



SRC 2020/2021 Term I Report

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Constitutional Responsibilities

“Chapter 3, section 21(1), (2), (3), (5) and (7) of the student constitution is where the portfolio to be and to draw its responsibilities from. Namely to (1) to act in the best interest of students and to actively promote students’ rights under (11), to represent students at – (a) the University Council; (b) the Senate; (c) the Institutional Forum; (d) other committees, bodies and functionaries of the University; and (e) national and international student bodies; (3) to evaluate the University policy and give input in the formulation thereof (5) facilitate projects and initiatives to the benefit of students and to (7) formulate and maintain policy in order to ensure that the Student Representative Council performs its functions and duties effectively.” – Chloe Krieger (Student wellness 2019/20)

2021 is the year in which the student constitution will be reviewed, and with the cancellation of the Student Success portfolio and the creation of the Student Financial Access portfolio, the duties of the Student Wellness portfolio may also change constitutionally.

Portfolio Overview

The portfolio has gone through many evolutions over the past few years, the most notable occurring in the 2018/19 term when a committee was created to draft the Mental Health Policy. The policy draft was both influenced by, and influenced, discussions around mental health at Stellenbosch University (SU). My predecessor’s term was unfortunately heavily impacted by the global coronavirus (Covid-19)





pandemic. It is however evident through her plans, and her speeches during the caucuses, that she had a great motivation to broaden and destigmatize the conversation around mental health.

I am of the strong opinion that there are many factors that affect one's mental wellness, besides obvious mental illness, and it is for this reason that the 2020/21 plan for this portfolio is to spend at least a month specifically focusing on the different aspects of the Wellness Wheel to improve overall well-being.

Committees / Task Teams

SRC Executive

The SRC Executive meets once a week to discuss ongoing developments within the SRC and student body. The Committee also meets with RMT (Rectorate Management Team) and the Student Governance team to discuss the work that the SRC has planned for the term. The committee also decides on the allocation of portfolios within the SRC.

Senate

The senate of a public higher education institution is accountable to the council for the academic and research functions of the public higher education institution and must perform such other functions as may be delegated or assigned to it by the council.

Bursaries and Loans Committee

Term Overview

My plan for the first term was to really settle in well and as comfortably as possible. The term was filled with many (many) trainings and sessions and possibly even more introductions. It was strange adjusting in the virtual space and I do still feel a bit disconnected from my team because I have yet to meet 80% of them in person.

Term 1 Goals:

- Develop a relationship with CSCD staff.
- Spread awareness about mental wellness ahead of exam season.
- Establish food-security internal SRC task team.
- Make 9 social media posts about student wellness.
- Allow students access to CSCD events and services.

Of the 5 goals listed above, I was able to successfully achieve 3 of them and attempt at the last one (I think it is always a trying process). The one thing I have not done is create an internal SRC task team, due to fact that there are still issues with the prototype of the food-security program we hope to implement in Stellenbosch. I also worry that there may be an issue of redundancy unless I really get to know exactly what food security programs are available to the students of Stellenbosch campus. With the development of the Student Financial Access portfolio – currently run by Gina Sibanda – there is also a blurriness with regards to who should take on the food security issue. At current, Gina and I are having discussions on the topic.

I started a Student Wellness Instagram page. We currently have 195 followers and are hoping to reach 200 by the end of the first academic term of 2021. The page made posts related to mental health awareness as well as the talks and sessions being held by the CSCD in October 2021. There are also





specific posts about how to book CSCD appointments during the Covid-19 period and posts promoting the new mental health policy draft. The page has also now released 2 Highlights focused on WHO covid-19 advice and updates on the SA Lockdown restrictions.

I have also opened applications for the Student Wellness committee. I had initially planned to do so during the first academic term, however I felt it would be easier to start early. I had originally budgeted for a maximum of 20 committee members (because I believed that I would not get more than that number of applicants), however the applicants surpassed that number in just 4 days. The applications will officially close on the 8th of February 2021, just to allow for fair time to apply. I must still decide on the system by which I will be electing committee members.

I am still in the process of planning the Financial Wellness month which will take place in March 2021. I will be collaborating with Masixole Ndamandama, the Senior Prim Committee chairperson. I have also been speaking with the CSCD staff and Unopachido Mubaiwa (a master's student) about mental health awareness initiatives for the 2021 year.

The Senate has had one sitting to date – late November. The meeting focused on welcoming and introducing new committee members and no new points were raised from the SRC's side. There have been 2 Bursaries and Loans committee sittings to date. I was unfortunately only able to attend the one due to academic obligations during the second one. The first sitting was the last one for the 2020 year and focused on introducing the changes to the Recruitment Bursary scheme as well as the introduction of the new Post-graduate bursary/funding system. The meeting also briefly discussed the shutting down of the SU loans system. There was a single point raised by the SRC regarding the accommodation of non-residence students during the A4 exams. At the meeting, the response was that the issue was "in discussion". However, during the A4 period during January 2021, many issues came to light and many non-residence students struggled with issues regarding accommodation. We hope that, should similar circumstances arise in 2021/22, the committee will be able to adequately prepare for any issues that may arise.

Budget

Student Wellness Budget 2020/21: (for a more detailed breakdown, please refer to the SRC budget 2020/21)

Project	Amount
Indigenous Games Day	R 17 100,00
Mental Health Month	R 5 660,00
Physical Wellness talk Series	R 2 600,00
Financial Wellness talk Series	R 2 600,00
Pop-up Coffee Shop (Social Wellness)	R 3 750,00
Student wellness committee dinner	R 4 000,00
Campus health emergency fund	R 5 000,00
Intellectual Wellness (with AAC)	R 16 700,00
Member Expenses	R 19 800,00
Total:	R 77 210,00

Plans for next term.

My goals for my second term in office are as follows:





- Set up 3 financial wellness talks.
- Contact banks for information around loans and funding and student account options.
- Begin meetings about food security initiative.
- Set up student interest groups (at least 3)
- Have a successful coffee shop activation (may be cancelled due to Covid-19)
- Establish a student wellness committee.

Recommendations to improve portfolio.

As this has only been my first term, I do not have many recommendations. I do believe that having a committee will be a great help in the future to lighten my workload and allow me to focus on my academics a little more.

Important Contacts

- Dr Munita Dunn-Coetzee (Head of the CSCD) – mdunn@sun.ac.za
- Mev Elmarie Kruger – elmarievdw@sun.ac.za
- Lizzie Witbooi (social worker) – lgwitbooi@sun.ac.za

