



# SRC 2020/2021 Term 3 Report

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## Constitutional Responsibilities

According to the Stellenbosch University Student Constitution, 2018, the Secretary is at least responsible for:

- Maintaining internal communication within the SRC.
- Managing knowledge and institutional memory within the SRC.
- Ensuring that SRC meetings, and any other meetings or consultations where the SRC desired record keeping, are properly recorded; and
- Updating, safekeeping and making available records, policies, and other documents of the SRC.

## Portfolio Overview

### Role in the SRC

The Secretary General is primarily responsible to uphold internal communication within the SRC.

This means that the Secretary General makes all relevant documents available to the SRC, including, but not limited to, the minutes and agendas of SRC meetings, the minutes, and agendas of Executive Committee meetings as well as the minutes and agendas of Executive SRC Members and Management meetings.

What is notable about this is that internal communication is most definitely, not limited to these formal circumstances. Because of this extension of definition, additional responsibilities befall the Secretary General such as keeping members and managers of the SRC on the various happenings and stances of the SRC.

The Secretary General is also responsible to ensure smooth communication lines within the SRC, using different platforms, including, but not limited to, emails and cell phone communication.

### Role in the University

The role of the Secretary General in the context of the University stretches as far as maintaining communication lines with the Rector's Management Team. The Secretary General is responsible to set up the agenda as well as to minute all meetings held between the Rectorate and the SRC Executive. They are also responsible to make these minutes and agendas available to all the people included in the SRC Executive and Management meetings contact list (listed in important contacts).

Further, the Secretary General plays a pivotal role as the direct communicating link between the SRC and the Rectorate Management Team

### Role in South Africa

SRC's around the country have a very important role to play in representing students on the different campuses. The Secretary General is an Executive position in all SRC's, plays a very important role a store of and main point of access for SRC Members and managers, Management, and students to all information relevant to the SRC. When Secretary Generals from various University's hold effective communication it helps unify the students of South Africa especially in extraordinary circumstances such as the ongoing pandemic. The Secretary General typically accompanies the Chairperson to meetings of the South African Union of Students, to articulate students' needs on a national level.

## Committees / Task Teams

### Term I

- Workstream for Student Services
- SRC Executive Committee

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- RegisterAll Task Team

## Term 2

- Workstream for Student Services
- SRC Executive Committee
- Communication Policy Task Team

## Term 3

- Workstream for Student Services
- SRC Executive Committee
- Communication Policy Task Team

## Term Overview

### Venue Booking System

The SRC Boardroom and Conference room booking system was changed from an email-based system to a Microsoft Bookings system, with a shortened bit.ly. This was done to streamline the process, prevent the occurrence of missed emails & bookings, and reduce the administrative load. This was challenging however, as Microsoft Bookings is intended to book a staff member for a consultation within a company, rather than a venue. Nevertheless, the system worked well and I will recommend that my successor set up forms for other processes like agenda point submissions as well.

### F2F Assessments Discontent

The term was relatively ordinary, until one week before the exams. At this point, the SRC received a huge influx of complaints about F2F assessments proceeding despite the third wave. The SRC promptly requested an emergency meeting with the SU Rectorate. We brought the various concerns of students to the rectorate's attention and advised them that students would be outraged if in-person assessments were to continue. The rectorate responded with the following points:

- Students knew about in-person examinations since the beginning of the year
- Faculties would not be able to restructure assessments within a week
- SU meets or exceeds all COVID-19 protocols and legal requirements
- Scientific data indicated transmission under these circumstances is extremely unlikely

We subsequently issued a statement and made one critical mistake: In trying not to sound like messengers of the rectorate (which we were accused of during registration), we informed students that the rectorate declined the demands for online assessments and added that the Academic Affairs Council's polls indicated that the majority of students were not opposed to F2F assessments. At this point, students criticised the AAC's data and blamed the SRC as the reason online assessments were declined. However, the SRC did, in fact, expressly request online assessments to be urgently and seriously considered, and the rectorate's decision was not and would not have been influenced by the AAC's data. This should serve as a cautionary tale for the next SRC: make statements with the utmost care and contemplate ways in which it may not be received as intended.

### Committees / Task Teams

The Workstream for Student Services met seldom this term and discussed routine upcoming logistical matters. Due to the risk of a fourth wave at the end of the year, as well as the relatively slow vaccination rate, the workstream decided to recommend a hybrid graduation, where only doctoral candidates and other exceptional cases would receive a F2F graduation.

The Communication Policy task team made slow but very thorough process on compiling the document. There was not yet an opportunity to raise points pertinent to students.

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## Budget

### Budget & Reasoning

Item	Cost	Purpose
12GB Long-term Data Bundle	R899.00	SRC Meetings, emails, etc. Live off-campus without uncapped internet
Mass Mailers	R9000.00 (6x R1500.00)	Keeping students informed about SRC activities, issuing statements on urgent / wide-reaching matters.
Minute Scribe	R3690.00	Ensuring SRC meetings are minuted accurately & on time.
Discretionary funds	R1000.00	Other portfolio-related costs.

### Expenditure so far

- R403.20 from discretionary funds for transportation costs outside of academic days
- R1440.00 for minute scribe meetings during Term 2
- ~R50.00 for data costs

### Plans for next term

I have no major plans for my portfolio, other than intentions to run it efficiently, to keep response time to student emails to a minimum, and to make sure internal communication is more frequent and efficient (by providing succinct 'digests' of meetings to members via WhatsApp or email).

### Recommendations to improve portfolio

When things get busy, the importance of planning and getting things ready or done beforehand becomes apparent. I recommend that systems to deal with routine tasks and constitutional duties should be implemented as early as possible and should be as automated as possible.

For example, meeting apologies will have to be consolidated for every single SRC-related meeting (General, Executive Committee, SU Management). Having an apology form ready right from the first meeting, will streamline the process for the other 50 meetings. Designing the Welcoming Presentation / Activities well beforehand will allow you to consult other members for improvement and allow you to communicate with Prims early enough to find convenient times. Said presentations should preferably occur in both residences/PSO's and faculties.

Set up two calendars as early as possible:

- SRC Member Birthdays calendar (the vice-chair might opt to do this)
- SRC events / activities calendar (to be discussed in the first few meetings, to ensure events are well-timed and members are informed for good participation)

Finally, and this is more a recommendation to the entire SRC: Make room for collaboration with other student leaders and external organisation. This year, we often received requests for collaboration, but because members had their plans and were so fixated on them, nothing much came of it. Set time and funds aside for others who approach you for collaboration.

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## Important Contacts

### SU Management

Executive		Executive's Personal Assistant	
Prof Wim de Villiers	<a href="mailto:wimdv@sun.ac.za">wimdv@sun.ac.za</a> <a href="mailto:vc@sun.ac.za">vc@sun.ac.za</a>	Wildre Kok	<a href="mailto:wkok@sun.ac.za">wkok@sun.ac.za</a>
Prof Stan du Plessis	<a href="mailto:stan@sun.ac.za">stan@sun.ac.za</a>	Mariette Hanekom	<a href="mailto:mhanekom@sun.ac.za">mhanekom@sun.ac.za</a>
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Grace Bruinties	<a href="mailto:graceb@sun.ac.za">graceb@sun.ac.za</a>		

### Student governance

Anele Mdepa	Manager	<a href="mailto:thulani@sun.ac.za">thulani@sun.ac.za</a>
Thulani Hlatswayo	Coordinator	<a href="mailto:anelemdepa@sun.ac.za">anelemdepa@sun.ac.za</a>
Sharine Dowries	Administrator	<a href="mailto:sharine@sun.ac.za">sharine@sun.ac.za</a>

### Division for Student Affairs

Dr Choice Makhetha	Senior Director	<a href="mailto:choicemakhetha@sun.ac.za">choicemakhetha@sun.ac.za</a>
Tonia Overmeyer	Dean of Students	<a href="mailto:toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za">toniaovermeyer@sun.ac.za</a>
Gerschwin Fritz	Administrator	<a href="mailto:gfritz@sun.ac.za">gfritz@sun.ac.za</a>

### Other Contacts

Gary Howell	Manager: Letting Office	<a href="mailto:ghowell@sun.ac.za">ghowell@sun.ac.za</a>
Nicky Adams	Promotion Officer	<a href="mailto:nadams@sun.ac.za">nadams@sun.ac.za</a>
Ayanda Ntuli	Communications Coordinator	<a href="mailto:ayandantuli@sun.ac.za">ayandantuli@sun.ac.za</a>
Sandra Pow Chong	Digital Channels Coordinator: Web	<a href="mailto:spowchong@sun.ac.za">spowchong@sun.ac.za</a>

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