



STUDENTS' REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL
IBHUNGA ELIMELE ABAFUNDI
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SRC 2021/22 TERM REPORT I SPECIAL NEEDS

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Students' Representative Council
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Constitutional Responsibilities

The Special Needs Manager has the following constitutional commitments:

- Compile the yearly portfolio budget.
- Attend at least one SRC meeting per term

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Portfolio Overview

The portfolio has outlined the following goals in its year plan:

- Ensuring students are provided a platform to engage in self-advocacy
- Facilitating communication and providing input so that students with disabilities are at the center of decisions that affect them
- Full participation in campus life and academic activities are granted to every disabled student
- Ensuring all aspects of the disabled student are considered when decisions are made
- Promote inclusivity in language, structures, and facilities



Committees/Task Teams

Institutional Transformation committee

I have been asked to serve on this committee on the 30th of October. As of yet, I have read and received the guidelines for serving on the committee and I am awaiting further information regarding meetings.

Special Needs Subcommittee

Applications for the sub-committee were released on the 7th of December and closed on the 21st of December. Candidates were shortlisted and asked questions to determine their aptitude for the portfolio. I selected 5 members – a treasurer (assisting in budgets), a secretary (creating meeting minutes/agendas, attending certain meetings with me, and assisting in the general organization), a social media manager (posts to our various social media accounts), a Tygerberg rep (helps assist with concerns specifically related to Tygerberg campus) and a policy officer (assists in drafting documents).

In the last meeting, the subcommittee discussed the plans for the upcoming workshop later in the 2nd term of the SRC, plans on engaging with students, and a new social media campaign.



Term Overview

The term focussed mainly on the formation of a sub-committee, planning for the year ahead and assisting students with disabilities disabled in registration.

Training session with the SRC

I hosted a training session for the SRC during pre-registration week. The topics discussed were:

- Disability as a concept
- Types of disabilities experienced by students
 - The effect on students
 - Seeking accommodations
- Support offered to students
- Financial support (Nsfas) for disabled students

The session was well received, and implementation of the ideas suggested is evident in how the registration period was dealt with for students with disabilities. As a result of the session, discussions with the prim committee have begun to ensure up-to-date information and support to students from their HKs.

Neurodiversity information campaign

I divided major types of neurodivergence's between my sub-committee members to research so that we can initiate a social media campaign starting the 10th of February.

Sensory safe space guide

After the training for the SRC, I was asked by the prim committee to make a guide on creating safe sensory spaces for students to engage with at residence or in PSO spaces. The document I created is 3 pages long detailing ideas for minimal space sensory boxes.

Res-ed Facilitation

I facilitated a Re-ed session at Dagbreek on the 7th of February. The session proved highly successful as the newcomers engaged actively. I spent a lot of the session discussing my own experience as a disabled student at Stellenbosch and the students engaged actively in my story.



Plans for next term

The plans for the upcoming term as outlined by the subcommittee are as follows:

- Workshop on disabled intimacy
- Changing the name of the portfolio
- Creating a guide on inclusive communication
- Advocating for service dog posters
- Training session for Prims

The disability unit has invited me to join their upcoming meeting on the 14th of February.



Recommendations

Facilitating training and discussions has been an extremely fruitful activity – the effect on the treatment of disabled students is evident in how the registration period was managed in regards to disabled students. From my experience of the last term, the focus should shift to disabled students more though. I noticed many concerns where concerns across the board that could be addressed by providing support such as a neurodiversity society or ensuring sport is more accessible at Stellenbosch. Though engaging with leadership specifically has been extremely fruitful, I would encourage more student-based approaches in further terms.

Engaging on the ground with newcomers has provided a valuable resource to assist newcomers before their comfort or safety is compromised by problems and discrimination arises.