



**Stellenbosch**

UNIVERSITY  
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**SRC**

Students' Representative Council  
Ibhunga elimele abaFundi  
Studenteraad



## SRC 2024 TERM 3 REPORT

### SRC CHAIRPERSON & Student Financial Access

Students' Representative Council

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## SRC Chairperson & Student Financial Access – srcchair@sun.ac.za

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### Foreword

To my Dearest Maties,

As I embark on my final year as a student and a student leader, it is a bitter sweet moment for me. I have lived, learnt and loved in Stellies I have spent most of young adult life in Stellies and I have no regrets. Through the time that I have been here, the best piece of advice that I can give you is, stay true to yourself and always remember you are capable! There is a point I was at my lowest and conflicted during this years registration period and what has kept me going are the words of Dr Choice “When in doubt allow your conscious to lead you Phiwo”. It is indeed easier said than done however as long as you stick to your principles you will know your heart is in the right place.

Let me take this opportunity to welcome you back to the second half of the year. I hope that your academic journey has been going well this far, if not please do reach out to your faculties, mentors and lecturers. As we embark on the 2024 election season I would like to wish all the candiates the best of luck and I hope that this season of elections will go well.

I wish you all a wonderful and progressive 2024.

## Constitutional Responsibilities - Chairperson

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According to the student constitution by constitutional responsibilities are the following:

The Chairperson –

- (a) Serves as the Chairperson at meetings of the SRC and SRC Executive Committee.
- (b) Acts as spokesperson for the SRC, in consultation with the Communications Officer.
- (c) Is responsible for the finances of the SRC alongside the SRC Executive Committee.
- (d) Ensures that the SRC fulfils its mandate.
- (e) Is responsible for oversight over the activities of the SRC.

## Constitutional Responsibilities – Student Financial Access

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As per the Student Constitution my role/duties as the Student Financial Access portfolio holder of the SRC includes:

- To act in the best interest of students and to actively promote students' rights under CHAPTER 2.
- To represent students at – (a) The University Council. (b) The Senate. (c) The Institutional Forum. (d) Other committees, structures, and functionaries of the University. (e) National and international student structures.
- To evaluate the University policy and give input in the formulation thereof.
- To formulate and maintain policy to ensure that the SRC performs its functions and duties effectively.
- To facilitate projects and initiatives to the benefit of students.
- To inform students continuously, and obtain feedback, about its activities.

## Portfolio Overview - Chairperson

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The Chairperson acts as the Spokesperson of the SRC. The Chairperson ensures that the SRC fulfils their mandate, and they are also responsible for coordinating the SRC's relationship with its various stakeholders. It is the Chairpersons role to lead with respect, to support the SRC and to ensure that the needs of students are prioritized.

## Portfolio Overview – Student Financial Access

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The duties and responsibilities as Student Financial Access head include Liaising with Funding offices and social workers, providing financial literacy programmes/workshops for students (especially vulnerable students). Ensuring accessibility of work opportunities on campuses, educating SRC members on funding matters and processes. Being a port of call for students with financial exclusion and difficulty concerns, generally working on improving financial accessibility in the institution.

## Committees/Task Teams – Chairperson & Student Financial Access

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I serve on the following Committees and or Task Teams:

### Council

- This is the highest governance body of Stellenbosch University. It oversees Management and holds them to account. Appoints management of the institution. It further takes strategic decisions and approves policies of the institution.
- There are no compulsory portfolios that must sit on this committee all the elected SRC members have the opportunity to stand for a seat at Council.
- Council is currently chaired by the acting chairperson Nicky Newton-King and the secretariat Dr Ronel Retief.
- Throughout my term I will only sit in a total of 4 meetings. I have sat two the first meeting was in September 2023 and in December 2023. I will be sitting my next two meetings in 2024
- The Council agenda is typically made up of over 400 pages. So, it is important that we go through the agenda and identify points that we would like to argue in the best of the institution.
- Unfortunately, most of the information tabled at this committee is regarded as confidential.

- First official meeting taking place on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2024. There was report read by Prof Wim on the current state of the institution. Thereafter there were approvals needed on a number of matters that were put before the council. The advertainment for the next Rector was also compiled and completed after considering the various inputs from all the university bodies.
- On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May a special meeting was held where I was the representative that was selected for the Seniors Appointment Committee for appointment of our next Rector and VC.
- The next meeting place took place on the 24<sup>th</sup> of June 2024 where, the Wilgenhof matter was tabled after the rectorate made the announcement to accept the findings of the report done by the panel. The Council took a decision to not make a decision on the day coming from legal advice. Furthermore, this was done because this involved a university asset therefore, due processes need to be followed.

### **Steering Committee (Integrating newly elected leaders)**

This is a new committee that the SG and I sat in and the purpose of this steering committee is to combine LSAL and the newly elected leaders conference to ensure our students get a holistic view of leadership. Considering that not all students are positional leaders. We have not sat another meeting I hope that there will be a review in our 4<sup>th</sup> term to make this a reality.

### **NSFAS Task Team**

This task team is currently chaired by Prof Stan. The purpose of this team is to find solutions that are constantly facing our NSFAS students namely, when it comes to food security, delay in payments and the defunding of students. At the beginning of this year the decision was taken to cap students at R120 per day to help them manage their finances which I strongly supported. The institution recently undertook a survey to analyse the spending of NSFAS students and identified that students have not been making use of the cheaper meal options which was leading to the depleting of the funds. However, at the committee I had raised the idea of a soup kitchen where students would receive a meal a day after I saw how well it performed when one of our Prims did it at HRB Fran did an amazing job with her team. The idea was well received, and it was then decided that funding would have to be sourced, it is with great pleasure to announce the university received a donation that is now allowing our NSFAS student who reside in catered residences to at least receive one meal a day free of charge until the end of the semester. This I

believe will allow more of our students to make use of the [supportus@sun.ac.za](mailto:supportus@sun.ac.za) that may not have funding. During this term we met on the 26<sup>th</sup> of April and 17<sup>th</sup> of May.

## **Simplifying structures, policies, regulations / align with institutional objectives – CIRCoRe**

### **Workstream**

I currently serve on this workstream.

- Below are some matters that are being rolled out / attended to:
  1. Workstreams are co-opting additional members based on identified areas of expertise and representativity.
  2. We are conducting some data and information-gathering and targeted research as requested by the workstreams.
  4. We are developing an institutional permission and ethics protocol for all our campus information-gathering and research processes. That will gather data, conduct research, and run dialogue processes at the institution.
- The workstream is currently chaired by Dr Leslie Van Rooi.

This semester we met on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May and 19<sup>th</sup> of June.

## **South African Union of Students (SAUS)**

South African Union of Students (SAUS) is a students' structure that was officially launched in April of 2006, led by President: Yandisa Ndzoyiya, Secretary General: Lukhanyo Daweti. SAUS aims to consolidate and strengthen students' view in the governance and enhancement of Higher Education and Training in South Africa. They are committed to building a unified, equitable, non-sexist, non-racial, democratic and well governed education system that is appropriate and responsive to the needs of South Africa, Africa and the world and which provides a conducive environment for learning, teaching and research and community service.

They believe that education, through excellence in learning, teaching and research and community service, must positively respond to the needs of both students and the economic, social, cultural and political development imperatives and needs of our country, region, continent and the world. Their objectives are to promote the development of an education system that provides equity of access,

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opportunity and outcomes and positively responds to the needs of both students and economic, social, cultural and needs of our country, region, and continent. All 26 public universities form part of this Union. It is a very powerful platform if used correctly. It is important to note that it is a very political space. So if you are not one used robust engagements you will not like the space because you simply will not understand how comrades behave. I strongly believe that every institution should be affiliated to this union because the engagements held there are extremely important. And you form relations with other institutions where crucial knowledge is shared.

The current political climate has made things quite tense in our union to the extent that we have not sat any meetings this year because majority of the SRC's in the country are EFFSC led and the current leadership of the NEC is SASCO so there are constant fight. We have taken the decision to begin our own structure that will allow us to engage on national issues. We hope that the conference will sit soon so that we can elect new leadership.

### **MAC Meeting: Monitor Report**

I form part of this committee that consists of members from DSAF, Prim Committee and Welcoming monitors. The meeting that was held this term was on the 30<sup>th</sup> of April where the monitors presented a welcoming report. There were not many incidents however it is never nice to hear that some of our first years did not feel welcomed because of some racists and unacceptable incidents. Overall, the communities did well and I am proud of the prims. We will continue working hard at realising a better Stellenbosch for all. It was suggested that there should be a big meeting with all stakeholders involved and discuss the report however, that has not taken place.

### **SAC for appointment of Rector and VC**

This committee is highly confidential we have sat one meeting this far. The next meeting is scheduled to take place on the 29<sup>th</sup> of July. The process is set to be concluded by September.



## **Naming Committee**

The naming committee sat on the 16<sup>th</sup> of May, where we had a good discussion around the new residences and the committee is still gathering more information of some of the people that were removed from that land so that one of the residences can be named after them to honour the community. In this meeting it was further revealed that the Forestry building is requesting for a name change as the current name does not reflect where we see ourselves in the future. Because it is associated with an individual that played a key role in keeping apartheid alive. It was further suggested that some of the lecture halls be renamed to the some of the students that managed to pass their degree under the hostile environments of being taught in Afrikaans a language they did not understand.

## **Leave of Absence task team**

This team was tasked with reviewing the current leave of absence rules led by the registrar of Tygerberg. Some major additions:

1. SRC members when having to attend statutory body meetings will have to apply for category A leave so that lecturers are aware that they have to attend such meetings. As I have seen most lecturers don't understand the role that we play on campus and sometimes we are unable to skip class.
2. Leave of absence will include cultural activities such having to go to initiation school to be a traditional healer.
3. Makes room for maternity leave.
4. Rules will apply to Undergrad and Postgrad.

Its important to note that SRC members will be able to file leave of absence following these university channels to ensure that while they carry out their duties their academics are safeguarded. This task team met throughout the recess period.

## **Student Finance Committee**

This committee is chaired by the Director of Finance, this is where student fees are discussed and approved. Last year we rejected the 8% increase in residences because our residences are already so expensive and we are afraid that this will negatively impact our students blocking them at registration next year. This year we met on the 30<sup>th</sup> of May where it was just introductions. Feedback was given on the current state of SUNStudent. Due to the difficulties with our fees record it was agreed upon that students would be allowed to see their results even though they owe fees. Furthermore, the future of SUNStudent is quite uncertain at this point.

## Term 3- Overview

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As seen above my days are full of meetings and advocacy. Being a student and always making the time to make sure I show up has been a rollercoaster. Most of my days involve meetings from 8am – 5pm sometimes with just an hour break because I also physically assist students when there is time.

On the 11<sup>th</sup> of April I had the pleasure of being a panellist on the Irene Lapd event. Where we spoke around our experiences in leadership. It is always a wonderful experience to have an opportunity to encourage others and also share my traumas because this job is not always the kindest to you. And I feel like students should really think long and hard before taking the decision to run for SRC. On the 12<sup>th</sup> of April I called for a special meeting with the SRC to discuss the developments in Palestine. Our SRC has always condemned the genocide that Israel is committing against the people of Palestine. And we have called for a seize fire. Of cause the neutral stance taken by institution is disappointing and even worse the votes at senate that were against us taking an institutional stance. I organised a meeting reps and management so that students could hear for themselves the reasons. I know students may have not been happy with the outcome however we have tried to advocate and support our students who are advocating. In life unfortunately we will not win every battle and I hope that the incoming SRC will continue the fight.

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of April I met with Pieter where we discussed the Wilgenhof matter and the office spaces upstairs in the neelsie. The university has said it does not have the money to renovate upstairs. So it was suggested that we bring back the idea of the “superhub” that was once proposed as a space dedicated to only student leaders. I liked this idea because if all of our offices are located in one venue, I believe it will bring about greater unity among us. On the 19<sup>th</sup> of April I attended the Staff Health and Training program. I like these programs because we truly get to witness how much our staff go through and they also just need kindness from us because its not easy for them as well. On the 30<sup>th</sup> of May I attended the 2<sup>nd</sup> Ordinary plenary sitting, these sittings are quite exciting now and vibrant just expect a particular individual who is set out to poke us. However, as a leader we must remained composed. I asked the student body to email me complaints with regards to social workers I have not received any.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of May we had a Student Governance gathering where our students' leaders just got together and networked. I thoroughly enjoy the leadership of Dr Choice because her division always tries to

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make sure we are okay and striving. On the 6<sup>th</sup> of May we had a meeting with community members and campus security which was organised by a council member. I presented my plans for our integrated shuttle services to ensure our students can get to campus safely. On the 10<sup>th</sup> of May I had a meeting with the electoral commission around elections and what role our SRC can play in increasing student engagement. On the 13<sup>th</sup> of May I attended the SU language committee, the meeting was quite short but the most important aspect was that the university wants to understand if there is still a need for Afrikaans classes. On the 15<sup>th</sup> of May I had the honour of being a panelist at one of Prof Thulis Café session and the theme was elections. On the 17<sup>th</sup> of May I attended the DSAF Transformation summit. It was painful to yet again find myself in a space to hear how hurt our staff members are. I enjoyed the session and learnt a lot. On the same day I had to meet with workers to understand their grievances. There has been a lot of tension between our general workers and the institution I try my best to at least try and find middle ground so that our students are not affected. This is still an on going case and I have reached out to HR to try and get to the bottom of things. Since the workers are outsourced if they were to have issues it would have to be dealt with by SUNCOM.

This term we were meant to launch the GBV campaign where we want to speak on GBV 365 days a year instead of 16 days of activism this is in partnership with student affairs and the equality unit. On the 25 of June Andri and I had a consultation with the residence office to provide inputs on the residence guidelines. We emphasised the need to accommodate students who may not have the necessary funds to secure accommodation when they receive offers. The talks have been welcoming and the university has agreed to waive the fee for qualifying students.

On the 27<sup>th</sup> of June we had the pleasure of welcoming the University of Fort Here we showed them around and had a discussion on our governance. These exercises are so important because it gives us the opportunity to spot any crucial changes that need to take place on our campus.

## Plans for Next Term

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I plan on doing the following:

1. Finalising the SRC Fundraising Committee and submitting SRC Gala dinner proposal to DSAF and Alumni relations.
2. Planning the declaration of campus elections.
3. Finalising handover process.
4. Womans Day lectuer