



# SRC 2020/2021 Term 2 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.

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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

### Original term 1 goals

1. Set up 3 financial wellness talks
2. Contact banks for information around loans and funding and student account options
3. Begin meetings about food security initiative
4. Set up student interest groups (at least 3)
5. Have a successful physical wellness month
6. Establish a student wellness committee

### Feedback on these goals

1. **Financial wellness talks:** On February the 18<sup>th</sup> 2021, I had my first meeting with the Financial Sector Conduct Authority's Consumer Education Division (FSCA CED) via MS Teams. The CED team is led by Mr Lyndwill Clarke who was very enthusiastic about the fact that I had reached out to him and saw the need to offer financial education sessions for students. The CED offers fantastic financial services and money-management information and provides education sessions all free-of-charge. With the FSCA we organised 3 financial wellness talks to take place during the month of March (which is global finance month). The plan coincided well with the FSCA's already planned *Money Smart Week*. The three talks took place on the 4<sup>th</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> of March and the topics discussed were: *Savings and Investments*, *Credit Scores* and *Financial scams*, respectively. Although the talks contained fantastic information and the possibility of winning prizes, they were unfortunately quite poorly attended. Some factors that may have contributed to this include:
  - Talks were held from 6-7pm which falls within dinner time for many students

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- 2 of the talks took place within the welcoming period which made it quite difficult for busy HC members to really promote the event and encourage student attendance.
- Lack of visibility in terms of only advertising via Instagram as social media.

Running with the talks was a giveaway competition that involved giving away 6 copies of South Africans' current favourite financial education books. Our social media page also tried to create financial education posts throughout the month.

We are currently still in conversation with the FSCA about future for more talks and perhaps some more sustainable non-temporary solutions.

- 2. Contact banks for information around loans and funding and student account options** - Goal 2 was connected to the financial wellness talks. I felt this was redundant because this portfolio is no longer primarily focused on student financial aid – that role is now specifically focused on by the Student Financial Access Portfolio.
- 3. Begin meetings about food security initiative** – In February I attended a meeting with Ms Gina Sibanda (our Student Financial Access SRC member), and Lizzie Witbooi (SU Campus social worker) and we discussed the current food security options and protocols for students at the university. At this meeting we learned that several residences and PSO's operate a small food security initiative within their residences and that the CSCD in collaboration with the Move4Food campaign were the main funders of food insecurity programs at the institution. Through our engagement in that meeting, it was decided that we would try to assist the small house-funded projects and allow the CSCD's protocols to handle other concerns. Although I am not personally involved with it, the SRC's Matie-to-Matie program has also been quite involved in handling non-food bases, but social insecurity focused requests for students. The initiative has played a major role in bridging the gap that food security programs can't directly help fill.
- 4. Set up student interest groups (at least 3)** – This goal was unfortunately not targeted due to the rather dense workload of the term, but also the rather difficult situation that Covid has created (i.e., it is tough to create a special interest group that could potentially never meet in real life due to the pandemic). I also felt that there were more serious issues plaguing the student body that this was not an essential to accomplish.
- 5. Have a successful physical wellness month** – Physical wellness month, although held online, was objectively a success. The initial plan drawn up last year was to have a series of 3 talks (A fatphobia talk, a sex talk and one more), however with the restrictions on live events, I felt that organising such talks online – especially the sex talk – may feel very impersonal and uncomfortable for many students. It was for this reason that I decided to work with my committee to create many infographics that could be released on our Instagram page about various topics. We also collaborated with Mr Khwezi Ndlovu (the SRC sport manager) who

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helped create the program with us and get some exercise routines for students to utilise during Test week to keep active. During this month, I saw major growth in terms of engagement with our Instagram page. We managed to surpass an average of 20 likes per post (a 5-7 like growth from Financial Wellness month) during April. This was fantastic to see. We had another giveaway this month where we offered R250 Takealot vouchers to 5 students who showed off reaching 10 000 steps or showed off a good fitness pose.

A big event plan that was meant to happen in this term is the Indigenous Games Day. This was unfortunately cancelled due to the pandemic; however, it is still on the table to happen later in the year, in collaboration with Maties Sport and Tygermaties Cluster.

6. **Establish a student wellness committee** – This goal (a recommendation in the last report) was finally completed. In March I was able to establish a group of almost 30 students who were passionate about student wellness and wellbeing and created my sub-committee. The committee has been broken up into groups based on the month of the year and that theme. The members of the group were allowed to sign up for a theme(s) that they would like to organise events for. When a particular month comes about, the small group will get together to organise all sorts of things, like the topics for infographics, colour scheme etc. There is also a vice-chairperson and 3 rotating secretaries. Since I am a Tygerberg campus student as well as the fact that such a large group makes meeting in-person difficult due to social distancing protocols and finding an adequate space, I have yet to meet some of the members in my community in person yet. An informal meet-and-greet session is currently being organised.

#### **Portfolio work done outside of these 2020-set goals**

- A. Wellness Wednesdays – In March I contacted a privately practicing black female psychologist, Dr Thembelihle Dube, based in century city about having a mental health talk focused on POC issues around mental health. Dr Dube encouraged the idea of having consistent talks once a month in the form of an Instagram Live discussion. Thus, began Wellness Wednesdays. This series started on the 5<sup>th</sup> of May 2021. Although the first talk did not render so much support, the conversation was very engaging and many students who attended benefitted from the session. The next session is planned for the 2<sup>nd</sup> of June 2021.
- B. Planning has now begun for another financial wellness talk which will be in direct collaboration with Dagbreek and Sonop residences. The idea of pairing up with a house directly is to hopefully find a way to increase student turnout through them taking ownership of the event as it is being held within their residences.
- C. Discussions with the CSCD around mental health event planning for the year. Many of the discussions held with the CSCD have proved to be quite fruitful and have yielded a lot of information and advice that will be of great use to students.

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## Budget

### Budget & Reasoning

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
<b>Total:</b>	<b>R 77 210,00</b>

### Expenditure so far

Total expenditure for the term is: **R 4712, 00**. This breakdown includes the following items:

5 x R250 Takealot vouchers for Physical Wellness giveaway = R1250

6 x financial education books from Takealot = R1376,00

Member expenses (vehicle bookings) = R2086,00

R500,00 of discretionary funds used for registration fees of a student

### Plans for next term

During the next term, my plan is to really focus on creating events and engagements in-person where possible. It seems rather unfair to have such a large budget but not be able to utilise it.

Focus on mental health awareness month and work with the CSCD to create a program that aims to promote student success but is also feasible.

Begin planning and processes for the development of a sustainable co-curricular program.

### Recommendations to improve portfolio

Delegate more within the sub-committee

Follow-up more when it comes to sub-committee input and ideas.

### Important Contacts

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

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Lyndwill Clarke – Financial Sector Conduct Authority’s Consumer Education division chairperson  
(Lyndwill.Clark@fsca.co.za)

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