

# Draft Constitution of the Natural Science Committee (NSC)

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## **Section 1: Establishment of the Natural Science Committee**

- 1.1 The Natural Science Committee, hereafter referred to as NSC, was established by the Academic Affairs Council and departmental representatives of the Faculty of Science of Stellenbosch University on 6 May 2000.
- 1.2 The NSC does not discriminate on the grounds of race, gender, sexual orientation or faith.
- 1.3 The NSC is the only representative body of students in the Faculty of Science.

## **Section 2: Definition of concepts**

- 2.1 NSC: the representative committee of the Science Student Society (SSS)
- 2.2 FACULTY: The Faculty of Science at the University of Stellenbosch
- 2.3 OFFICE: The NSC office in room 2011 on the second floor of the AI Perold Building
- 2.4 SSS: Student Science Society, which all students that are registered with the Faculty of Science are part of
- 2.5 COMMITTEE MEMBER: Member of the NSC
- 2.6 MEMBER: Member of the SSS.
- 2.7 MENTOR: A staff member of the Faculty of Science, who attends one weekly meeting per term and represents the NSC among the staff.
- 2.8 WEEKLY MEETING: Weekly meeting of the NSC
- 2.9 CONSTITUTION: The valid constitution of the NSC
- 2.10 TERM OF OFFICE: The period of office of a given NSC, commencing after the joint weekly meeting after the election and ends with the joint meeting the following year
- 2.11 AAC: Academic Affairs Council
- 2.12 SRC: Students' Representative Council
- 2.13 ELECTION CONVENOR: Person who is responsible for a fair voting procedure
- 2.14 WEBSITE: <http://www.sun.ac.za/english/faculty/science/Pages/Sciences-Student-Committee.aspx>
- 2.15 SU: Stellenbosch University

## **Section 3: Constitution**

- 3.1 All previous constitutions of the NSC and SSS are repealed by this constitution.
- 3.2 A copy of the constitution will be available on the website at all times.
- 3.3 Amendments to the constitution proceed as follows:
  - 3.3.1 Propose a new draft amendment at a weekly meeting.
  - 3.3.2 Announce draft amendment to members by official notice and make it available for inspection on the website for at least three (3) academic days.
  - 3.3.3 Submit amendment to the Student Court for inspection.

## **Section 4: Legal Personality**

- 4.1 The NSC is a juristic person with the capacity to act in its own name and has its own rights and obligations.
- 4.2 All actions and agreements are entered into by the executive of the NSC.
- 4.3 The NSC is not accountable for the personal matters of its committee members.

## **Section 5: Finance**

- 5.1 The NSC's annual budget may not exceed its annual income.
- 5.2 The NSC's finances along with the treasurer's report will be audited by the SU auditors at the end of every term of office.
- 5.3 No member of committee member shall be liable for any debt of the NSC unless it is the result of negligence or dishonesty.
- 5.4 Members may not use their own money for payment or purchases for the NSC.

- 5.5 The NSC may not transact in cash.
- 5.6 The treasurer has the power to compensate committee members for the use of their private vehicles for NSC purposes.
- 5.7 The compensation tariff for the transport costs is at most 80% of the tariff stipulated by the Stellenbosch University Vehicle Pool for the type of vehicle concerned.
- 5.8 Committee members may receive honorariums at the end of their term of office.
- 5.9 The NSC may not open an external bank account.
- 5.10 Any payments to NSC received by a committee member and not disclosed will be considered embezzlement, in which case legal action will be taken.
- 5.11 The membership fees of all members, except those who completed a request form, are collected by the Student Fees Division of Stellenbosch University, and paid over to the NSC.

## **Section 6: Structure of the NSC**

- 6.1 The NSC consists of a minimum of eight (8) and a maximum of ten (10) members.
- 6.2 The executive consists of:
  - 6.2.1 The chairperson
  - 6.2.2 The vice-chairperson
  - 6.2.3 The treasurer
  - 6.2.4 The secretary
- 6.3 The executive acts on behalf of the NSC in urgent matters that arise between weekly meetings.
- 6.4 Additional portfolios may include:
  - 6.4.1 The representative for Student Affairs
  - 6.4.2 The representative for Marketing and Technical Manager
  - 6.4.3 The representative for Postgraduate Students
  - 6.4.4 The representative for Social Events
  - 6.4.5 Any other temporary position(s) voted into action
- 6.5 Should a vacancy arise in the NSC, any suitable member may be co-opted into the NSC at the committee's discretion, if voted in by a 50% plus one voting majority. This new committee member having equal rights to any other committee member.

## **Section 7: Objectives of the NSC**

- 7.1 To promote member's academic and student interests in an accountable manner.
- 7.2 To serve as intermediary between the students and the staff of the Faculty.
- 7.3 To foster a broader interest in Science through various events.
- 7.4 To facilitate the election and training of class representatives in a fair and orderly fashion.

## **Section 8: Committee Membership**

- 8.1 Any committee member ceases to be an NSC member if:
  - 8.1.1 They die.
  - 8.1.2 They hand in their resignation to the secretary, the resignation taking effect immediately.
  - 8.1.3 They are no longer enrolled in the Faculty.
  - 8.1.4 They miss two meetings without written apologies and cannot give reason for their absences or their reasons are deemed unworthy when out towards the NSC.
  - 8.1.5 They have committed misconduct or dereliction of duty and is obliged to resign by two-thirds majority vote at a meeting.
  - 8.1.6 Their term ends.

- 8.1.7 A motion of no confidence is brought against them and gains a 50% plus one voting majority.

## **Section 9: Portfolio Descriptions**

### **9.1 The chairperson:**

- 9.1.1 Keeps order at meetings by being impartial, holding to the agenda, protecting the rights of the members and ensuring that the majority will is carried out.
- 9.1.2 Maintains order at all NSC events.
- 9.1.3 Hands over control over a meeting if they wish to act impartial in some matter.
- 9.1.4 May call an extraordinary NSC meeting.
- 9.1.5 May postpone a meeting to a more convenient time.
- 9.1.6 Has a deciding vote at meetings when a tie occurs.
- 9.1.7 Serves ex officio on all NSC portfolios.
- 9.1.8 Serves on the Faculty Board.
- 9.1.9 Serves on the AAC.
- 9.1.10 Must meet with the Dean of the Faculty at least once a term to inform them of the NSC's activities.
- 9.1.11 May at any time request an interim report from any committee member.
- 9.1.12 May publish press reports on the behalf of the NSC, given that it was discussed at a weekly meeting.
- 9.1.13 Must submit a report of the NSC's activities at the annual general meeting.
- 9.1.14 Must be replaced from within the committees ranks, should they resign as described in Section 8.
- 9.1.15 Must attend the treasurer training course presented by the SU administration.
- 9.1.16 Acts as treasurer in the case of the treasurer being absent.

### **9.2 The vice-chairperson:**

- 9.2.1 Acts with the full authority of chairperson if the chairperson is absent or the chairperson has temporarily conferred their authority.
- 9.2.2 Serves on the Faculty Board.
- 9.2.3 Serves on the AAC.
- 9.2.4 Helps the chairperson with the duties as treasurer if the treasurer is absent.
- 9.2.5 Is in charge of disciplinary action within the NSC.
- 9.2.6 Must attend the treasurer training course presented by the SU administration.

### **9.3 The treasurer:**

- 9.3.1 Must draw up the budget before the beginning of February in the new year following election.
- 9.3.2 Must attend the treasurer training course presented by the SU administration.
- 9.3.3 Must familiarise themselves with the University's financial rules and adhere to them.
- 9.3.4 Must ensure that income and expenses are recorded, and that no portfolio exceeds their individual budget.
- 9.3.5 Must handle purchases by means of the electronic request system and submit such requests to the director: faculty management for approval.
- 9.3.6 Must give an account of the NSC's income and expenses at the last meeting of every month.
- 9.3.7 Must submit a financial report at the annual general meeting.

- 9.3.8 Must ensure that at the start of their term, printing quota is loaded for each individual member as needed.
- 9.3.9 Is responsible for managing the NSC's assets.
- 9.3.10 Must maintain regular contact with the director: faculty management.
- 9.3.11 Acts as chairperson if the chairperson and vice-chairperson are both absent.

#### **9.4 The secretary:**

- 9.4.1 Must notify the committee members three (3) days in advance when the weekly meeting will take place, and the venue and agenda must be sent at least one day in advance.
- 9.4.2 Must distribute the minutes of the meeting at least two (2) days before the next meeting takes place.
- 9.4.3 Must convene an extraordinary meeting at least two (2) days in advance, upon request by the chair or written demand by at least 50% plus one (1) of the committee members.
- 9.4.4 Acts as chairperson in the case that the chairperson, vice-chairperson, and the treasurer are all absent.
- 9.4.5 Is responsible for the procurement of quotes for the committee.

#### **9.5 The representative for student affairs:**

- 9.5.1 Must serve as link between the NSC, students and US staff.
- 9.5.2 Handles complaints directed at the NSC.
- 9.5.3 Serves on the Faculty Board
- 9.5.4 Is in charge of the class representative system, wherein:
  - 9.5.4.1 Each class must elect a representative.
  - 9.5.4.2 The election must be done democratically in the class setting, with the results being communicated afterwards.
  - 9.5.4.3 They must organise training for the class representatives at least once per semester.
  - 9.5.4.4 They must keep regular contact with class representatives.

#### **9.6 The representative for marketing and technical support:**

- 9.6.1 Is responsible for marketing NSC events.
- 9.6.2 Has to organise and present design for the NSC's external image, e.g. merchandise and posters.
- 9.6.3 Is responsible for maintaining the NSC website and social media platforms.
- 9.6.4 Is responsible for maintaining and updating the technological equipment the NSC uses in liaison with the NARGA manager.

#### **9.7 The representative for Social Events:**

- 9.7.1 Is responsible for organizing all NSC social events.
- 9.7.2 Is responsible for canvassing for ideas regarding social events.
- 9.7.3 Must work alongside the representative for marketing to ensure events are advertised.

#### **9.8 The representative for Postgraduate Students:**

- 9.8.1 Handles postgraduate issues and complaints
- 9.8.2 Must create a postgraduate committee consisting of one person from each department within the Faculty.
- 9.8.3 Must organise at least one social function and at least one academic function in the interest of postgraduate students.

- 9.8.4 May be exempted from weekly meetings not directly involving postgraduate affairs.

### **Section 10: Voting Rights**

- 10.1 All members may vote for class representatives in their respective classes, while only those who have been members for more than a semester may vote for the NSC.
- 10.2 Where the need arises, class representatives from a specific department may elect a departmental representative from among their ranks.
- 10.3 Only committee members may vote at an NSC meeting.

### **Section 11: Election of the NSC**

- 11.1 An NSC election must be held every year, with the election dates being coordinated with the AAC and SRC.
- 11.2 Only SSS members may nominate and second candidates for the NSC.
- 11.3 One must obtain at least 25% of the votes to be appointed to the NSC.
- 11.4 The election shall take place in the third term, with voting taking place electronically in the form of a closed ballot. All SSS members are entitled to vote and may attend the election meeting.
- 11.5 The executive, the Dean and the independent election convenor shall evaluate and ratify the election result.
- 11.6 Following elections, portfolios shall be allocated internally amongst the NSC members.
- 11.7 The portfolio of secretary is not considered during elections. After the elections have been held, the chairperson elected and the other portfolios assigned, interviews are held by the chairperson and vice-chairperson for the position of secretary.
- 11.8 If fewer than 7 nominations are received for the election, the election shall be postponed by a week and further nominations shall be invited. If no new nominations are received, those who were nominated shall be deemed duly elected NSC members.
- 11.9 A joint committee meeting of the outgoing and newly elected NSC shall take place within one week of the NSC election. At this meeting, a complete set of work instructions, a financial report and account details associated with the NSC shall be handed over to the newly elected NSC.
- 11.10 Following the joint meeting, the handover function will take place, which shall be attended by the Dean, Dean's secretary, Faculty Manager and outgoing mentor as well.
- 11.11 Every NSC must elect their mentor by the start of the first term of the first semester of their term of office.

### **Section 12: Election of the NSC chairperson**

- 12.1 Once the NSC has been appointed, nominations for chairperson start. Candidates for chairperson may be nominated from the old as well as the new committee members.
- 12.2 Voting shall occur during the joint meeting.
- 12.3 The outgoing chairperson shall determine a date, time and venue for the election, and if they have made themselves available for re-election, they shall appoint an independent election convenor.
- 12.4 Outgoing and newly elected members shall have equal voting rights.
- 12.5 A nominee must obtain 50% of votes plus one to be elected chairperson.

### **Section 13: Assignment of Portfolios**

- 13.1 After the election of the chair, the standing and additional portfolios other than secretary are declared open. The newly elected and outgoing NSC members vote to allocate portfolios to the newly elected members.
- 13.2 Every candidate is allowed a turn to address the meeting, after which the outgoing chair and vice-chair handle the election by means of a secret ballot.
- 13.3 Members are allocated portfolios provided they gain 50% plus one of the votes.
- 13.4 The position for secretary must be advertised by the newly elected committee. When interviewing for and appointing the new secretary, practical skills should be focused on. The interview process must be conducted by at least the chairperson and vice-chairperson, any additional interviewers being added at their discretion.

### **Section 14: Election of class representatives**

- 14.1 Class representative shall be elected in the first three (3) weeks of class. Every class group in every module shall elect a representative.
- 14.2 The election of class representatives shall be the responsibility of the representative of student affairs.
- 14.3 Only members of the particular class group may nominate and second fellow students from the same class group for class representative.
- 14.4 The candidates shall be nominated, seconded, and elected either by way of a closed ballot or show of hands, depending on the election convener's decision. This shall be the responsibility of the representative of the student affairs. All class member shall have a right to vote.
- 14.5 The representative of student affairs shall have quarterly meetings with class representatives.
- 14.6 The representative of student affairs is in charge of arranging class representative training within the first four weeks of every semester.
- 14.7 Class representatives are elected to lead within their class groups and may act in that capacity.

### **Section 15: NSC meetings**

- 15.1 A quorum shall be 60% of committee members.
- 15.2 If the meeting has not achieved a quorum fifteen (15) minutes after it has commenced, the meeting shall be postponed by three (3) academic days.
- 15.3 A meeting may not be postponed more than once.
- 15.4 The number of committee members present at a postponed meeting shall be regarded as a quorum.
- 15.5 The chairperson may afford anyone present at meeting an opportunity to speak.
- 15.6 An NSC meeting shall be held at least once every two weeks in the NSC office. Apologies must be emailed to the secretary and the chairperson one (1) day in advance.

### **Section 16: Annual Meeting**

- 16.1 The annual meeting shall take place in the third term
- 16.2 If the meeting has not achieved a quorum of twenty (20) members fifteen (15) minutes after it has commenced, the meeting shall be postponed by three (3) academic days.
- 16.3 The annual meeting may not be postponed more than once.
- 16.4 The number of committee members present at a postponed annual meeting shall be regarded as a quorum.



- 16.5 The chairperson shall report on the NSC activities during the term of office. One copy of the report shall be submitted to the Dean and another placed online.
- 16.6 Members shall be afforded the opportunity to put questions forward following each report.
- 16.7 Once the reports have been delivered the election convener shall take control of the meeting to introduce all nominated NSC candidates.
- 16.8 Members shall have the opportunity to put questions to a candidate once they had been introduced.
- 16.9 It shall be the duty of the election convener to ensure that:
  - 16.9.1 Candidates are not personally attacked by anyone asking a question
  - 16.9.2 The meeting occurs in an orderly fashion.
- 16.10 Attendance is compulsory for all candidates. Should a candidate fail to attend without having obtained written permission, the election convener shall withdraw their nomination.

### **Section 17: Honoria**

- 17.1 The total amount of honoria allocated may not come to more than 10% of NSC total annual income.
- 17.2 The total amount is apportioned according to termly reports that monitor the progress of each member per term.
- 17.3 The maximum amount payable per honorarium is determined by the Dean and/or the Director: Faculty management

### **Section 18: Disbandment**

- 18.1 The NSC may be disbanded by adopting a motion to that effect at an annual meeting attended by 50% plus one voting majority, as well as with the permission of the AAC and the Students' Representative Council.
- 18.2 Should the NSC cease to exist, it shall hand over all its assets to the Dean, with notice to the chairperson of the AAC, to ensure safekeeping.
- 18.3 Should a similar society be established within five years following the disbandment of the NSC, such a new society may take over the property of the NSC from the Dean, if the AAC agrees.
- 18.4 Should no similar society be established within five years following the disbandment of the NSC, the Dean may deal with the property of the NSC as they deem fit.