



SRC 2020/2021 Term 3 Report

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Constitutional Responsibilities

Currently the Student Financial Access portfolio is not a compulsory portfolio per the constitution.

Please find below an extract of the SU (Stellenbosch University) Student Constitution. I deem the below extract the most important section.

“The SRC is the highest representative and policy-making student body at the University and is under the authority of the University Council.

*(1) SRC members must comply with the provisions of this Constitution and policy and regulation of the SRC.
(2) If an SRC member contravenes subsection (1), or if reasonable grounds exist to believe that a member will contravene subsection (1), then – (a) the Student Court may grant an appropriate order at the request of any student, and if that order is not complied with, the member concerned can be discharged from office in terms section 25 (1)(h); and (b) the Evaluation Panel can take this into account in its decision whether or not to decrease the honorarium of the member in terms of section 47.”*

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[Microsoft Word - SU Student Constitution 3.2 \(Final\).docx \(sun.ac.za\)](#) (Constitution Link)

It is particularly important to familiarise yourself with the content of the SU Student Constitution.

Portfolio Overview

Please find below a portfolio overview per the SRC website:

[SRC Portfolios \(sun.ac.za\)](#)

When challenging socio-economic conditions prevail in South Africa, especially as they are exacerbated by COVID-19, the Student Financial Access portfolio's vision is that no student will be financially excluded. The portfolio focuses on collaborative efforts to ensure students who are able, willing & deserving of a place at Stellenbosch University can secure it, despite their financial circumstances. This involves dealing with matters such as bursaries, loans, application fees, tuition fees, student debt, and other monetary challenges.

The creation of this portfolio was advocated for by the Chair of the Student Representative Council due to the high volume of student finance queries. The most responsible measure to ensure that these queries were attended to was to appoint a dedicated individual to the Student Financial Access portfolio.

Please note that due to the lack of resources the Student Financial Access portfolio can only refer students to the relevant departments.

Prior to 2020 the Student Representative Council has not had a Student Financial Access portfolio the SRC has however had a Student Access and Student Success Portfolio. I struggled a lot to get these reports so here is the link for all the reports of previous years so that you can get the bigger picture of this portfolio https://stellenbosch-my.sharepoint.com/:f/g/personal/gina23_sun_ac_za/EuDZHlgjU9lBhOSdzCFGC74BvN7ttl-Ce_u57ebUcKHfXA?e=bBjDTD .

It is no secret that the demographics of Stellenbosch University are changing. Over the past few years and for many more years to come, many students who are in the lower socio-economic bracket are being admitted. Many of these students do not have the means to pay for their own tertiary education. These students will make use of funding from NSFAS (National Students Financial Aid Scheme), SU and private institutions to complete their studies.

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Most of the time students will not have problems with regards to their funding. Their fees will be paid in time, they will receive their allowances monthly and when they graduate, they will receive their academic transcript like all the other students.

Unfortunately, we do not live in a perfect world. More often than I would like to admit students' fees are not paid in time which leads to them not being able to see their exam marks. Sometimes a students' funder decides to defund them in the middle of the year. Due to a technological or human error some students go for months without receiving a food allowance. Students with the abovementioned issues usually approach the Undergraduate Department for Bursaries and Loans or the Postgraduate Office for help.

Bear in mind that the number of students that need help usually exceed the human capital of these departments. This means that some students queries go unanswered for months. That is where the Student Financial Access portfolio comes in.

This portfolio then follows up on all these unanswered queries to ensure that students get the answers that they so desperately need. This portfolio is thus a body that keeps the SU Bursaries and Loans department accountable.

If you are still a bit confused this portfolio helps students with any matter that is related to finances.

Committees / Task Teams

University Committees:

Committee for Bursaries and Loans

Student Debt Working Group

Task Teams:

RegisterAll Tygerberg

RegisterAll Main Campus

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Term Overview

By the beginning of the term all planned projects had been implemented and/or completed i.e., Stationary Aid and the Food Security Assistance Project. The Food Security Assistance project did not get a lot of traction from the student communities that signed on to be a part of this project. A lot of emphasis will be put on marketing this project in the final term.

This term was spent on dealing with issues with regards to access and then relaying these matters to the relevant university departments.

Please find attached the link to a detailed registration report:

https://stellenbosch-my.sharepoint.com/:w:/g/personal/gina23_sun_ac_za/EWIHas9YA6pOotRgkyuCsQ4Bz04DGmbZUfT7wyYWgV2IFg?e=5vUxMd

Budget

Budget & Reasoning

Expenses	Notes	Budgeted
Stationary Aid	Project implemented in the second term	5000
Food Security Assitance	Project implemented in the third term	20000

Reasoning:

This is a new idea that I have came up with many students have difficulty affording stationary at the beginning of the year.

How the application for stationary aid would work is that students will fill in an application form and it will then get approved or not based on pre-defined criteria.

Students will then be given vouchers to go buy their respective stationary.

Please see my report in term 2 for a detailed explanation regarding the project.

The budget for food security was R9250 in the term of 2018/2019 and then it disappeared in 2019/2020. So, I decided to double since I know that many students across all the campuses experience food insecurity

I am contemplating implementing a voucher system same as with the stationary aid, but I will discuss this with my fellow colleagues.

Please see my term 2 report for a detailed explanation regarding the project,

Expenditure so far

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Expenses	Spent
Stationary Aid	4982.70

This expenditure was justified as it was used to help students with regards to stationary.

The food security assistance has no expenditure yet. I have only received one request from a student community so far. The last term will be spent on tweaking this project so that students can be assisted and that the budgeted funds can be depleted.

Plans for next term

The next term will be my last term. This term will be used to make sure that everything is in place for the successor of this portfolio. This will be done by ensuring that the final report is as complete as possible.

This term will also be used to try to address the following issues:

- Credit refund policy
- Effective collaboration between the SRC and the Centre for Undergraduate Bursaries and Loans
- Mark blocking

I also plan to continue with the Food Security Assistance Project.

Recommendations to improve portfolio

I would recommend the following for the Student Financial Access Portfolio:

- I would advise that this portfolio holder attempts to sit on the Student Fees Committee.
- Many students are still not aware of this portfolio so marketing this portfolio is of the utmost of importance.
- Currently this portfolio can only refer students to the relevant departments, and it comes with the disadvantage that students cannot always be assisted by the relevant departments. Since most of the issues that cannot be resolved are financial in nature, the only way to be able to assist the students who get excluded by the system is to improve the financial resources of this portfolio. The above can be done by crowdfunding or properly motivating an increase in the portfolio budget to the SRC Executive.

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Important Contacts

Issue	Name	Email
Food Security	Lizzie Witbooi	Lgwitbooi@sun.ac.za
NSFAS matters	Kallie Sauls	Kallies@sun.ac.za
NSFAS matters	Lynette Williams	Lrw@sun.ac.za
Postgraduate funding serious matters	Nugent Lewis	Nugent@sun.ac.za
SU Bursaries matters - undergraduates	Tulia Geogre	Tulia@sun.ac.za
SU Bursaries matters – postgraduate	Tammy Abrahams	Tammya@sun.ac.za
Student Fees	Anri Engelbrecht	Anriengel@sun.ac.za
Registration	Ashmind Daniels	Bvdm2@sun.ac.za

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