



Student Forum Postponement and Quarter 1 Report

| 22 April 2022 |

Good day

The University of Pretoria Student Representative Council, hereafter UP SRC, sees it fit to communicate why the Quarter 1 Student Forum that was intended to be held on 7 April 2022, was postponed.

As per the Constitution for Student Governance (CSG), the Student Forum is a platform for Students to hold their elected leadership accountable. Naturally the SRC completely and fully supports the idea of our Student Body holding the SRC accountable.

However, as per Section 43 (2)(a), in order for Student Forum to proceed, quarterly reports have to be shared to the Student Body, amongst other stakeholders, 2 weeks prior to the Student Forum. Additionally, the date and venue must be communicated 2 weeks prior to Members of Student Forum, including the Student Body, according to Section 43 (2)(b). Unfortunately, neither one of these points were met. Rather than working around this constitutionally mandated process, the SRC saw it fit to postpone Student Forum to fulfil all requirements in the CSG. The SRC takes full account for this, and humbly apologises to all Students, in this respect.



The SRC therefore looks forward to the Quarter 1 Student Forum happening on the 5th of May 2022. The Quarter Report is shared as part of this communique.

The SRC will continue to strive to serve and represent every Student at this institution.

A Luta Continua!



Thuto Mashile
SRC President 2022



Tarik Lalla
SRC Secretary 2022





UP SRC Quarterly Report No. 01 01 January 2022 – 22 March 2022

*As compiled by the SRC Deputy Secretary
General: Fikile Sibanda*



UNIVERSITEIT VAN PRETORIA
UNIVERSITY OF PRETORIA
YUNIBESITHI YA PRETORIA

Student Representative Council 2022
Lynwood Road, Hillcrest, Pretoria, South Africa 0002

SRC RESIDENCES TASK TEAM REPORT

Task Team Members

- Sibulele Zandile Gondo (Residences 1)
- Enrique Ashford Francis (Residences 2)
- Busisiwe Yabo (RAG)
- Mashudu Ramashidzha (Facilities, Safety and Security)
- Sibongokuhle Maphalala (Societies)
- Thuto Mashila (SRC President)
- Stefan Steenkamp (SRC Deputy President)

General

Within our task team, we developed an escalation guide poster (attached at the end of the report), to streamline any queries that students approached members of the team with and speed up the rate at which students were helped effectively. We found this especially helpful at the beginning of the year when students were returning to Pretoria ahead of the commencement of the 2022 academic year.

Helpdesk Period

- The entire task team assisted with general queries. We helped with students who approached us in terms of the registration process and advised them regarding the appropriate channels to follow.
- First years in UP Residences were assisted by their House Committees in acquiring their student cards, getting vaccinated and general queries regarding their respective first year experiences. This was a smooth process, with no incidents reported.
- As the Co-Chairs, we visited many of the UP residences and regularly checked in with our fellow chairpersons to ensure that they were always coping with the workload and looking out for the best interests of the first-year cohort, whilst remembering not to neglect the returning senior cohort of residents.
- We had frequent communication with the TuksRes placement team to assist us with placing students who reached out to us either via email, phone call or who arrived at the Campus without accommodation. We either took those students to the residences that they needed to be at or adequately directed them to where they needed to go if we were unable to. We provided those students with the details of the House Committee members that could assist them upon arrival.

Private Accommodation

- As the Residence Officers, we provided our task team members with a directive regarding how to advise students who had queries regarding their placement status, though we handled the bulk of students with queries who approached us directly via email or phone. If we could not find students accommodation in



a UP residence, we liaised with personnel at private accommodations through a representative to assist them with finding available spaces in those accommodations.

Elim Church

- Alongside the President, we negotiated a deal with Elim Church, to provide temporary accommodation to students who found themselves in Pretoria without accommodation whilst we attempted to resolve their accommodation issues.

Study Finance referrals

- We had a healthy working relationship with the Finance Task Team, regularly liaising with the Office of Study Finance, to guide students with various student finance queries including but not limited to the acquisition of financial aid in lieu of NSFAS, or other bursaries.

Throughout Quarter

- Throughout the remainder of the quarter, we continued to assist students who approached us with accommodation queries; however, our influence was limited due to TuksRes Residences reaching full capacity towards the end of February
- As a result, we referred many students to the list of accredited and recognised private accommodation, though even these private accommodation service providers had limited space as the month of March progressed.
- Several students in Private Accommodations reached out to us regarding various issues within these accommodations. These issues included the provision of Wi-Fi, billing for water and electricity, unpaid deposits and/or refunds, lease agreements that were not upheld, among other issues with the service providers. We advised and assisted where possible, and referred to the TuksRes Manager: External Residences, Mr. Nathaniel Nkala-Ka Dlamini, who engaged with the service providers on the matters at hand.
- We liaised with various SRC Members and their respective offices regarding issues which involved Residences, or required our attention, as well as any matters that required our attention as members of the SRC.
- As Co-Chairs we assisted the UP Accreditation & Recognition team with the accreditation process for additional private accommodations for students and engaged with the relevant stakeholders in that regard about providing students with a clean and conducive living space within these new accommodations.

Residences Sub-Council

- As the Co-Chairs of the Sub-Council, we chaired fortnightly meetings throughout the first quarter with the residence chairpersons and day house chairpersons present.
- At these meetings issues affecting residences and day houses were discussed and brought to our attention.
- We collected the relevant information regarding these concerns and raised them with the TuksRes Manager: Residence Management and Student Life,



Mr. Lanché van Tonder, who helped on how best to guide the chairpersons or escalated the issues to the relevant authorities in TuksRes or DSA Management, where it was possible to assist.

- We await the resolutions from the Constitutional Tribunal regarding the inclusion of chairpersons from various recognised Private Accommodations, as defined by the CSG; however, this is a complex and multifaceted issue, which will hopefully be resolved in quarter 2. In the meantime, we resolved to include the Chairpersons of recognised private accommodation as per the CSG, and we are in the process of getting in contact with them. Beyond this we need to assess whether these Chairpersons, as well as those from accredited private accommodations, desire to form a part of the Sub-Council and how their inclusion would potentially influence the functionality of the Sub-Council as there are a great number of private accommodations (accredited and recognised), with 59 accredited and recognised private accommodations on the latest list released by the accreditation team.

SRC ACADEMICS TASK TEAM REPORT

Members of the Task Team

- Asanda Lembede (Academics 1)
- Michellee Mukome (Academics 2)
- Fikile Sibanda (SRC Deputy Secretary General)
- Siyabonga Nkosi (Sport)
- Thuto Mashile (SRC President)
- Stefan Steenekamp (SRC Deputy President)

As the Academics Task Team, we began working on queries as soon as our term began due to the Special Examinations (Supplementary/Sick and Chancellor's Examinations) period having overlapped into the new year, Academic Exclusions and Appeals.

This report is a narration of what the task team worked on from the 1st of January 2022 – to date.

Academic Exclusions and Appeals

- Due to the special examination period overlapping into the new year, communication to students regarding appeals and exclusions was received at short notice for many students. Through working hand in hand with the Faculty Houses, we were able to engage some of the faculties to extend when the faculty appeals would close. This was beneficial for the students as it allowed more students an opportunity to appeal on time
- As the Academic Task Team, we drafted what we called the "Information Guide to Academic Appeals" which was a compilation of all the documentation



available on the UP website pertaining to Academic Appeals to ensure that information was readily available to our students. Further through the assistance of the Faculty Houses, we compiled a document displaying all the closing dates for the Faculty Appeals.

- When students experienced varying issues when submitting their appeal through the UP Portal due to the system rejecting their documents. The Academics Task Team liaised with Faculty Administration to have them consider the documents of students who found themselves in such a situation even if the due date had passed and also to make available alternative ways for students to submit their appeals (via email) to ensure that every student had the opportunity to submit their appeal.
- Additionally, we also assisted with many other varying queries pertaining to appeals such as how and where students could submit their appeal, liaising with Faculty Administration on the behalf of the student where their appeal was outstanding even though the date that they were told they would receive feedback on had lapsed and giving students pointers on how they could best write their appeal motivational letters.

Through the Academic Representatives, the Academics Task Team was also present to represent the student populace at the Senate Appeals Review Committee Meetings.

Special Examination and Summer School Queries

- The Academics Task Team assisted with different queries pertaining to special examinations such as when a student could qualify for a Chancellor's examination, what was Summer School and what are the cost implications relating to Summer School.
- Through the assistance of the Residences Officers, the Academics Task Team we were able to liaise with TuksRes to avail early accommodation to students who had to be back in Hatfield to write their special examinations and attend summer school. It is important to acknowledge that there were some shortcomings in the process such as that some students did not receive assistance timeously, but this has been taken into consideration for future circumstances.
- The Academics Task Team working hand in hand with Bhaviksha Ramouthar was able to assist with the procurement of data for students who expressed a need for it due to writing their supplementary/special examinations as well as attend their online classes for summer school. Again, there were certain shortcomings in the process which resulted in some students not receiving their data allocation on time, but lessons have been taken for future reference.

General Academic Queries

When our term commenced, we were dealing with a varying nature of academic queries pertaining to the previous academic year. This included but was not limited to:
 -Students who had indicated that there was an error in how their marks were being reflected in the grade centre or on their academic record



- Letters of propensity from the faculties for students who needed appeal to NSFAS for funding.
 - We assisted a few first students who were confused on how ClickUp functions and how their timetables work.
 - Many students had not received the outcomes of their internal applications and we liaised with the faculty to remedy this.
 - We liaised with the Disability Unit and various lecturers to get clarity on the fact that concession letters for extra time students from the previous academic year would be applicable to the supplementary/special examination and summer school period.
- Dealt with specific queries pertaining to Faculty Administration within some faculties such as non-responsiveness to student queries by approaching the faculty admin directly with the queries

- **Registration Related Queries**

From the beginning of the term in January, throughout the Help Desk Period and up until the closing date for registrations the Academics Task Team dealt with a variety of registration related queries such as and not limited to:

- Issues pertaining to the cancellation and addition of certain modules
- Discontinuation of studies
- Prospective UP students who were seeking assistance with placement at UP. Unfortunately, we were unable to assist any students who have T-numbers (which is an indication that a student did not complete their application on time)
- Prospective students who were uncertain about how to go about paying their registration fee, how to register modules etc.
- Assisting students with re-admission into their degree programme after there had been a pause in their studies due to reasons such as financial constraints.

- **Issues relating to Legal Services and pending alleged disciplinary procedure outcomes**

The Academic Task team assisted students by liaising with staff members within the Legal Services department regarding the outcome of pending disciplinary procedures as well as assisting students set up meetings with staff in the department.

- **Assisting House Education in liaising with Faculty Student Administration to ensure that students are registered for their PRO 280 and PRO 380 module on time.**



- Through the Academic Ex-Officios, Faculty Houses submitted their bi-weekly Faculty House reports and received Feedback on these reports. This was to ensure that student queries are heard directly from the ground. The Academics Ex-Officios also facilitated the Academics Sub-Council meetings. These meetings have allowed the sub-council members a channel to ventilate queries from within their constituencies directly to the Student Representative Council.

SRC FINANCE TASK TEAM REPORT

MEMBERS OF THE TASK TEAM

- Nobuhle Nyembe (Study Finance)
- Neville Mupita (Postgraduate and International Students Affairs)
- Stefan Steenkamp (SRC Deputy President)
- Thuto Mashile (SRC President)
- Thando Dhlamini (SRC Treasurer)
- Tarik Lalla (SRC Secretary General)

The Finance task team has worked closely with the SSC and the financial department through the DSA.

- On the financial aid side, we worked with individuals that had historical debt, those who could afford to do a payment arrangement so that they could register as well as though who couldn't afford, we worked closely with the finance department and asked if they could assist with loans to students who contacted us who did not have 50% of what they owed to the university so those students can also be able to register.
- We also assisted with postgraduate students in getting registration fees as they did not fit the criteria for the study aid fund, those that came forward in need of registration fees were assisted.
- Regarding the study aid fund, the team sat and worked through the applications, and they assisted the students in great need of registration fee, who met the requirements on the criteria set out by the counsel.
- In as much as the process was slow, we also did assist students who qualify and are approved by NSFAS to also receive their book allowances, including



the students who took laptops last year and signed to not get their allowances this year for them to receive the remaining portions of their allowances from the book allowances.

SRC MEDIA TASK TEAM REPORT

TASK TEAM MEMBERS

- Chantelle Zhou (Media, Marketing and Communications)
- Thobile Mbhele (Transformation and student success)
- Lauren Thabethe (Day Students and external campus affairs)
- Mororiseng- Oratile Mosadi (Student Culture)
- Thuto Mashila (SRC President)
- Stefan Steenkamp (SRC Deputy President)

The social media task team is tasked with media, marketing, and communication.

- The task team responded to students via Facebook, Instagram, and twitter. The task team assisted students and additionally referred the students to the correct contacts who handled their situations and concerns thereafter. The task team engaged with students on the various social media platforms and assisted students in getting help & their queries sorted out.
- During the help desk period, the task team assisted students physically and via social media with the Universities registration period. The task team released the relevant information regarding registration and went further to initiate an Instagram live help desk, as we were aware that not all students could attend the help desk physically.
- The task team communicated all relevant information regarding other SRC portfolios which assisted students in their queries. The head of the task team had further met with the DIA in formulation of making students more aware of what is happening in the university. We are further working on making our communication swifter and more transparent as possible alongside implementing more campaigns that will assist students in the University of Pretoria.

The End.

