

# **MINUTES | Rhodes University SRC General Meeting**

DATE: 11 March 2019  
TIME: 18h30 – 21h15  
VENUE: RA Room, Steve Biko Building  
CHAIR: Mr. Samkelo Mngadi

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## **ATTENDANCE**

- Apologies submitted to Secretary General for Projects Manager; Oppidan Councilor; and Environmental Councilor

## **MATTERS ARISING**

- Student Governance Colloquium
- Statement on Death of Student

## **CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 05 MARCH 2019**

- Minutes confirmed by Media Councilor with Sports and Societies Councilor, and Student Benefits Councilor concurring

## **OPPIDAN COMMITTEE LETTER**

- Vice President reads letter from Oppidan Committee addressed to the Student Body, in respect of new developments in the Oppidan Bus service; in summary the Oppidan Committee does not have the funds to continue the provision of the service, and their savings account has been depleted; the Oppidan Committee maintains that the provision of the service has actually been beyond the scope and mandate of the Oppidan Committee; there have been capacity issues in regards to the provision of the service; the service hours are to be cut from 17h00 – 23h00 to 17h00 – 21h00; in the coming weeks the bus will no longer operate on the weekend; unless the university pitches in, the service may be discontinued altogether from 26 March 2019 indefinitely

- President reported that he and the Oppidan Councilor had met with the Vice Chancellor and raised these issues with him; response from the Vice-Chancellor was to the effect that these issues follow from the changing demographic of the university, and is thus symptomatic of a broader issue; the Vice-Chancellor's proposed solution in this meeting included proposing to the Student Body that NSFAS students pay for the service via their transport allowance; another proposed solution included the prioritization of NSFAS students in residence-placement
- President noted concern that these propositions will not solve the immediate problem in respect of the changes made to the provision of the Oppidan Bus service; he reported that the Vice-Chancellor further proposed a meeting with the relevant stakeholders in this regard – including taxi service providers
- Treasurer General noted her concern that none of these solutions are likely to work; she expressed the view that further brainstorming is needed with the Vice-Chancellor
- International Affairs Councilor requested information as to whether it is the university's responsibility to pay for, and provide for student transport
- President noted that students must accept an Oppidan fee on their student account; he reported that as it stands, the university is too cash-strapped to help
- Sports and Societies Councilor noted that NSFAS students receive transport allowances
- President noted that there is lack of clarity in terms of what that allowance caters for
- Academic Councilor noted concern about hours being cut as most students go home late at night given that they are studying; he noted that discontinuation of the service also has negative implications in terms of the accessibility of university resources for those who live off-campus
- President noted that the cutting of the hours was for compliance with labour laws
- Secretary General noted that it is not only NSFAS Oppidan students who are negatively impacted; he called for findings to be made in respect of the viability of a university transport system as well as what the Oppidan Committee does

with their fund allocation from Give5; he noted that transport is not the university's responsibility

- International Affairs Councilor asked what the Council proposes to do in the event that university does not take decisive action
- Activism Councilor noted that NSFAS students are getting the short end of the stick, adding that it is negligent of the university to require that these students be prioritized in residence placement as the residence fees are very expensive – doing this would compound their historical debt
- Vice President noted that Council should understand the university's role in all of this; it is not for Council to find solutions when there are people in University Management who get paid millions of rand to find these solutions; he proposed that Council give University Management deadlines in relation to finding solutions to this problem
- Student Benefits Councilor concurring with Vice-President added that students must be informed as to how the discontinuation of the service is likely to affect them as different groups; he noted that the Financial Aid office must also be consulted in terms of finding solutions
- Community Engagement Councilor proposed that these propositions be tabled at the next meeting with the Vice-Chancellor; she asked when the deadline is for the Vice-Chancellor's response; she added that the Vice-Chancellor's comments about Oppidan NSFAS students living off-campus not living in residence because they want to squander their pocket money allowances are anti-poor; she urged that the Council take concomitant action as a matter of urgency
- *Council resolved to a way forward being decided upon by Council executive and the Oppidan Committee's meeting with the Vice-Chancellor on Wednesday 13 March 2019; at this meeting it is to be made clear that Council is not going to come up with solutions – that is the responsibility of University Management*

### **FEEDBACK ON CALENDAR TASK TEAM**

- Secretary General reported that he had met with the University Division relevant hereto (a meeting at which Desiree Wicks) was present; at this meeting it was determined that the adjustment of the University calendar to accommodate the

Easter holiday would be impossible – especially given that the issue was raised at such a late stage; the Task Team could not meet with the Registrar as she has been unavailable; a compromise was suggested whereby academic commitments like tests and due dates would not take place in that week

- Mr. Ofei noted that the people the Task Team had met with were being dishonest when mentioning that Council also has a say in terms of how the calendar is drafted; he also expressed the view that the proposal to shift the entire calendar to accommodate the Easter holiday is impossible
- *Council resolved to meet with the Registrar, and to keep pushing for either of the following:*
  - o *Scrapping of academics during Easter week*
  - o *No tests or due dates during this week*

### **FEEDBACK ON S.A.U.S. AFFILIATION**

- Secretary General reported that he had called to ask the Secretary of SAUS Mr Lwandile Mtola to detail the benefits accrued by payment of the affiliation fee; he was told to contact the Treasurer of SAUS for more information; he had tried to contact this person to no avail; he requested that Secretary General of SAUS tell Treasurer General of SAUS to send through this information; he has not yet received this information
- Treasurer General noted her disappointment at the level of disregard with which SAUS has treated Council by not furnishing Council with this information; she expressed the view that on this basis Council ought not affiliate with SAUS
- Student Benefits Councilor asked if Council can still table concerns even if Council has not affiliated with SAUS
- President noted that Council stands to benefit from the activities of SRC's nationwide even if Council does not affiliate with SAUS provided the issues at question are national in scope
- Mr. Ofei, concurring with President, also noted that Council is likely to be sidelined in those spaces given that the Rhodes campus politic is very different to the politic on most other campuses – this is insofar as Rhodes students

prioritize bread-and-butter issues *as well as* issues relating to the politics of marginalized identities

- Vice-President reiterated the sentiment that Council ought to affiliate with SAUS despite his thoughts that SAUS is useless as it stands
- Residence Councilor noted that the money for the affiliation fee is better spent elsewhere
- Secretary General noted that Council ought not to celebrate that the Rhodes campus politic is different to those of other universities; he expressed the view that Rhodes' presence in SAUS can help remedy the fact that SAUS is useless as it stands; he expressed the view that the affiliation fee is best placed with SAUS and not anywhere else
- Vice-President, concurring with Secretary General, noted that Council can use SAUS to integrate the campus politic at Rhodes into the national discourse; he expressed the view that "...our privilege allows us to voice concerns around things like gender-based violence, and rape culture..."
- Treasurer General noted that SAUS has ostensibly shown that they do not consider Rhodes as important otherwise they would not have treated Council's requests so dismissively; she noted that it is precisely because the Rhodes campus politic is so different that Council is likely to be sidelined in that space even if it resolves to affiliate with SAUS; she added that Council can access power without affiliating with SAUS
- Mr. Ofei recommended that Council re-visit the documentation relating to SAUS; he noted that Council can attend all the meetings of SAUS but will not have voting rights if they choose not to affiliate with SAUS; he recommended that Council set terms and conditions for its affiliation with SAUS: that SAUS must de-politicize its space in relation to party politics as they preclude necessary reform; must take seriously the politics of marginalized identities going forward
- *Council resolved to communicate the aforementioned terms and conditions with SAUS; if Council does not receive a response (or does not receive a favourable response) Council resolved not to affiliate with SAUS*

## **STUDENT GOVERNANCE COLLOQUIUM**

- Secretary General reported that this event is scheduled to take place on 16 March 2019; he suggested the possibility of postponing the event
- Mr. Ofei asked what happened with the SRC Google Calendar; he noted the announcement of this event is too late; he suggested that it be postponed to next term, and that the Vice-Chancellor be asked to sponsor in some form of the other
- Vice-President suggested that Council Executive strategize in respect of this event and report back to Council at the next General Meeting
- *Council resolved to report back from Council Executive; Colloquium postponed from 16 March 2019 to 27 April 2019; invitations to be sent out as soon as possible*

## **STATEMENT ON DEATH OF STUDENT**

- Media Councilor reported that members of the Student Body have been requesting Council through her office for Council to draft a statement on the death of a student in one of the residences on campus
- Mr. Ofei noted that statements of that nature can only be released after the family identifies the corpse; he urged Council to exercise caution in these matters as they are highly sensitive; he noted that the protocol is that the release of statement by Council has to proceed the release of a statement by University Management
- Residence Councilor asked if Council has to attend the funeral
- Mr. Ofei noted that the whole of Council need not attend, and transport for that can be organized
- *Council resolved to follow the protocol detailed by Mr. Ofei*

## **JUTA**

- Oppidan Councilor reported that Juta is interested in partnering with Council and requests to meet on 13 March 2019 at 13h00 (venue to be confirmed)
- *Council resolved that Councilors in attendance of this meeting with Juta will be*
  - o *Student Benefits Councilor*

- *Environmental Councilor*
- *Secretary General*
- *International Affairs Councilor*
- *Media Councilor*
- *Oppidan Councilor*

### **STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OFFICER**

- Mr. Ofei noted that memorial services of students who pass away are at the discretion of the bereaved family only;
- Mr. Ofei requested that Secretary General keep a record of Councilors who attend optional engagements
- Mr. Ofei requested that Secretary General print the agenda without errata in the future
- In respect of honorary membership, Mr. Ofei advised Council not to align with societies with which they are already familiar; he noted that their role as honorary members is that of oversight

**MEETING ADJOURNED**

**NEXT MEETING ON 19 MARCH 2019 @ 18H30**