

MINUTES | Rhodes University SRC General Meeting

DATE: 18 February 2019
TIME: 18h30 – 22h21
VENUE: RA Room, Steve Biko Building
CHAIR: Mr. Samkelo Mngadi

ATTENDANCE

- No apologies received by Secretary General

MATTERS ARISING

- Varsity Shield
- Spar Brown Bags
- Uniforms
- Deductions
- Slander
- Financial Obligations
- Easter Weekend
- The Wall
- SBS Agenda Item
- Nominations for Senate
 - o Secretary General reiterated that items be left off the agenda if they are not urgent; and that Matters Arising only be reserved for emergencies arising; he requested that Matters Arising be kept minimal
 - o Academic Councilor advised that the “Academic Appeals” agenda item would be moved to the following meeting

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 04 FEBRUARY 2019

- Minutes of both 04 February 2019 **and** 11 February 2019 confirmed by Council

MEDIA

- Media Councilor reported that website will be ready by Friday, 22 February 2019; she reminded Council that the radio show would take place the following day (19 February 2019) and asked everyone to submit their voice-notes, each not exceeding 30 seconds in length; she requested that Councilors preserve a professional tone in their verbal deliveries in the voice-notes and that Councilors include their names and portfolios in the voice-notes; she further reminded Council that these would be due on 19 February 2019 at 17h00 every Tuesday of every week
- Secretary General (with Vice-President concurring) noted, given that there is no such thing as an “Acting Sports and Societies Councilor”, that Residence Councilor Phiwa Mdluli only be requested to submit a single voice-note including all the work done in his capacity as Residence Councilor as well as the work done under the Sports and Societies Portfolio
- Projects Manager reiterated the importance of brevity in the voice-notes

VARSITY SHIELD

- Vice-President reported that the scheduled game against Fort Hare would take place in East London, and that as at the time of the present meeting no buses had been arranged yet for transporting students outside of Council; he did however request that Council delegate some Council members to attend the game and, having done so, reminded everyone that those attending the game would have to travel from Grahamstown to East London at 15h00 on Thursday, 21 February 2019
- Oppidan Councilor requested that at least one bus be booked for non-SRC students, so as to present a show of support for the rugby players; she also suggested that seats on the bus be allocated on a first-come-first-served basis
- *Council resolved that students’ academic obligations would take priority and that this would be left at the discretion of the attending students themselves*
- *Council further resolved that Residence Councilor acting under the Sports and Societies Portfolio would liaise with Sports Admin regarding the pertinent logistics*

- *Council further resolved that Treasurer General would liaise with Mrs. Penny Kivitts regarding the availability of buses and to advise Council accordingly*

SPAR BROWN BAGS

- Environmental Councilor reported that she had been given brown bags by Spar and suggested that these had been presented to returning students; she further suggested that there be stations designated for the collection and recycling of plastic bags at the front of each residence where students store already-used plastic bags for further reuse
- Secretary General noted his agreement with the idea, and suggested that Environmental Representatives in each residence be active in the monitoring of the use and collection of the plastic bags for the aforementioned purpose
- Oppidan Councilor inquired as to how Oppidan students would be incorporated into this idea
- Environmental Councilor suggested that placement of stations at central places on campus at which students can deposit used plastic bags and from which plastic bags may be reused, for example the Jacaranda Computer Labs
- Projects Manager further supplied that if students do not make use of this idea then it would be outside of Council's control
- *Council resolved to continue with the proposition of the Environmental Councilor by general consensus*

UNIFORM

- Oppidan Councilor noted the importance of sticking to dress code and the appropriate Council uniform to be worn at relevant occasions; she requested Councilors to adhere strictly thereto
- Projects Manager added that it is important for the establishment of an SRC brand, and that a standard should be put into place regarding what dress code to follow at specific occasions/engagements

- Secretary General noted that a such a system is already in place via the powers vested in the office of the Secretary General; he expressed the view that this system works well and does not require further supplementation
- Treasurer General expressed the view that decisions regarding uniform ought rather to be made at the level of Council by general consensus
- Secretary General reiterated that such powers are, as a matter of course, vested in the office of the Secretary General
- President bade the Secretary General to at least hear the submissions of fellow Council members, concurring with the Treasurer General, Projects Manager and Oppidan Councilor that standards must be set
- Secretary General reiterated again that such powers are vested in the office of the Secretary General
- President noted that such powers may be superseded by a decision via general consensus by Council as a whole
- Vice-President noted that the default position is that the Secretary General decides on what uniform Council should wear and when, but further noted that Council in general has the final decision in that respect
- Treasurer General noted that when the Secretary General makes decisions about what uniform to wear, it must be in accordance with Council's operational principle of professionalism
- Projects Manager reiterated that standardization of uniform-protocol on the basis of a general set of criteria is important for Councilors to make the necessary preparations timeously
- Residence Councilor submitted that such criteria would have to be specific, and not general
- Secretary General noted that portfolio specificity is equally as important and does not accept the submissions made by Councilors as regards the protocol for uniforms
- Oppidan Councilor noted that she takes strong exception to the Secretary General's tone; and noted that the proposition being tabled would ease the workload already on his shoulders
- Vice-President reiterated that the Secretary General ought to be the one to advise Council as regards uniform protocol

- Environmental Councilor requested that Secretary General and Oppidan Councilor apologise to each for the confrontational manner of their engagement and submissions
- (Secretary General and Oppidan Councilor both apologise)
- *Council resolved by general consensus that suggestions be submitted to the Secretary General regarding uniform protocol, as and when the relevant occasions arise, and for such decisions made by the Secretary General to be applied consistently*

DEDUCTIONS

- Oppidan Councilor noted that there were important items still pending from O-Week, and that those deductions ought to be re-thought
- Secretary General noted that Mr. Ofei might already have finalized the deductions
- Vice-President noted that Council does not decide on deductions – instead that decision is made by Mr. Ofei; Council merely decides upon and implements a working document
- International Councilor requested information regarding the deductions for March for Office hours owing to lack of clarity on how the system pertaining to office hours works
- Vice-President noted that Council ought not to discuss deductions ex post facto; deductions ought to be discussed before the event/s take/s place
- Oppidan noted her confusion and concern regarding retrospective actions taken with respect to deductions, because the application of retrospective deductions seems to be inconsistent
- Environmental Councilor, concurring with Oppidan Councilor, noted that this inconsistency is not a good thing
- Projects Manager suggested that Council refer to Mr. Ofei regarding the deductions from O-Week
- Secretary General suggested that Councilors with qualms regarding deductions ought to speak with Mr. Ofei

- *Council resolved to undertake the propositions of both Projects Manager as well as Secretary General*

SLANDER

- *Council resolved for this agenda item to be discussed and recorded **in camera**, as it related to an alleged harassment and – as such – is sensitive and confidential*

FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS

- Treasurer General requested that when Councilors make decisions in their respective portfolios that have financial implications that the Treasurer General herself please be consulted; if Councilors are uncertain they should ask for clarification; she noted that the Treasurer General must be consulted for purposes of accountability

EASTER WEEKEND

- Projects Manager raised a concern in relation to the University's calendar and how the academic programme coincides with the Easter Holiday; she noted that in previous years, the entire week was given as a holiday but this year (2019) is different; she reported that students raised complaints with the Registrar and they were then advised to consult with the SRC to request that they be given the whole week off as vacation
- Secretary General requested clarity insofar as the implications this would have on other religious holidays
- Vice-President noted the complication of the diversity of religious identity on campus
- Projects Manager suggested that they request that the proposed days off be made up for by allocating days for the academic programme somewhere else on the calendar

- Media Councilor also noted that this would have financial implications on students who have to travel to get home for the proposed vacation
- Treasurer General proposed that a Task Team be assembled to take the issue further with the Registrar's Office
- *This proposition was seconded, and resolved by Council. This Task Team would ascertain the feasibility of the proposition and revert back to Council with regard thereto*
- *Council resolved that this Task Team would comprise of the Academic Councilor, the Activism and Transformation Councilor, the International Councilor, and the Secretary General*

THE WALL

- Media Councilor requested that Councilors check the Council WhatsApp group for further information pertaining hereto; she reported in brief that the Communications Division had alerted her to the fact that some people wanted to make use of the wall
- Projects Manager suggested that Media Councilor would ascertain the relevant information and get back to Council as soon as possible
- *The above suggestion is resolved by Council by General Consensus*

SBS AGENDA ITEM

- Student Benefits Councilor reported the possibility of impending crisis on campus which might lead to a strike/protest action by certain sectors of the Student Body; he noted that this is in relation to the SAUS issue, and how it affects postgraduate students doing their PGCE and their funding
- Student Benefits Councilor noted that there are three categories of students – namely, those on NSFAS; those on Funza Lushaka; and those funded through the Matthew Goniwe bursary; he noted that these three funding avenues have three separate and distinct protocols, particularly as it relates to the handing out of pocket money – however the students concerned have conflated these protocols (which, by their nature, treat the relevant students unequally based

on their source of funding); he noted that this inequality is causing tension among the students

- Student Benefits Councilor noted that some of these students had already been engaged in a confrontational situation at the Student Fees Office, and that if the situation is not immediately resolved then it will escalate into something undesirable
- Student Benefits Councilor expressed the view that students ought to be calmed down, and liaised with via Class and Faculty Reps
- Treasurer General noted the importance of ascertaining the facts of the situation at hand, and to get the students' side of the story before taking any action
- Vice-President noted that the students in question are in fact not entitled to that money and that all schemes have not as yet pitched in the relevant funds to the university; he reported that the university itself has been making provisions for the students in the meantime; he suggested that a Student Body Meeting be called
- Secretary General noted that it is problematic that students who already have money would feel the need to protest; he raised the implications thereof on the students who have not yet registered; he noted that the students concerned must go to their actual bursars to find recourse
- Student Benefits Councilor noted that there has been lack of clarity following Fees Must Fall in 2015 and 2016; he suggested that the relevant personnel be present at the proposed Student Body Meeting to answer to student concerns; he noted that caution must be exercised regarding how the students are then engaged
- Projects Manager (with Treasurer General and International Councilor) reiterated the importance of holding a Student Body Meeting to hear from the students what their concerns are
- Vice-President reiterated the importance of the presence of the relevant stakeholders to answer student questions
- Secretary General suggested that it not be a general Student Body Meeting but one to which only the affected students (the PGCE students) ought to be invited

- *Council resolved to meeting with PGCE students with relevant stakeholders present; Council resolved that this meeting would be compulsory for all Council members to attend*

RELEASING OF MINUTES

- Oppidan Councilor reported that the minutes of the 11 February had been released to the Student Body prematurely and this is problematic and unacceptable; she suggested that only resolutions in the form of redacted minutes from the Council meetings be published
- Secretary General noted that minutes are to be published as and when they are confirmed by Council to avoid backlog; he noted that the only fault in respect of the publication of the minutes in question was that the minutes were unconfirmed at the time of publication – otherwise the act, itself, of releasing minutes is not wrong; as such he apologized for releasing the incorrect set of minutes
- Treasurer General noted that, in any event, Council ought to have been notified beforehand
- Secretary General noted that if the Council is proposing the publication of a redacted set of minutes, this would mean that the minutes themselves are not to be published; he reiterated that the mistake he had made was to publish the incorrect set of minutes
- *Council resolved to publish redacted set of minutes per email and to make the detailed version of the minutes available on the SRC website – with 9 Councilors in favour of the proposition and 2 abstentions*

NOMINATION FOR INSTITUTIONAL FORUM

- Secretary General reminded Council that the deadline for nominations is on 22 February 2019 to fill the 2 additional seats on Institutional Forum
- Vice-President noted that these would have to be people not already affiliated to leadership as it has implications on accountability

- *Council resolved that Activism and Transformation Councilor would fill one of the seats, and that the other would filled by a female student not already affiliated to student leadership*
- *Council further resolved that suggestions for such a student are due on Wednesday, 20 February 2019 at 18h30; consent is to be obtained from the nominees; and Council Executive is to make the final call*

MEETING ADJOURNED