

RHODES SRC COUNCIL MEETING

AGENDA & MINUTES OF THE MEETING

DATE: 17 JANUARY 2022

TIME: 18:00- 21:04

AGENDA

1. Attendance
 - 1.1. Apologies
 - 1.2. Confirmation of Minutes
 - 1.3. Declaration of Conflict
2. Minutes from meeting with EEFSC and SASCO
3. Mandatory Vaccinations – Update from Activism and Transformation, Vice-President, and Media.
4. Extension of Payment of IFP.
5. List of demands in preparation for the Meeting with University Management.
6. NSFAS students with outstanding debt (concessions)
7. Update from Residences and Oppidan on any preparations for o-week.
8. Strengthening relations/ communication with other Student Governance Structure structures
9. SAUS Membership
10. Matters arising from Executive
11. Other Matters Arising:
12. Date and Time of Next Meeting, Monday 24 January 2022.

MINUTES OF THE MEETING

Opening: Mr President opened the meeting by welcoming council members

1. Attendance

1.1 Present:

The following councillors were present for the meeting

- President: Mr Bothale Modisaotsile
- Vice-President: Ms Tinashe Hlako
- Secretary General: Ms Nobesuthu Mnkandla
- Treasurer General: Mr Njabulo Mkhulisa
- International Affairs: Ms Rumbidzai Gondongwe
- Postgraduates Affairs: Ms Vuyelwa Moyo
- Academic: Ms Sisenalo Onica Makwedini
- Environmental: Mr Anda Mtshintsho
- Media: Ms Khwezi Maloma
- Oppidan: Ms Omphulusa Nengwekhulu
- Projects Manager: Mr Bongani Pellemu
- Activism & Transformation: Ms Lebo Ramohapi

-Student Benefits & Sponsorship: Mr Pfano Mulaudzi

-Sports & Societies: Ms Palesa Makoli

-Community Engagement: Ms Panashe Maneya

- Residence: Mr Mlungisi Dindili.

1.2. Confirmation of Previous Minutes:

-The minutes of the previous meeting held on 10 January 2022 were sent out to the council before the meeting by the Secretary-General. They were amended and confirmed by the council.

1.3. Declaration of Conflict

-No declarations were made.

2. Minutes from meeting with EFFSC and SASCO

-There were no minutes from the meeting with the EFFSC and SASCO

3. Mandatory Vaccinations-Update from Activism and Transformation, Vice-President, and Media

-The council was updated about the engagement received from the student body where some students were opposing the mandate and the exemptions. From this engagement, the following five problems were identified:

- Some Part-Time Students are worried that they won't be allowed to register even though they do not have to be physically present at the University.
- There are partially vaccinated students, those who received 1 dose.

- Some do not understand the science behind vaccinations, which is understandable considering the history of people of color and medicine according to Madam Activism and Transformation.
- Some students view that mandatory vaccination is unconstitutional and invades people's autonomy.
- Some oppose mandatory vaccinations because of medical and religious reasons.

-From the above-identified problems, the council came up with some recommendations, which are:

- Total exemption for Part-time students as they do not pose a threat. They do not engage full time with other students.
- Partially vaccinated students should be allowed to register on the condition that they get a second dose after 45 days of registration.
- The University should conduct an extensive and rigorous campaign to enlighten those hesitant to vaccinate.
- Since the council does not have much legal information on vaccinations, further advice may be sought on the constitutionality of the matter.

-In addition to the above, the council suggested that when engaging with the student body on this matter, the council should ask students to apply for exemptions and state their reasons. If rejected, the council will step in to assist.

-The council suggested that there should be additional grounds when applying for exemptions outside of the ones mentioned by the University.

-In addition to the above, it was mentioned that the student body is not happy that the exemptions are only on true grounds, i.e., medical and religious. The University should have other reasons such as ancestral etc.

-A document has been composed that reflects the views of the Student Body on this matter.

-Madam CE suggested that when sending out a statement to students, the council should stress the importance of individual engagement of students with the argument raised by the University.

-The council received a memorandum from the Black Lawyers Association, which provided the council with several solutions to be explored.

-It was brought up that there is a Rhodes student working with the International News Agency in Johannesburg which has requested a meeting to interview the council on its stance on mandatory vaccinations.

-The council decided that only the President could be interviewed unless the interview is portfolio specific.

-It was raised that the council needs to confirm its stance on the mandatory vaccinations matter before scheduling a meeting with the interviewers.

-Before establishing a stance, it was decided that the council needs to proceed with caution when establishing a stance and not speak from the point of privilege.

-The council decided that if there is a side to be picked on this matter, the council should choose students.

4. Extension of payment of Initial Fee Payment

-The council raised the need to request an extension because many students have complained that the deadline is too soon, and most parents receive their income at the end of the month.

-The council that the period between the time when the results were released and when the IFP is requested is too short as some students need to send their results to Bursaries and thus might lose res. The deadline is also unreasonable for International Students considering that some families were affected by Covid-19.

-It was raised that for Postgraduate students who were awarded last-minute bursaries and have not yet been cleared as there has not been communication on when they will be cleared might lead to loss of residence for some of them.

5. List of Demands in Preparation

- That the University should not demand students to test every week and not request the n95 masks when they do not even provide them.

-That the University should make space in res or any alternative accommodation for NSFAS students who do not find accredited accommodations.

-That the University sympathize with students when deciding on deadlines, particularly those monetary based.

-That the University should communicate with SRC before issuing any statement or releasing any communication to the student body. The SRC will not answer what they are unaware of or were not told of.

6. NSFAS students with outstanding debts (concessions)

-The council discussed the outstanding debts issue and it was raised that if a student registered after 2018 NSFAS will not cover the debts, the University will not claim, but if a student registered before 2017, the outstanding debt will be cleared. Before 2018 NSFAS was a loan, and after 2018 it became a grant as students do not have to pay it back.

-On the n+1 rule it was explained that this rule means that NSFAS gives a student an extra year to repeat a module when the student has failed.

7. Update from Residences and Oppidan on any preparation for O-week

-There was an update from the Oppidan committee on the progress made by the Oppidan committee, which includes:

- A proposal that needs to be presented to the DSA
- The seminar rooms in Eden Grove and Oppidan tea room have been reserved for O-week. The Oppidan hall is yet to be secured.

- Oppidan T-shirts and masks that have been ordered for the first years and will be in the purple/green bag.
- The committee is still waiting for the DSA on the printout of cookbooks for first-year Oppidan students
- The procurement of the Oppidan Bus for it to be ready by the first day of O-week.

8. Strengthening relations/communication with other Student Governance Structures.

-It was raised that Student Governance Structures requested permission to share SRC statements on social media platforms that the SRC does not engage in.

-The council did not consider this as a good idea because engagement by students with the shared posts might misconstrue the SRC's position. Queries should be directed to the SRC, not governance structures, if permission is granted.

-It was raised that the council may not have control over what students share, which might be problematic.

9. SAUS AFFILIATION

-In light of the previous consideration of SAUS affiliation, the council gathered that there is a lack of transparency in the organization, the organization does not push a student agenda, i.e., Fees must Fall and decolonization of institutions etc.

-In addition to this, it was raised that the affiliation fee is too steep, and there is no transparency about what this money is used for.

-Furthermore, it was raised that because of the institutional uniqueness of Rhodes compared to other institutions, SAUS does not cater for the student culture at Rhodes.

-The council voted on this matter. 13 members voted against the affiliation, and 1 member voted for it.

10. Matters arising from Executive

-No matters arose from the Executive as the Executive has not held any meeting.

11. Other Matters Arising

-There was a suggestion from the 2021 SG that the council should submit a proposal to the University asking for a leeway to be given to students who have been granted exemptions to be allowed to participate in events, be in res and Dining Halls. The University can allocate them in the same residences separate from vaccinated ones.

-It was raised that placing non-vaccinated students in one res will appear as if the SRC is marginalizing. Instead, there should be a common ground established on accommodating all.

-Council voted on this matter, 14 members were against the proposal, and 2 were for it.

-On this matter council rejected the proposal but decided to demand the inclusion of exempted students.

12. Adjourned

-After thanking the councillors for their presence and contribution, Mr President adjourned the meeting.

13. Date and Time of Next Meeting: 24 January 2022