

Oppidan Hall



Hall Committee 2019

Introduction

The governance of the Hall is managed by the Hall Wardens, Hall Administrator and the Hall Committee Chair. The Hall has adopted the Rhodes University Policies and Procedures for receipts, payments and petty cash, as the Hall funds and suite of accounts are managed and contained in the Rhodes General Ledger. Excess funds not required for the day to day running of the Hall are transferred to an investment account within the Rhodes General Ledger.

Committee Structures

The Oppidan Committee shall normally comprise the following members:

- a. The Oppidan Hall Warden
- b. Oppidan Sub-Wardens
- c. The Hall Administrator
- d. The SRC Representative that also is the Chairperson of the Oppidan Committee
- e. Treasurer
- f. Sports Representative
- g. Community Engagement Representative
- h. Environmental and Welfare Representative
- i. Entertainment Representative
- j. Media and Marketing Representative
- k. Academic Rep
- l. Vice Chair

Participation in Committee Structures of the University

The Hall Wardens and student representatives of the Oppidan Union were involved at the Board of Residences, DSA/Hall Wardens Committee and Student Forum. Topics discussed at these meetings are mainly directed towards students living in Residence and are not pertinent to the Oppidan Union.

Hall Administrator

Ms Karen van Heerden was employed as Hall Administrator on the 1st April 2011. Her input and assistance given to the Hall Committee and students has had a huge impact on the Hall. Students and staff were impressed by her dedication to the Hall, and the manner in which she interacted with everyone on a daily basis.

A word from our Vice- Chairperson on the year:

Term 1

Registration

The registration period brought with it various issues, most of which required immediate solutions. These among others were:

- Students who lost their res allocations due to late payments and needed to find alternative accommodation.

-The Committee went through local listings, and called estate agents to help students find accommodation.

- First year students who were still waiting for their funding confirmation from NSFAS and needed emergency accommodation.

- NSFAS students who were unable to pay for accommodation immediately as allowance pay-outs were still pending.

-The committee negotiated with landlords to allow Oppies to stay in their digs and letters providing surety were provided by the NSFAS office.

- Returning students who were awaiting their NSFAS appeal outcomes. Some of these students could not move into their digs, as their monthly rental allowances were withheld, others had no means to feed themselves during the waiting period. Food packs were arranged using portfolio funds.

Over and above committee assisted first years with registration, distributed o-week info packs and assisted those who still needed NSFAS clearances. In some cases, they had to negotiate with Ght landlords to drop their prices to an amount which was within our students' means.

We provided first years with lunch and supper for the duration of o-week using funds from our annual levies.

Events

The Committee hosted the Annual Valentine's Love Rush Evening as a way of providing a platform for our students to meet each other and socialise.

Oppi Bus

It is evident that the demographics of Rhodes University have changed over the years, the increased number of Oppi Bus users in 2019 was reflective of this. One sees that there is a serious need to ensure that the University provides services which are relevant to the changing needs of its changing student body population.

There were numerous complaints from students regarding the high demand for seating and subsequently, being left behind. Unfortunately, due to inescapable financial and mechanical constraints, the old bus could only take a limited number of students on any given night. The bus went beyond the scope of its means needing regular repairs. The intensified use had accelerated

the wear and tear of the vehicle and the cost of service and maintenance had increased tremendously. All these factors had put a strain on the efficient running of the bus and its drivers, therefore the Committee decided to cease the old bus system.

These issues were escalated to Senior Management, and committee members attended various meetings with the DSA and VC in attempt to address the Oppi Bus issue.

Term 2

Oppi Bus

An Oppi Bus Pilot was launched in the beginning of Term 2, this bus system runs under an external service provider (Sugar's Shuttles). This allowed us to increase the number of students that could be transported hourly and to extend bus operation times. This package consisted of two 22 seater buses, which would operate from 18:00-00:00 daily.

An emergency student body meeting was held to address Oppidan bus issue and update students on progress made.

Events

The Committee (under the leadership of the Entertainment Rep) hosted an Open Mic Evening creating a platform for our students to showcase their talents and socialise. All proceeds went towards Give5.

Term 3

We hosted an Oppidan Forum (reporting back to students on Oppi Comm portfolio activities, presented financial report and sub wardens concluded with a lease workshop).

The Committee (under the Academic representative) implemented an Oppi Academic/Exam Tips Workshop to help improve our Hall's academic performance. Committee members formed part of the Oppi Bus Task Team and the Chairperson was the convenor.

The Chair had to:

- Oversee the finalisation of the procurement process for the 2020 bus
- Implement a formal system for record-keeping of bus users (this is to happen on both the University, and Service provider's side).
- Creating a formal structure through which students can lodge potential complaints.
- Setting up a formal panel that will meet regularly to enforce the contract between Rhodes University and the Service provider should there be any breaches, or problems that occur with the transport system.
- The panel will include: SRC Oppidan Councillor, Student Services Manager, Oppidan Warden, Oppidan Administrator, and Oppidan Comm Member.
- (In serious instances, the DSA, University Proctor and the Legal and Risk Manager are to be invited).
- Ensure a guiding document that will address the issue of compliance is drafted.

Events

Hosted a second open-mic evening.

Term 4

NSFAS

Distributed food packages to aid stranded students, the Chairperson used portfolio funds allocated for emergency relief.

Oppi Bus

A Procurement Document was released to the public, invitation closing date was 4th October 2019. A panel was formed to deal with Oppi Bus complaints and any issues that might arise. Relevant stakeholders have agreed. We held a review meeting of the 2019 contract, amendments were suggested to prevent problems we had in 2019. Suggestions sent to University Proctor and these changes will be effected in the 2020 contract.

The procurement process came to a standstill, as local services providers had challenges with submitting their documents on the e- portal and the only bidder that had successfully submitted their document was beyond our financial means. Due to time constraints, the resolution was that the task team would finalise plans for 2020 with the current service provider and undergo Procurement for the 2021 bus.

Events

We hosted the Annual Oppidan Ball, which included an awards ceremony.

2019 in General

Committee Meetings

Weekly meetings with the Committee were held every Wednesday. Attendance was relatively good and some committee members were consistently present. Academic commitments are what kept committee members away from time to time.

I have managed to chair all Oppidan Committee meetings and attend BOR as required by the Constitution.

Hand-over

A handover programme with the 2020 Oppidan Chairperson happened throughout October, and one with all Committee members was conducted on 9 October 2019.

Sports

The Sports Representative managed to secure teams for inter-res competitions and our Oppidans' performance was good.

Community Engagement

The Community Engagement Representative worked with Nollie Shelle (Community partner) throughout the year, hall activities under **VukaMakana** were minimal. The Committee has agreed that it needs to meet with Mrs Nollie Shelle on site and see the physical challenges of the Toy Library in order to implement relevant solutions. This relationship will be developed further by the Committee in 2020.

Events

The Committee successfully achieved its goal of hosting one event (minimum) per term.

With all the challenges faced, the 2019 committee has remained steadfast and consistent, displaying excellent leadership. Chairing such a great team has been an absolute pleasure.

Oppidan Chairperson 2019

ACHIEVEMENTS OF THE YEAR

First Year Orientation

We welcomed about 200 first years to the Oppidan Hall during orientation weekend. The week was filled with many events and talks for the first years and lots of socialising and good friends were made.



Mentee and Mentor events

We also hosted an exam workshop with hot chocolate and Chelsea buns. There was a lot of interaction between the mentees and their mentors and the project was a great success this year.

Hall Ball

We hosted the Annual Hall Ball on the 5 October in the Oppidan Dining Hall about a 190 students attended. Amongst those that attended were the students that received certificates and trophies for participating in sport and community engagement for the year. The night ended on a high note with a marriage proposal. A wonderful night was had by all.



Sport

The guys ended 5th on the log which was great for the Hall. We are super proud of the efforts that were put in by all our Oppidans that participated to get us to this position.



Community engagement

We painted so murals at the Toy library but not a lot happened in this portfolio this year.

The Oppidan Bus

In March it was decided that the Oppidan bus could not handle the loads of students anymore and it after many talks with the VC it was decided to sign a contract with an outside company to do the services for us. The Oppidan committee paid the bulk of the service and the VC contributed and the Director of Student services. The contract ran from April 2019 to November 2019. We are hoping that this will continue for 2020.

The Oppidan Sub-wardens

We had 5 sub-wardens this year and their case load consisted mainly of Lease issues, Noise Issues, Digs mates not getting along, depression, para suicides etc. This year as far as sub-warden cases were concerned was not that busy. The Sub-wardens have done a great job in solving their cases and being of great help to the students and supporting them through troubled times.

Discipline

2019 proved to be a quiet year where discipline was concerned as we had no discipline cases.

Conclusion

We are looking forward to another great year with our New Committee for 2020 and endeavour to make an even bigger impact on our students next year.