

each year to set an agenda of priorities with regards to curriculum development issues that need to be prioritised in that year. Task groups are then mandated to deal with these priorities, and to report back to the Forum for approval of the plans they come up with the transformation and its members.

In each year, class reps should liaise with each other to ensure that one of their members attend the above meetings. If they are not available for a given meeting, they can also mandate a member of their class to stand in for them.

CLASS REP GUIDE

As a class representative, you are responsible for identifying and communicating the general interests of your class.

THINGS YOU DO AS A CLASS REP:

- » Represent your class to individual lecturers, the year co-ordinator and with the Head of School.
- » Find out the concerns and issues of your class. This could include matters such as workload, timetable, course structure, assessment problems, communication concerns, deadline extensions and course material.
- » Gather information from the students about what they think is and isn't working well.
- » Act as a liaison between students and staff.
- » Attend meetings with the year co-ordinator at least twice a term.
- » Interact with the class, gather students' input for meetings, and give them feedback.
- » Ensure that students are informed about developments and decisions that concern them. This includes

decisions made in the meeting with the Head of School and at meetings with the year co-ordinator; and

- » Actively look for ways to solve problems faced by the students and make recommendations to the Head of School.

HOW TO GO ABOUT IT:

- » Have a positive attitude. The school stands to gain from hearing the voices of the students. You, as students, gain from a good relationship with the school.
- » Make yourself known to the class and the lecturer. Make sure students have your email address. You and your class make this system work.
- » Take the concerns of the class seriously and respond effectively to student issues.
- » Assess if the responses you are getting are representative of the class at large.
- » Make use of email to elicit feedback from the students. You can also circulate questions on a piece of paper in class, or ask for a show of hands, depending on the nature of the issue.
- » In bigger classes, use the tutorial groups to make the process of gathering feedback easier.
- » Make sure you have a good understanding of the issues at hand. Ask for clarification from students if necessary.
- » Plan and prepare for meetings with lecturers, the year co-ordinator and the Head of School.
- » If a lecturer is not responsive, you may take up your issue with the year co-ordinator.
- » Do not be intimidated by the school or your lecturers. This relationship should be one of mutual respect.

THINGS CLASS REPS ARE NOT EXPECTED TO DO:

- » Champion your own cause.
- » Handle harassment cases and serious issues of conflict. (In these cases, refer students to an appropriate support body.)
- » Assist students with personal, emotional or psychological problems. (Again, rather refer
- » Raise a problem involving a particular staff member at your meeting with the Head of School. (Take up such matters either directly with the lecturer or with the year co-ordinator.)
- » Vent. (This system is intended to be constructive.)

WORK RULES

DP REQUIREMENTS, LEAVES OF ABSENCE AND EXTENSIONS

DP requirements differ across faculties and departments within faculties, and may even be observed or enforced differently by lecturers within a particular department. The following are the DP requirements for the School of Journalism and Media Studies. They should be taken as a given for all courses within the school, unless specifically stated otherwise in a particular course outline.

THE REQUIREMENTS ARE STRAIGHTFORWARD:

- » You must attend 100% of all course meetings and events, including lectures, tutorials, pracs, tests and examinations.
- » You must submit all practical and essay assignments by the due date and time.
- » If you are unable to attend any meeting you must apply for a Leave of Absence (LOA) from the administration manager (Belinda de Lange, room 003, email: b.delange@ru.ac.za)
- » If you are unable to submit an assignment by the due date and time you must apply for an extension from the administration manager (this is the same form as the LOA, and is available from AMM reception).
- » If you obtain an extension, you must meet the deadline for that extension.
- » If you are unable to attend course meetings for any extended period (a week or more), you must make an arrangement with your lecturer (or get a friend or family member to do so if you are unable to do so yourself) to obtain course notes, lecture notes, readings or other materials.
- » No matter how valid your reasons for an extended absence may be, you will not be permitted to continue with a course if you miss more than 20% of meetings. If you start to approach this threshold, you (or a family member if you are incapacitated) must contact the Head of School to make the necessary arrangements and negotiate your options.
- » LOA applications should be made

in advance. However should circumstances prevent this, you must apply for an LOA through the AMM office no later than seven days from date of tutorial absence/ non-submission of work etc. Failure to apply within seven days in person (student) or via email to ammadmin@ru.ac.za (via a family member, in the case of the student being incapacitated) means that you will be marked absent or receive zero, and this may result in the immediate removal of your DP.

- » DP appeals should be lodged within seven days from date of issue of a DP refusal (DPR), otherwise the appeal will not be considered and the DPR will stand.

GROUNDINGS FOR LOAS AND EXTENSIONS:

MEDICAL

Applications must be accompanied by a certificate from a medical practitioner or a note from a counsellor or the Rhodes Sanatorium. This certificate or note must set out the nature of the illness or ailment as well as the period for which you were booked off. A doctor's note simply confirming that you had an appointment and were diagnosed with a minor ailment will not be sufficient grounds for obtaining an LOA or extension.

DEATH OR SERIOUS ILLNESS OF AN IMMEDIATE FAMILY MEMBER

The school is flexible about the documentation or proof required in such circumstances. In some cases notification from another family member will be sufficient, in others we may

require a death certificate or doctor's note. Discuss with the administration manager.

PARTICIPATION IN OFFICIAL SPORTING EVENTS

Applications must be submitted in advance of the event, and must be accompanied by an official letter from the Sports Officer. Applications will be treated according to the circumstances. (You may, for example, be granted leave from a Friday afternoon tutorial if you are travelling to Johannesburg for a weekend event; it is unlikely that leave would be granted for a similar event taking place in Port Alfred, even if the rest of the team is leaving early on Friday afternoon).

No LOAs will be granted retrospectively for sporting events. You will not be granted extensions on assignments because of sport commitments.

OTHER CIRCUMSTANCES

Events

LOAs are generally not granted for religious events or celebrations, for weddings, for 21st or other milestone birthday celebrations, for other social events, or for unofficial sporting events. However, applications will be treated according to the circumstances and the applicant's general academic performance. All applications here must be made well in advance. No extensions will be granted in these circumstances.

Clashes and technical problems:

It is inevitable that assignment deadlines in one course will coincide with deadlines in another course. It is also inevitable that there will be problems with networks, computers and printers. However, our assignments are given out

well in advance of the deadline, and the school will generally not grant extensions on these grounds.

HANDING IN OF ASSIGNMENTS & DEADLINES

- » Place your assignments in the appropriate assignment box on or before deadline.
- » The assignments will be taken out of the assignment box on deadline and the Admin staff will tick off names on a class list.
- » Do not hand assignments to the lecturer or your submission will not be recorded.
- » Faxed and emailed assignments will not be accepted.
- » Late assignments will score 0 and will not be marked or commented on. However, you must still hand them in as they will count for DP purposes.
- »

KEEP COPIES OF ALL YOUR WORK!

We take care to avoid losing work – but cannot take responsibility if something goes astray. Keep a copy of the work you handed in (not a rough draft) both in print and digital formats. We suggest students buy a USB flash memory stick from the IT division, which is a far more reliable way of keeping records of work done than computer disks or hard drives, which tend to crash.

RETURN OF ESSAYS TO STUDENTS

Every effort is made to mark and return assignments in good time. However, in certain instances, high teaching loads may result in delays. Even with delays, all assignments should be returned within the term, or within the first fortnight of the following term. When the assignments have been marked and are ready to be collected, the school secretary will send a message on email to the class list for students to collect them, but only between 8.30am and 12.30pm. These assignments will be filed in alphabetical order in the building foyer. You may collect only your own assignment. You cannot collect assignments from the lecturers unless instructed by them to do so.

PLAGIARISM

Visit <http://www.scifac.ru.ac.za/plag.htm> for more details.

Rhodes University measures itself against the highest international standards of academic and professional practice as regards plagiarism. As the School of Journalism and Media Studies, we not only consider academic plagiarism to be a major offence, but we also recognise that it is a practice abhorred by journalists. In order to make clear what this school understands by plagiarism, we wish to spell out its definition, both in an academic context and a media production context.

GENERALLY, PLAGIARISM IS DEFINED AS: Taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another as if they were one's own.

ACADEMICALLY

This definition covers a wide range of practices, ranging from minor infractions such as inadequate referencing, through to more serious misdemeanours such as copying blocks of text and not acknowledging the original author, and then to very serious offences such as stealing an entire essay or assignment from another student or from the Internet, or infringing copyright. Rhodes policy is not to treat incomplete or unsatisfactory referencing, which is more a matter of negligence than deceit, as plagiarism. However, when marking assignments in which this occurs, staff retain the right to penalise students by subtracting marks, according to the degree of negligence and the academic level at which the student is writing. Marking systems in this school allocate certain marks to correct referencing and correct academic style.

REFERENCING:

The style followed by this school for all academic essays is found in Visser, Nicholas, 1992, *Handbook for Writers of Essays and Theses*. Cape Town: Maskew Miller Longman. See "Reference Guidelines" at: <http://www.ru.ac.za/jms/studentresources/>

JOURNALISTICALLY

Media workers in South Africa uphold the principle of giving credit to the originator of work being used. However, in practice there are many slippery

situations that take place in newsrooms. In this school, we expect you to be rigorous about giving credit where credit is due. While academic style has rigid guidelines about referencing work, journalistic practice tends not to use footnotes, bibliographies, etc. As a result, all borrowings must be credited within the media production, and this takes care and attention. But the principle remains. Credit whatever is not your original work whether a press release, news agency, another reporter, an archive, news conference, experts you consulted, books, surveys, research projects; or Internet sites. Unlike academic referencing, this does not need to be as detailed, but must be complete enough to allow another person to find the exact source you consulted and used.

RHODES UNIVERSITY'S DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURES FOR DEALING WITH PLAGIARISM

Depending on the nature of the plagiarism, penalties can range from detracting marks to exclusion from Rhodes. In all cases, a record will be kept of the offence.

PLAGIARISM DETECTION

Students should be aware that Rhodes uses electronic software (Turnitin) to detect plagiarism. Lecturers may use this software to check assignments.

PRESENTATION OF ACADEMIC ESSAYS AND JOURNALISM STORIES

ALL WRITTEN WORK MUST:

- » Be typed on white A4 paper in Times New Roman 12 point, with 1.5 spacing.

CONTAIN A COVER SHEET WITH

- » Your full name
- » Your student number
- » Your year of study
- » The name of the course
- » The lecturer's name (in full and correctly spelt)
- » The title of the assignment
- » The due date

THE FOLLOWING DECLARATION MUST APPEAR WITH YOUR SIGNATURE:

I hereby declare that this essay is my own work. I have acknowledged all other authors' ideas and referenced direct quotations from their work. I have not allowed anyone else to borrow or copy my work.

ACADEMIC ESSAYS MUST:

- » Contain an abstract on a separate sheet at the beginning of the essay.
- » Have a bibliography at the end, also on a separate sheet. Only works consulted in the body of your essay need to be referenced in the bibliography. Please use the prescribed book *Handbook for Writers of Essays and Theses* by Nicholas Visser (Maskew Miller Longman) for the correct referencing style.

JOURNALISM STORIES MUST:

- » Contain a headline at the top on the first page of the story.

- » On the second line an accurate word count of the story (without headline and without source list) must appear.
- » Before the story starts the name of the student must appear as a byline.
- » In the right hand corner a "slug" (one word name for the story) plus a page number must appear.
- » All news stories must contain a detailed source list on a separate sheet attached to the end of the story. Every person, document, book, research project, website, etc, you consulted must be listed here with contact numbers, URLs, etc. Unlike an essay bibliography, it is important to detail even those sources you consulted but who do not appear in the text of the story. (Note: this requirement is a classroom obligation and not one which is used in actual media houses or newsrooms.)

See the Rhodes Journalism Style Guide on our website:

<http://www.ru.ac.za/jms/studentresources>

ALL WORK:

- » Must be proof-read; must be spell-checked and must be neat and clean.
- » Marks will be deducted for work that does not conform to these requirements.
- » Please note: we use SA English and not American English in this school – set the settings and spell checker on your computer to SA and not US English and be aware of using Americanisms.

A NOTE ON PLAGIARISM FROM THE HEAD OF SCHOOL

In the past we've had to deal with numerous cases of plagiarism. In some instances we've had to remove the DPs of second-time offenders. Even for first time offenders, the consequences are severe: we notify the Rhodes University Academic Administration Division and the offence is placed on the students' permanent academic record. This means that should a related issue arise at any time in our or any other department during your degree at Rhodes your DP Certificate will be removed with immediate effect. In addition, you may then face exclusion from the university.

While many of the cases we've had to deal with pertain to individual infractions, a number have involved two or more students working together on an essay or set of seminar questions and then each handing in a jointly produced document for assessment. While we obviously are not averse to students working together (and in fact encourage it), you need to separate out the sharing and clarification of ideas and understandings through discussion and the committing of these to paper for the assignment. The former is a joint activity, the latter is individual and involves expressing the understandings you've arrived at in your own words.

Each time you sign the cover sheet you commit yourself to such an understanding.

Rhodes University has an official policy on plagiarism which specifically asks staff to be on the lookout for infractions and to deal with any such cases in accordance with the policy. To aid staff, the university has computer-based plagiarism detection software which it encourages staff to use.

The policy notes the following:

- » Plagiarism is theft compounded by fraud and involves taking and using the ideas, writings, works or inventions of another as if they were one's own.
- » In an intellectual community, as universities are meant to be, this is tantamount to stealing somebody's possessions – except in this instance you are stealing their ideas or research. There are various degrees of plagiarism, but all are serious.
- » The definition of plagiarism covers a wide range of misdemeanors including: using the direct words of someone else without using quotation marks (even if you give a page reference), the syndication (sharing) of a single piece of work by more than one student, the borrowing and using of someone else's assignment (with or without their knowledge), or stealing an essay from someone else or the internet.
- » The intention, negligence or innocence of the student is not relevant to the findings of whether or not plagiarism has occurred.

The University distinguishes three categories of plagiarism – from one to three – each seen as increasingly serious. In short:

CATEGORY A OFFENCE: first time, minor infringement usually handled by staff member who detects the infringement. In the School we usually give the student(s) zero for the assignment and give them a plagiarism warning. This warning goes onto the students' university record in case further infractions occur.

CATEGORY B OFFENCE: relates to repeated offences of a minor nature or to a relatively minor offence at a more senior year than first year. It can also apply to a first time more serious offence. These offences go to the School plagiarism committee and can result in the loss of a students' DP.

CATEGORY C OFFENCE: Extremely serious infringement which the department/school feels should be adjudicated by the Senate Standing Committee on Plagiarism. The penalty here is more than the removal of a DP.

Note that in all of these cases, the student can appeal the decision taken by the lecturer of plagiarism committee.

Finally, the policy points out that if you plagiarise, you learn absolutely nothing. Producing assignments and essays is an important learning experience and should be treated as such. In addition, if you plagiarise you will lose your DP, have a permanent statement of your dishonesty on your student record, or be rusticated from the university.

Yours
Larry Strelitz
HEAD OF SCHOOL