

MINUTES | Rhodes University SRC General Meeting

DATE: 05 March 2019
TIME: 18h30 – 21h05
VENUE: Purple Room, Steve Biko Building
CHAIR: Mr. Samkelo Mngadi

ATTENDANCE

- Mr. Ofei and Projects Manager informed Secretary General that they would be arriving late
- Oppidan Councilor was absent for this meeting
- All other Councilors present

MATTERS ARISING

- Vice-President requested that the number of items under Matters Arising be kept minimal; such items would only qualify as Matters Arising for this meeting if the issue at hand arose is of an urgent nature that arose specifically after the deadline for the submission of agenda items
- **ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS**
 - o SciFest
 - o Secretary General's Agenda Item

CONFIRMATION OF MINUTES OF 18 FEBRUARY 2019 & 25 FEBRUARY 2019

- Minutes of 18 February 2019 confirmed by Treasurer General with Secretary General concurring
- Minutes of 25 February 2019 confirmed by Media Councilor with Academic Councilor concurring

PURPLE THURSDAY

- Media Councilor expressed concern at the unfortunate events that transpired at the Purple Thursday event immediately preceding the present meeting; she noted that Council would need to ask Projects Manager to account for these events; she reported that the Council had been accused of false advertising by some members of the Student Body given the absence of Red Bull at the event
- Vice-President noted that part of the problem with respect hereto is the communication breakdown between Red Bull and the Projects Manager; he reported that he had spoken briefly with Samantha (the Red Bull liaison person) and ascertained that there had been misunderstanding between her and the Projects Manager; he noted the importance of maintaining good communication to avert situations like the one at issue from recurring; he also noted his concern in respect of the poor turnout to the event
- Secretary General noted that it would not be fruitful to continue to have this discussion in the absence of the Projects Manager, particularly where recommendations are concerned
- [AGENDA ITEM PAUSED UNTIL THE ARRIVAL OF THE PROJECTS MANAGER]
- Projects Manager reported that the event was scheduled to commence at 12h00 and end at 14h00; she had met with President and liaised with Samantha to that effect; she noted that Red Bull had been late the previous Purple Thursday; she reported that she had informed Samantha of the venue, date and time for Purple Thursday; she then received a message forwarded to Council at large informing that Red Bull would only be present from 13h00 onwards; she noted that she acknowledges that she, herself, had been late to the event and takes full responsibility for that; she had operated under the impression that Samantha was still on board, and that she has records to that effect; she (Projects Manager) noted that communication was fine from her side, but that Red Bull simply had not delivered
- Treasurer General noted that, following liaison with Samantha, she (Samantha) had been upset with Council; Treasurer General noted that Samantha had been dishonest in reporting the communication between her and Projects Manager;

she requested that a meeting be held with Samantha to discuss the matter further

- Media Councilor noted that advertising for future events of this nature needs to improve
- Secretary General noted that contingency plans for Purple Thursday must also be included to avoid cases such as this
- Vice-President noted that fault lay with both Samantha as well as Projects Manager
- Projects Manager reiterated that the fault lay with Red Bull for having been unreliable
- President noted that communications regarding Purple Thursdays must happen through Projects Manager; he reiterated the importance of contingency plans; he requested that Projects Manager as well as Vice-President meet with Samantha to iron out their issues
- Mr. Ofei noted that he is willing to help to come up with a sample Purple Thursday proposal to be circulated to Council – especially with regard to allocation of tasks and resources
- International Councilor noted that she can speak with the International Office to provide donuts, as a contingency plan for Purple Thursdays

ACADEMIC APPEALS

- Academic Councilor reported that the process for the submission and handling of Academic Appeals is now closed; he reported the following statistics:
 - o 82 academic appeals had been received by the SRC
 - 68 of these had been sent through to the Registrar's Office
 - The remaining 14 appeals were not accompanied by complete forms (as well as other necessary documentation)
 - Academic Councilor reports that he had tried to make contact with these students to no avail
 - 49 of the 68 appeals submitted were successful (approx. 72%)
- Academic Councilor offered his gratitude to the Secretary General as well as the Vice-President for their help in the processing of these appeals

- Secretary General noted that while a 72% success rate is remarkable, it is not ultimately about the percentages – it is in fact about the “human factor”; he expressed his appreciation for the work ethic, professionalism, and efficiency with which Academic Councilor had dealt with the appeals; he also expressed his approval of the work done by the Vice-President and the Council at large
- Treasurer General, concurring with Secretary General, noted that the Council has borne witness to and congratulates the work done by the Academic Councilor
- Vice-President, concurring with Treasurer General and Secretary General, encouraged Council at large to follow the positive example of diligence and efficiency with which the Academic Councilor had been working

S.A.U.S.

- President reported that Secretary General had forwarded an invitation from SAUS regarding affiliation with the organization; he submitted the agenda item under assumption that Councilors had read the Constitution where it makes provision for affiliation with SAUS – but if Councilors had not yet done this, he requested that they do so urgently; he reported that the affiliation fee is R30 000 (THIRTY THOUSAND RAND), and noted that each year Council must decide if it wants to affiliate with SAUS and to justify its decision to do so – or not to do so – at Student Parliament
- Student Benefits Councilor asked Vice-President and Secretary General why the previous year’s Council had not affiliated with SAUS, and further what benefits accrue with affiliation
- Secretary General noted that the previous year’s Council had not affiliated because it could not pay the affiliation fee on time; he also noted that the benefits that accrue with affiliation involve *inter alia* staying abreast of the salient issues pertaining to other SRC’s nationwide – especially as they relate to such issues like NSFAS funding, etc.
- Vice President noted that SAUS represents SRC institutions nationwide and provides them with the requisite access to liaise with Ministers and high-ranking dignitaries in the country; he expressed the view that it is important that Council

affiliate with SAUS because Council serves a bigger role in the context of the country as a whole – owing to the national scope in the kinds of issues dealt with by SRC's (for example, NSFAS funding); he noted this as true despite his personal view that SAUS is a useless organization as it stands; he noted that Council's involvement with SAUS could potentially change this unfortunate circumstance

- Treasurer General noted that Councilors must have read the aforementioned invitation in order for them to engage it properly
- [Council indicates that majority had not yet read the invitation]
- Vice-President noted his concern that Councilors had not yet read the invitation; he requested that documents under discussion at meetings be read prior to the commencement of General Meetings so that they can be engaged properly
- Activism Councilor requested information in respect of how the R30 000 affiliation fee gets used to the benefit of the SRC seeking to affiliate; he noted the importance of this question as this is a large sum of money
- Projects Manager expressed the view that affiliation with SAUS is superfluous given Council's ability to access the aforementioned benefits without needing to affiliate; she noted that the R30 000 affiliation fee is better used elsewhere
- Secretary General responded, noting that the kind of access to networks which SAUS provides for is not guaranteed in the absence of affiliation – this access is however, guaranteed by affiliation with SAUS (e.g. access to Parliament, and cabinet Ministers etc.); he also noted that affiliation with SAUS is important for the proliferation and representation of the idiosyncratic nature of the Rhodes University campus politic among students
- Projects Manager noted that, while that may be true, time and resources of Council are a zero-sum game: dedicating those resources to SAUS means that not as much time and energy is spent doing Council work here at Rhodes University
- Vice-President responded by noting that SAUS provides a joint voice and structure among SRC's across the country, and that in general hierarchy is important for championing issues on a national scale
- Treasurer General noted that affiliation fee is not accounted for in the Council budget but money to affiliate can be found if Council resolves to affiliating with SAUS

- Media Councilor noted that the invitation is not very explanatory in respect of what affiliation to SAUS would mean for Council, so even if Councilors had read the invitation, an informed decision to affiliate or not could not be made anyway
- Treasurer General requested that Secretary General find out what Council would be paying for should it decide to affiliate
- Secretary General noted that this would neither be possible nor appropriate
- Academic Councilor reiterated the view that affiliation is necessary for the championing of issues on campus that are broad and national in scope
- International Affairs Councilor noted that affiliation could also have potentially positive implications for international students (especially with respect to issues surrounding VISA's etc.)
- Treasurer General requested information in respect of the legal obligations to which Council would be bound should it decide to affiliate – especially as it pertains to hierarchy and accountability of Council to SAUS
- Vice-President noted that affiliation to SAUS does not make Council subordinate to SAUS, and that it does not take away full autonomy from Council
- President noted that the last time Council had resolved to affiliate with SAUS was in 2012, and since then Council has still been able to function properly in the absence of affiliation; he noted that the decision not to affiliate with SAUS does not completely preclude Council from enjoying the aforementioned benefits – particularly where access to power is concerned; in general he requested that whenever Secretary General sends documents to Council that they be read before the commencement of meeting in which said documentation would be discussed; he reiterated that the affiliation fee is rather steep, and Council must be able to justify its decision to affiliate or not; he instructed Secretary General to find out information regarding what benefits accrue specifically from the affiliation fee, and to revert to Council with that information by the next meeting – having consulted with the Treasurer General
- President noted his wish for it to be expressed in these Minutes that Council is considering affiliation but need to be convinced on the basis of the evidence to be collected by Secretary General

HONORARIUM AMENDMENTS

- Secretary General noted that loopholes in respect of the Honorarium Document still exist – especially as they pertain to the more permissive provisions
- Environmental Councilor sought clarity on whether or not Councilors may be excused for an engagement if they have a test the following day
- Mr. Ofei discouraged the approval of apologies when it comes specifically to SRC General Meetings, and that apologies only be validated if the academic commitment in question means that the Councilor making the apology cannot physically be in the meeting as a consequence of that academic commitment; he cautioned Council in respect of what Council allows and what it does not allow; he noted that the Honorarium Document as it stands is too relaxed, and cautions against further relaxation
- President suggested that whether or not events are to be compulsory should be decided by a two-thirds majority vote in favour thereof by a quorate sitting of Council
- Mr. Ofei also suggested that workload be distributed and allocated fairly; he advised that Council avoid multiple compulsory events in the week (excluding SRC General Meetings)
- **COUNCIL RESOLVED TO:**
 - **PRESERVING SRC GENERAL MEETINGS, AND THE APOLOGY SYSTEM SUGGESTED BY MR. OFEI IN RESPECT THEREOF**
 - **AN EVENT IS COMPULSORY IF AND ONLY IF A TWO-THIRDS MAJORITY OF A QUORATE SITTING OF COUNCIL VOTES IN FAVOUR THEREOF**
 - **NOTICE OF IMPORTANT EVENTS MUST BE GIVEN A MONTH IN ADVANCE**
 - **RECORD BOOK OF TASK ALLOCATION MUST BE KEPT**

SCIFEST

- Environmental Councilor reported that SciFest would commence from the day following the present meeting; one of the events under SciFest is the Eco-Bricks

Project; she reported that Environmental Reps are helping; she requested that Councilors come through every once in a while for visibility purposes

- Media Councilor requested that she get a poster for this event
- Treasurer General requested that an email detailing the times and other important information be sent to Council at large
- Mr. Ofei reported that he had received backlash from wardens regarding the impression that they had been given of the alleged compulsory nature of this event for Environmental Reps – to the extent that they would have to miss lectures for it; Mr. Ofei assured the Wardens that this is in fact not the case, and sought clarity from Environmental Councilor as to why this impression had been given to the Wardens
- Environmental Councilor confirmed that the instruction to Environmental Reps was not to forego their academic commitments – as task-allocation was done on the basis of the academic tables of the Environmental Reps, and their general availability

SECRETARY GENERAL'S AGENDA ITEM

- Secretary General requested that Councilors attend Pick 'n' Pay's Pink Walk if they are able to do so; he requested that Councilors meet the deadline for the submission of reports by the coming Sunday (10 March 2019); he reported that SRC Inauguration would take place in the Oppidan Dining Hall and that this event is compulsory
- Secretary General also noted with concern that the Pick 'n' Pay posters advertising the Pink Walk did not have the Council stamp on them, but he had not taken them down because Pick 'n' Pay is such an important entity to the Council and in Grahamstown at large
- Mr. Ofei noted that everyone must obey the rules regarding advertising – even Pick 'n' Pay (i.e. posters must have the SRC Stamp on it), and that this be communicated clearly to the broader University community

STUDENT DEVELOPMENT AND SUPPORT OFFICER

- Mr. Ofei reported that Residence Councilor's attitude at a recent University Committee meeting had disgraced Council – especially as it relates to his body language and conduct in the meeting; he reiterated the importance of maintaining good conduct in Committee meetings; he announced that SRC Training would take place on the coming weekend; he reminded Council about the honorarium deadline, as well as one-on-one appointments with him; he noted that as far as the operations of Council are concerned (with the exception of a few mishaps): so far so good
- Secretary General requested that Council decide on who would sit on the Honorarium Committee
 - o **COUNCIL RESOLVED THAT INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS COUNCILOR WOULD ASSUME THIS POSITION**

MEETING ADJOURNED