

DieMATTIE

NEGE-EN-SEWENTIGSTE JAARGANG | NO 4

WOENSDAG 9 OKTOBER 2019



KUITE, KUITE, KUITE Hierdie vyf fietsryers van formaat is hard aan die oefen, aangesien hulle in November 1000 km gaan aflê vanaf Namibië tot Agulhas. Vir elke kilometer wat hulle aflê, skenk vrywilligers R1 vir behoeftige studente. Foto: Tom Groom

Meghan
skenk
geld vir
gelykheid **2**

Give me
puppers
and
doggo's **4**

Rock 'n
Roll on
tap **7**

Are you
Black or
Coloured?
– choose **9**

Maties
is the
Ultimate
Sport **11**

SRC can't tie a member to chair

BRYNLEY VAN AARDT

The Stellenbosch University (SU) Student Representative Council (SRC) has had three of its newly elected members accused of sexual assault on social media. As a result, an extraordinary sexual harassment advisory panel has been created by the Equality Unit to deal with such allegations. The allegations are one of the reasons why the process of electing a SRC Chairperson or Vice-Chairperson has been halted.

At Student Parliament on Thursday, SRC member Wamahlubi Ngoma stood up to address the house, elaborating on reasons why an SRC Chairperson and Vice-Chairperson had not yet been elected. Prior to her address she apologised to the house for the delayed elections and spoke of the SRC wanting to be fully transparent on the process of the elections.

"On 5 September we were informed that the election would be postponed as well as the entire student body due to unforeseen circumstances. One of such circumstances being that the military academy captain, who serves on the SRC as well, had not been

elected yet and it would be ideal to have them present. While awaiting the appointment of the captain, there were also allegations made on social media involving some of our own newly elected SRC members. In response to this, the Equality Unit had now convened an extraordinary sexual harassment private panel which will await formal reports to be filed by [Friday] to the Equality Unit Anti-discrimination and Harassment coordinator," Ngoma said.

One of the accused SRC members, Sifiso Zungu, took to Facebook on 5 September and in a since deleted post publicly admitted to the allegations against him and apologised for what he had done.

"What you call transparency, I call taking accountability for my actions. As a student leader tasked with the tremendous responsibility of leading, accountability is non-negotiable," Zungu said in response to a question on his sudden transparency. No formal cases were made against any of the SRC members but Ngoma said in parliament that regardless of whether a formal case is made or not, all the accused parties will be allowed the opportunity to present their case

to the Equality Unit panel.

The Equality Unit is convening a panel which will focus specifically on sexual harassment complaints that have been lodged, with their jurisdiction being the entirety of the SU campus including staff and students. They have set the provisional dates of 15 – 18 October for those affected to come forward and register their complaints. "They [the panel] will then write a report and make recommendations communicated firstly, to the people involved in the process and then take what is necessary from the report to the relevant stakeholders of the university who can assist us moving forward regarding these very serious allegations," Jaco Greeff Brink, the Head of the Equality Unit, said at the student parliament sitting on Thursday. "The panel consists of four competent individuals who have sound knowledge of social justice, sexual harassment and discrimination.

The panel is mandated to conduct preliminary investigations as well as providing SU Management with recommendations. Recommendations made by the panel will assist SU Management in

making the best possible decision on the way forward to address the specific social media-based allegations and with the aim to eradicate sexual misconduct and harassment on campus.

The investigation is currently underway, and we cannot, at this stage, prematurely provide any additional details or comment," Brink later told *Die Matie*.

Dr Choice Makhetha, Senior Director of Student Affairs, said SU Management and Student Affairs are "very committed to addressing these allegations" and are in "continued meetings with the Anti-GBV Student Movement, SRC and TSR, to ensure thorough investigation, interventions and refined processes".

According to Addendum A in the Unfair Discrimination and Harassment Policy, the recommendations from the Sexual Harassment Advisory Panel of Inquiry will be submitted to the Vice-Rector: Learning and Teaching, and Vice-Rector: Social Impact, Transformation and Personnel (joint owners of the policy) for their consideration and action within 20 working days from when the panel was activated.

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