

**[Incoming Stellenbosch University SRC Chair Axolile Qina: Prepared presentation to Parliamentary Portfolio Committee on Higher Education and Training, 1 September 2015; final draft as prepared; compare against recording of delivery]**

Name and where you come from ...

The broadened access in the Stellenbosch University has resulted in the need for collective unifying strategy to ensure that all students reach their full potential, achieve academic success, and have an inclusive diverse and welcoming university experience. Achieving this will require a collective effort and as incoming SRC 2015/2016 we are committed to actively unify campus and laying down the foundations for future generations of Maties both practically and structurally. We cannot live blindly to the racist and discriminatory acts that attempt to divide us as students, neither can we NOT show empathy when our fellow students are marginalised and labelled unjustifiably due to their language, culture, and race. Racism and discrimination is a poverty that denies our collective humanity, value and inherent worth. It's unacceptable and we as incoming SRC 2015/2016 will not tolerate any form of discrimination and racism. The implementation of the discrimination policy, office and officer will be set in place before the end of next term so that students have a safe place to ensure grievances and acts of injustice are heard and dealt with actively and accordingly. We as the incoming SRC 2015/2016 will ensure that the office functions affectively and hold them accountable.

There are entrenched norms, whether it be institutional culture, race, religion and gender. There needs to be a social deconstruction which can be achieved through understanding a consciousness that is sensitive to our individual and collective identities. The collective identity we share, our humanity then becomes an ideal and paradigm that must be governed by principles and values: love, humility, transparency and accountability. Our vision for campus is for students to see each other as human beings who share the same heart beat first, where leaders critically think through this lens with value driven leadership that influences students to reach their full potential and ensure students have a diverse university experience. First step is get to achieve this practically is getting the many student voices (Open Stellenbosch and Afriform) around one table to begin critically engaging on what can further be done, for it is students who know the context and its shortcomings. Transformation is an organic change and is complex. It calls for students to hold arms and join together so we transform Stellenbosch by embracing our humanness. The leadership structure should

understand its role in terms of their positions and responsibility made clear in the leadership preparation. We are also in the process along with the FVZS of rethinking leadership and what it should leadership look workshop, a workshop that challenges student leaders to realise their leadership responsibility; the leadership conference, to do programme for students; and year plan discussion where the need for acceleration of the process of transformation is made prevalent in the presentations that student leaders need to present to Centre of Student Communities (SSG). Here in this process mind-shift to be made to think holistically and inclusively.

The root of the problem is that there are students who don't all feel welcomed, and there are those who are apathetic to the need for inclusivity. The practical steps we are looking to take on is have open discussion on the rooftop, where societies will have a theme and facilitate the discussions, where these critical engagements will strive to change the mind-set of students, further making people aware of the social campus responsibility and active participation in the process of transformation. Together with the Prim Committee, we will ensure that residences have task teams and critical discussions with regards to inclusive culture in residents; where in the leadership preparation we further develop the value-driven leadership approach of the university to challenge leaders to think more critically and apply practically in the culture of the residence; during welcoming period and the rest of the year. Where the welcoming period is not just limited to social gatherings but building of relationships, critical engagements and workshops that begin to deconstruct and challenge the mind-set and way of thinking to be challenged. Leaders must be informed about issues and discuss them by building relationships of the different diversity on campus and various student communities, so we begin to respect and learn about our individual identities and cultures.

Clusters is an initiative which groups student communities (PSO's (student who live in private accommodation and residences) with the goal is to make campus smaller and building relationships and academic accountability. LLL community can further spread throughout the student community by using hub spaces to further be used to drive gender campaigns, personal and academic development where time management sessions are displayed and motivation regarding identity and purpose for personal development, and societies to hold discussions and platform to tell stories further accelerating transformation. Initiatives such as shaken silence taken further, an activism campaign that deals with sexual assault. Human dignity and conscious discussion in these spaces will also be implemented to further

accelerate this process. The academic committees also have responsibility to have termly meetings in their faculties, where lecturers and deans are held accountable to ensure students concerns are addressed and attended to so each student has equal opportunity to achieve academic success, where we as newly elected SRC can facilitate discussions with students and management actively. Martin Luther King Jr: "I see a time when people will not be judged by the colour of their skin but by the content of their character". We can be that time and reconstruct our country and campus into a human consciousness mind-set that ensures institutions can be a home for all. That time is now and its only if we work together we can reach this goal, for a kingdom divided by itself cannot stand. As the Kenyan proverb reads: "Peace is costly but it is worth the expense." We need to be uncomfortable in order to become, and that refers to us all. Thank you.