

POLYTECHNIC OF NAMIBIA



POLYTECHNIC STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL

CONSTITUTION

Office of the Dean of Students

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SRC CONSTITUTION

PREAMBLE

- Whereas we are aware that an organized student body is necessary to ensure unity of purpose and action in line with the Vision and Mission of the Polytechnic of Namibia within the guidelines of the Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994 (Act 33 of 1994) and the Namibian Constitution;
- Whereas in terms of section 5 (f) of the Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994 (Act 33 of 1994) the students of the Polytechnic are a constituent part of the Polytechnic of Namibia;
- Whereas in terms of section 4(e) of the Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994 (Act 33 of 1994) the Polytechnic of Namibia shall aim providing an effective collegial governing structure that encourages active participation of all its constituent parts and reflects the collective input of all interested parties;
- Whereas we believe that vital to every sphere of life, is the ability to work together, liberating one another's energy and creativity towards agreed upon purposes within the guidelines of shared values;
- Now therefore we constitute the Students Representative Council of the Polytechnic of Namibia by virtue of section 21 (1) (a) of the Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994 (Act 33 of 1994).

1. GENERAL PROVISIONS

In this Constitution, unless the context indicates otherwise —

- "the Act" means the Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994 (Act 33 of 1994);
- "Polytechnic" shall refer to the Polytechnic of Namibia as promulgated by Parliament in terms of the Polytechnic of Namibia Act, 1994 (Act 33 of 1994);
- "the Statutes" means the Statutes of the Polytechnic of Namibia;
- "Regulations" means the Regulations of the Polytechnic of Namibia;
- "Council" means the Council of the Polytechnic of Namibia;
- "Senate" means the Senate of the Polytechnic of Namibia;
- "year" means Academic Year of the Polytechnic as prescribed by the Statutes;
- "day" shall mean one calendar day, including weekends;
- words in the masculine shall also include the feminine and *vice-versa*;

- words in the singular shall also include the plural and *vice-versa*;

2. NAME

The name of the body shall be the Students Representative Council of the Polytechnic of Namibia hereinafter referred to as the SRC.

3. AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The SRC shall strive and be dedicated to:

- (1) Give expression and ensure a flexible and appropriate response to the interests, aspirations and needs of the Polytechnic students.
- (2) Emerge as a forum of conciliation within a diverse and multicultural student body.
- (3) Promote and defend a culture of excellence in learning, research and scholarship in the Polytechnic, primarily among the students.
- (4) Promote and cultivate links of cooperation and friendship among students in Namibia and the World.

4. POWERS AND FUNCTIONS

Subject to provisions of the Act, Statutes and Regulations, the SRC shall have the powers and functions to:

- (1) Be the representative body of all students of the Polytechnic.
- (2) Be the liaison and communication channel between the students, on the one hand, and the Polytechnic authorities and outside bodies, on the other.
- (3) Formulate, develop and enforce the terms of reference of its committees and sub-committees as well as the criteria for registration and recognition of any of the Polytechnic's student cultural society, club and sport codes.
- (4) Elect its representatives to sit on the Council, Senate and other bodies of the Polytechnic.
- (5) Be the coordinating body of all intra- and extra-mural activities of the students of the Polytechnic.
- (6) Control and administer equipment and properties allocated to it, in line with the policies of the Polytechnic.
- (7) Perform all such other acts as may be reasonably justifiable in the pursuance of the stated aims and objectives and incidental thereto.

5. THE GENERAL STUDENT ASSEMBLY

The General Student Assembly of the Polytechnic [hereinafter referred to as the GSA] shall be a platform where the student population of the Polytechnic meets to discharge the powers and functions set out hereinafter.

- (1) Every registered student of the Polytechnic shall be a voting member of the GSA.
- (2) The GSA shall have at least two ordinary meetings per year.
- (3) The GSA may hold special meetings at the recommendation of the SRC or at the written request of at least a hundred of its voting members.
- (4) The agenda of the GSA shall be drafted by an Ad-hoc Committee, and be published and circulated at least seven days before the next scheduled meeting.
- (5) Provisions of section 8 hereof shall apply *mutatis mutandis* to the GSA meetings.
- (6) Subject to provisions of this Constitution the GSA shall have the power and functions to :
 - (a) Require the SRC to account for and explain its policies, plans and programmes, from time to time.
 - (b) Receive and discuss reports on the activities of the SRC and make recommendations thereto.
 - (c) Discharge a member of the SRC upon resolving that it has no confidence in such a member of the SRC.
 - (d) Designate or elect the person(s) to fill any vacancies occurring among the elected members of the SRC.
 - (e) Exercise such other functions or powers incidental thereto, subject to provisions herein.

6. MEMBERSHIP

- (1) The SRC shall consist of eleven members elected in terms of sections 10 and 11 hereof plus one representative of the House Committee.
- (2) The SRC members shall hold the following portfolios:
 - (a) President
 - (b) Vice-President
 - (c) Secretary General
 - (d) Secretary for Finance

- (e) Secretary for Internal Affairs
 - (f) Secretary for Academic Affairs
 - (g) Secretary for External Affairs
 - (h) Secretary for Information and Publicity
 - (i) Secretary for Sports
 - (j) Secretary for Culture
 - (k) Secretary for Gender Affairs
 - (l) House Committee Representative
- (3) A member of the SRC may be suspended if a motion of censure is passed on him on the grounds of a systematic infringement of the code of conduct set out hereinafter or of such gross ineptitudes as to render him unfit to hold office with dignity and honour, provided that:
- (a) The said motion is adopted by a two-thirds majority of all the members of the SRC;
 - (b) The SRC reserves the right to reverse or annul the consequences of the said motion at any time after its adoption;
 - (c) The matter is subjected to the GSA under section 5(6) hereof if provisions of paragraph (b) herein are not discharged before its first ensuing meeting.
- (4) A member of the SRC shall cease to hold office if he:
- (a) Ceases to be student of the Polytechnic;
 - (b) Tenders his resignation in writing to the Secretary General of the SRC;
 - (c) Is found guilty of serious misconduct by a relevant Disciplinary Committee of the Polytechnic;
 - (d) Is discharged under section 5(6)(c) hereof.
- (5) The term of office of the SRC members shall be of one (1) year whereupon they shall be eligible for re-election in terms of section 11 hereof.
- (6) If a person is elected into office under section 5 (6)(d) hereof, the period of time during which he holds office shall not be regarded as a term.

7. DUTIES OF THE OFFICE BEARERS

- (1) The President shall:
 - (a) be the chief executive officer and leader of the SRC;
 - (b) preside at sessions of the SRC and GSA;
 - (c) countersign financial and other appropriate documents of the SRC;
 - (d) report on behalf of the SRC on the discharge of all duties;
 - (e) have ultimate responsibility for the implementation of the SRC rules and policies;
 - (f) delegate tasks to any member of the SRC whenever necessary;
 - (g) be an *ex-officio* member of all committees of the SRC.
- (2) The Vice-President shall:
 - (a) assist and deputize for the President;
 - (b) coordinate other portfolios within the SRC on delegation by the President;
 - (c) be an *ex-officio* member of all committees of the SRC.
- (3) The Secretary General shall:
 - (a) be the executive administrative officer of the SRC;
 - (b) be the secretary of the GSA;
 - (c) be responsible for the correspondence of the SRC;
 - (d) give notice and take minutes at all SRC meetings; and
 - (e) record the voting at all SRC and GSA meetings.
- (4) The Secretary for Finance shall:
 - (a) be responsible for the upkeep, administration and maintenance of all financial books, records and transactions of the SRC;
 - (b) prepare and present financial reports to the GSA on behalf of the SRC;
 - (c) be co-signatory of all financial documents of the SRC;
 - (d) inform the SRC members about the financial status of the SRC by presenting verbal reports at all meetings and in writing every three months of the year.

- (5) The Secretary for Internal Affairs shall:
- (a) convene and preside over the SRC Disciplinary Committee;
 - (b) attend to the needs of non-resident students in consultation with the relevant authorities;
 - (c) take measures aimed at safeguarding and maintaining a calm, collegial, decent, disciplined and safe environment on campus;
 - (d) advise the SRC on legal matters after consultation with the relevant authorities.
- (6) The Secretary for Academic Affairs shall:
- (a) represent the SRC at meetings of all Schools and Boards of Studies;
 - (b) attend to all academic student matters in liaison with the Polytechnic authorities;
 - (c) initiate activities aimed at promoting and cultivating a culture of academic excellence among the students of the Polytechnic;
 - (d) address issues regarding the academic progress of the students and make presentation thereof to the relevant authorities;
 - (e) foster communication between students, on the one hand, and lecturers as well as other Polytechnic staff, on the other.
- (7) The Secretary for External Affairs shall:
- (a) cultivate and establish links of communication, solidarity, cooperation and friendship with other student bodies and organizations in and outside Namibia;
 - (b) oversee and monitor the links between the students and other outside bodies in the interest of the students;
 - (c) liaise with the Polytechnic authorities to organize workshops, seminars, public lectures etc, aimed at enhancing the professional, organizational and leadership skills of the students; and
 - (d) safeguard the interests of the international students in liaison with the Polytechnic authorities.
- (8) The Secretary for Information and Publicity shall:
- (a) be responsible for the collection, analysis, publication, and dissemination of information among the students;

- (b) propagate, defend and explain the policies and deliberations of the SRC and GSA;
 - (c) encourage intellectual inquiry, debate and research among the students;
 - (d) promote attitudes of understanding, tolerance of different viewpoints and freedom of speech on the Polytechnic campus; and
 - (e) oversee and co-ordinate the Media Committee.
- (9) The Secretary for Sports shall:
- (a) organise and promote sport activities among the students;
 - (b) cultivate and maintain student sporting links with other academic institutions in liaison with the Polytechnic authorities;
 - (c) cooperate with the relevant authorities in the maintenance and administration of sport facilities and equipment of the Polytechnic;
 - (d) monitor and promote bonds of unity, cooperation and friendship amongst the students;
 - (e) convene and chair meetings of the Sports Committee.
- (10) The Secretary for Culture shall:
- (a) convene and chair meetings of the Cultural Committee;
 - (b) monitor the entertainment of the students on and off campus in consultation with the relevant authorities;
 - (c) advise the SRC on cultural matters after consultation with the relevant authorities;
 - (d) be involved in the promotion of intercultural student exchange programmes.
- (11) The Secretary for Gender Affairs shall:
- (a) initiate projects and organize activities aimed at cultivating gender awareness and sensitivity on the Polytechnic campus;
 - (b) propagate and defend human rights and dignity on campus;
 - (c) advise the SRC and promote its active participation in gender related matters;
 - (d) convene and preside over the meetings of the Gender Committee.
- (12) The House Committee Representative shall:

- (a) represent the House Committee on the SRC;
- (b) attend to all matters of resident students in consultation with the relevant authorities and the House Committee (HC);
- (c) perform such other functions as may be delegated by the SRC and/or HC.

8. PROCEDURE AT MEETINGS

- (1) The SRC shall have no less than two ordinary meetings per term of the year.
- (2) The quorum of the SRC meetings shall be two-thirds of all its members.
- (3) Notices of meetings, the agenda and minutes of previous meetings shall be circulated to all SRC members at least three days before any scheduled meeting.
- (4) The SRC shall hold special meetings at the discretion of the SRC President or at the request in writing, of at least one-third of all its members.
 - (a) No business other than that for which a special meeting was called shall be transacted at the meeting.
- (5) Proceedings at meetings shall be in accordance with the adopted agenda.
- (6) No question that has been debated and decided upon shall be reopened at the same meeting.
- (7) The ruling of the chairperson on a question of order shall be binding, unless immediately challenged by a member, in which event it shall be submitted without discussion to the meeting and the decision of the meeting shall be final.
- (8) The chairperson shall have a deliberative vote and a casting vote in the event of a tie.
- (9) Except where provided for in this Constitution a motion shall be carried by simple majority vote.
- (10) A motion can be amended after it has been proposed and before it has been voted upon.

9. COMMITTEES AND SUB-COMMITTEES

- (1) The SRC may establish committees or sub-committees consisting of member of the SRC or of other members of the student community.
- (2) The SRC may delegate any of its powers to any such a committee or sub-committee, but it shall not be divested of a power so delegated, and a decision of such a committee or sub-committee may be altered or set aside by the SRC at its first ensuing meeting.

- (3) The SRC may assign to any committee or sub-committee such functions or duties as it may deem expedient, subject to the provisions herein.

10. ANNUAL ELECTIONS

- (1) The Electoral Committee (EC) shall conduct general and presidential elections once a year in terms of section 11 hereof.
- (2) General elections shall be conducted to elect the eleven members of the SRC from the nominations received.
- (3) Presidential elections shall be conducted within seven days of the announcement of the results of the general elections.
- (i) Candidates shall be short-listed from among the persons elected herein;
 - (ii) Candidates with the highest and second-highest number of votes shall be the President and the Vice-President, respectively.
- (4) The following portfolios shall be allocated during internal elections of the SRC.
- (i) Secretary General
 - (ii) Secretary for Finance
 - (iii) Secretary for Internal Affairs
 - (iv) Secretary for Academic Affairs
 - (v) Secretary for External Affairs
 - (vi) Secretary for Information and Publicity
 - (vii) Secretary for Sports;
 - (viii) Secretary for Culture
 - (ix) Secretary for Gender Affairs
- (5) Nothing contained in this section shall be construed as inconsistent with and/or derogating from provisions of section 11 hereof.

11. ELECTORAL PROCEDURE

- (1) Candidacy:
- (i) All registered students of the Polytechnic shall be potential candidates for the SRC office.

- (ii) Candidates shall be subjected to a public scrutiny by the student electorate prior to the actual polling.
- (2) Nominations:
- (i) The Electoral Committee shall publish the regulations concerning nominations, two weeks before the deadline for their submission;
 - (ii) Nominees forms shall be available at venues specified by the Electoral Committee (EC);
 - (iii) Nominations shall bear the signature of the nominee, nominator and not less than ten supporters;
 - (iv) Objections to nominations shall be lodged in writing within 24 hours of their publication;
 - (v) If such objections are valid, the nominations objected to shall be withdrawn by the EC.
- (3) Voters Roll:
- (i) The EC shall publish a list of voters made up of all registered students at least 48 hours before the actual polling;
 - (ii) Objections to the voters roll shall be tendered in writing within 24 hours after the first publication;
 - (iii) If such objections are valid, the EC shall make the necessary amendments to the voters roll.
- (4) Polling:
- (i) The EC shall announce the polling venues at least 48 hours before the actual polling;
 - (ii) Voting shall be by secret ballot and the ballot papers shall be provided by the EC;
 - (iii) Polling shall be for the period decided upon and announced by the EC. However, if more than 50% of the potential voters do not vote by the end of the polling period, it shall be extended by 24 hours.
- (5) Counting of ballots:
- (i) The counting of the ballots shall take place immediately after the polling period.

- (ii) The counting of the ballots shall be conducted by the EC in the presence of the candidates or their representatives and the interested members of the student community.
 - (iii) The EC shall declare a spoilt ballot in the presence of the candidates or their representatives and the interested members of the student community.
- (6) Results of polling:
- (i) Results of the polling shall be published by the EC within 48 hours after the counting of ballots.
 - (ii) Objections to results shall be lodged in writing within 48 hours following the announcement of the results.
 - (iii) Should any irregularities whatsoever be discovered and confirmed to have affected the results, the elections shall be declared null and void.
 - (iv) If fewer than 15% of the potential voters participate in the actual polling, the EC shall declare the election null and void.

12. CODE OF CONDUCT

All members of the SRC shall:

- (a) Be conversant with the Act, Statutes and Regulations and other governing documents of the Polytechnic.
- (b) Acquaint themselves with the Constitution of the SRC, accept it, and be consistent with it in word and action.
- (c) Attend meetings of the SRC as well as any other meetings as delegated by the SRC.
- (d) Refrain from utterances and deeds, which might indirectly or directly bring the SRC and/or the Polytechnic into disrepute.
- (e) Refrain from any divisionist tendencies that might result into disunity within the SRC and/or the student community.
- (f) Be committed and accountable to the students and oppose any form of prejudice that might undermine academic excellence and harmony among the students.
- (g) Regard themselves as servants of the students and desist from any conduct by which they seek to alienate themselves from the students.
- (h) Be an example of dedication and commitment as students.
- (i) Conduct themselves above reproach.

13. PRIVILEGES

- (1) Flexibility in academic arrangements shall be afforded to all members of the SRC, subject to approval by the authorities concerned, upon a written application submitted in advance. *Academic arrangements* shall include alternative arrangements for tests, submission of assignments, reports, and other academic obligations.
- (2) A rebate shall be granted to all members of the SRC as specified and on conditions as set out by the Polytechnic authorities from time to time.
- (3) Nothing contained in this section shall preclude the Polytechnic authorities from authorizing further conferment to, or withdrawals from, the SRC members, individually or collectively, as deemed necessary and expedient.

14. INTERPRETATION

The responsibility of the interpretation of the provisions of this Constitution shall be vested in the SRC and any matter or dispute arising in connection therewith shall be decided upon by the Rector after consultation with the Chairperson of Council.

15. AMENDMENTS

- (1) Any amendment of this Constitution shall be adopted by a motion carried by two-thirds majority vote of the GSA.
- (2) No amendment of this Constitution adopted in terms of subsection (1) herein shall be of force unless and until approved by Council.

16. THE TITLE

This Constitution shall be titled "The Constitution of the Students Representative Council of the Polytechnic of Namibia" also referred to as "The SRC Constitution".