

# Constitution of the Student Representative Council

**WATERFORD KAMHLABA UWC OF SOUTHERN AFRICA**

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# I. MISSION

The Student Representative Council (SRC) is an independent, student-run organisation that represents the opinions, concerns, and demands of the student body through democratically elected representatives. It provides a forum for an active discussion of ways to improve the quality of life at Waterford Kamhlaba UWC of Southern Africa.

# II. STRUCTURE

The SRC consists of two Joint Presidents, a Secretary-Treasurer, a number of autonomous committees and representatives from essential constituencies.

## A. COMMITTEES

Each committee can act independently on issues only related to that committee, and is strongly encouraged to do so. However, issues that require coordination of multiple committees are taken to the executive council. Each committee elects two representatives to the executive council.

### **Academics Committee**

The academics committee addresses the academic concerns, opinions and demands of all students and attempts to find viable solutions for them. It consists of one representative per class from each year group from Form 1 to Form 3 and two representatives from each year group from Form 4 to IB2.

### **Activities Committee**

The activities committee addresses the concerns, opinions and demands of all students regarding the extra-curricular activities at school and attempts to find the most viable solution for them. It consists of two representatives from Form 1 to Form 3, two representatives from Form 4 to Form 5, and two representatives from IB1 to IB2.

### **Day-Student Committee**

The day-student committee addresses the concerns, opinions and demands of all day-students and attempts to find the most viable solution for them.

The day-student committee consists of two representatives from Form 1 to Form 3, two representatives from Form 4 to Form 5, and two representatives from IB1 to IB2.

### **Hostel Committee**

The hostel committee addresses the concerns, opinions and demands of all boarding students and attempts to find the most viable solutions for them.

The hostel committee consists of one male and one female representative from each hostel.

## B. CONSTITUENCY REPRESENTATIVES

Representatives from essential constituencies sit on the executive council to ensure proper communication between these constituencies and the SRC.

### **Environment representative**

Members of environmental community service groups and activities meet to elect one representative to sit on the executive council as environmental representative. He or she addresses the concerns, opinions and demands of the various environmental constituencies who work cooperatively to improve environmental awareness within Waterford Kamhlaba and the school's environmental impact on the surrounding community and the world.

### **Link Group**

The link group elects one representative to the executive council.

### **Pastoral Care: Peer Supporters**

The peer supporters elect one representative to the executive council. The representative also chairs a monthly pastoral care meeting with the heads of the day-student and hostel committees where concerns, opinions and demands of all students concerning the pastoral care at school are addressed.

## **C. LEADERSHIP**

### **Executive Council**

The executive council consists of the two Joint Presidents, the Secretary-Treasurer and the representatives defined above. It is a forum for communication between the different committees. Its members coordinate and decide matters that require cooperation or broadly affect the student body. In addition, they coordinate the effort to fulfill the agenda of the leadership.

### **Joint Presidents**

The two Joint Presidents, together with the Secretary-Treasurer, form the leadership of the SRC. They unite the members behind a vision, take initiative, and ensure proper communication across the SRC. It is their responsibility to uphold, defend and respect this constitution. The Joint Presidents chair the executive committee. They work closely with the Principal and Vice Principal to cultivate the implementation of their vision for Waterford Kamhlaba. The Joint Presidents share a full seat, including full voting rights, on the Central Management Group (CMG) and the Governing Council in order to represent the opinions, concerns, and demands of the student body and report on the work of the SRC. Both Joint Presidents sit on the disciplinary committee (DC) at the discretion of the student(s) concerned.

### **Secretary-Treasurer**

It is the Secretary-Treasurer's task to monitor, allocate and increase the funds of the SRC. He or she ensures the effective communication with the student body; this includes taking the minutes of all meetings of the executive committee and publishing them swiftly to the student body.

### III. ELECTION PROCEDURE

All elections are conducted democratically, i.e. all students vote freely, equally, secretly, directly, and annually. The members of the outgoing SRC stay in their positions until the incoming SRC has been fully elected. Individuals can be reelected to the same position once.

#### A. ELECTORAL COMMISSION

The electoral commission (EC) consists of the Form 4 life skills classes and three SRC members, who are elected by the executive council to lead and advise the EC.

The EC's task is to ensure that elections occur in accordance with the democratic principles outlined above. It organises the multiple stages of elections and the campaigning process and provides preemptive election education.

#### B. SINGLE TRANSFERABLE VOTE

All votes follow the procedure of the Single Transferable Vote (STV). STV minimizes wasted votes because votes cast for losing candidates and excess votes cast for winning candidates are transferred to voters' next choice candidates.

- I. Each voter is presented with a list of all of the candidates. The voter then ranks the candidates in order of preference.
- II. The first preferences of all voters are counted. To be elected, the candidates need to reach the quota. The quota is calculated by dividing the number of votes by the number of seats plus one rounded up to the nearest whole number:  $\text{number of votes} / (\text{number of seats} + 1)$ .
  - A. If a candidate reaches the quota, he or she is declared elected and his or her surplus votes are transferred to the other candidates according to their voter's second preferences. This is done using the following formula:  $(\text{number of surplus votes} / \text{number of voters with a second preference}) * \text{number of preferences for a specific other candidate}$ . Votes for candidates who are already eliminated are transferred to the next preference using the same formula.
  - B. If no candidate meets the quota, the candidate with the fewest votes is eliminated and his or her votes are transferred using the same procedure as described in a.
- III. Step II is repeated until there are as many remaining candidates as available seats.

#### C. FIRST ROUND

The members of the academics, day-student, activities and hostel committees are elected in the first week of the second term.

Each year group from Form 1 to Form 3 elects one representative per class to join the academics committee. Each year group from Form 4 to IB2 elects two representatives to join the academics committee.

All students from the three groups Form 1 to Form 3, Form 4 to Form 5, and IB1 to IB2 elect two representatives each to the activities committee.

Day-students from the three groups Form 1 to Form 3, Form 4 to Form 5, and IB1 to IB2 elect two representatives each to the day-student committee.

Each hostel elects one male and one female representative to join the hostel committee.

## **D. SECOND ROUND**

In the third week of the second term the members of each committee elect two chairs. At the same time the constituencies elect their representatives. Together, the chairs and representatives form the executive council.

## **E. THIRD ROUND**

Once the executive council has formed, its members can be nominated or nominate themselves for the position of Secretary-Treasurer or Joint President. If a student who does not sit on the executive council gains the support of 10 % of the student body to take part in the election process, in the form of signatures, he or she can run for the position of Secretary-Treasurer or Joint President.

During the campaigning period, candidates need to outline in 200-300 words why they should be elected, what they want to improve and how they want to achieve this. These written tasks will be published in a space convenient to the whole student body by the EC and the candidates should give a brief summary during assembly.

The candidates will have the opportunity to formally address the student body on three occasions:

- I. The EC create questions and scenarios regarding issues faced at school, and moderate a discussion in which candidates debate the best solution. All students can attend passively.
- II. Town Hall Debate: Students ask questions to the candidates. These can either be directed personally at candidates, or provoke general debate between candidates. This will be moderated by the EC.
- III. Each candidate holds a final speech to convince the student body to cast their vote in their favour.

Before the seventh week of the second term, the student body elects the Secretary-Treasurer and the two Joint Presidents. The Joint Presidents and Secretary-Treasurer lose their prior position and are replaced by the person second in line for said position.

## **IV. CONDUCT**

The SRC works efficiently, proactively, and transparently.

Ideally issues are solved on the committee level. In order to help the committees find solutions efficiently, each committee collaborates with a teacher in charge of their respective area to implement their ideas and to raise concerns.

## **A. MEETINGS**

The hostel, day-student, activities and academic committees as well as the executive council are required to hold weekly meetings. Other committees organise meetings in accordance with their workload, yet are required to hold at least one meeting a month.

A full SRC meeting is held monthly, chaired by the Joint Presidents. The Joint Presidents publish the agenda three days prior to the meeting in a space convenient to the whole student body. All students are encouraged to actively participate in these meetings, at the discretion of the chairs. The meetings are used to discuss and coordinate large projects, and tackle important issues raised in individual committees.

All meetings are mandatory for all members of a committee. Should a member be unable to attend a meeting, he or she has to notify the chairs of their committee of his or her absence prior to the meeting.

All meetings, of all committees, including the executive council, are open to all students to attend and observe. The pastoral meetings are exempt from this as sensitive information may be discussed. In addition, at least every third meeting of each committee, and every full SRC meeting, is open to all students to raise issues and actively participate in discussions, at the discretion of the chairs.

During each meeting every member has the right to express their opinion freely and to be treated with respect and courtesy.

The chairs of committees must ensure that minutes are recorded at every meeting in a record transparent and available to the student body.

## **B. VOTING**

If the members of a committee have not come to a unanimous agreement at the end of a discussion, members vote for their preferred solution through a show of hands. A solution has to reach a simple majority to be accepted. Every member's vote counts equally, unless there is a tie. In that case, the chairs' votes count twice. In the executive council, the Secretary-Treasurer's vote counts twice as well. If no final agreement can be found, the issue is taken to the executive council.

## **C. VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE**

Every student holds the right to raise a complaint over any elected SRC member. There are different procedures for the leadership and any other member of the SRC.

### **Leadership**

A lack of confidence in a member of the leadership can be expressed through:

- I. A vote of no confidence by the executive council where a two-third majority expresses their distrust in the ability of the member of the leadership under review.
- II. An independent, student-led petition supported by 15 % of the student body expressing their distrust in the ability of the member of the leadership under review.

In both cases, a re-election for the position of the member of the leadership under review is called in which the member of the leadership under review can participate.

### **Other Members**

To express a lack of confidence in any other member of the SRC, a written complaint is submitted to the member's superior. Together with the executive council the superior reviews the legitimacy of the complaint and, if approved, places the elected individual under a period of probation lasting four weeks.

After the four weeks, the elected individual presents a personal statement reflecting their improvement. If the superior and the executive council have not witnessed any significant improvement, they call for a re-election for the position in which the individual under review can participate.

### **D. AMENDMENTS**

Amendments to the constitution can be suggested by any member of the student body by submitting a written description of the problem and, if possible, a possible solution to the executive council. Amendments are discussed and voted on during a full SRC meeting. To be approved, an amendment requires a two-thirds majority of all SRC members.