

FINAL

(Approved by the UFS Council on 10 June 2005)

Constitution of the Central Student's Representative Council of the University of the Free State

Preamble

We, the students of the University of the Free State

- will strive to create and maintain an environment conducive to the pursuit of quality education, relevant knowledge and research;
- acknowledge the University as a parallel-medium institution with a multicultural student community;
- are committed to the notions of academic freedom, equality and respect for the fundamental rights enshrined in the Bill of Rights of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa (Act 108 of 1996);
- are committed to the pursuit of a non-racial, non-sexist and democratic student society, free from oppression, exploitation and any form of discrimination;
- strive towards a united student culture to which every student can uniquely contribute and be proud of; and
- pursue the development of community-orientated and holistic intellectuals and a nation-building educational system.

We therefore adopt this Constitution in order to establish a united student representative body with the mission, to promote the interests of the whole of the student body of the University on the basis of the above-mentioned values and within a federal system which recognises the autonomy of campus-specific student governance.

Section 1: Definitions

Unless indicated otherwise by the context, the following meanings apply in this Constitution:

- (a) "CSRC" means the Central Student Representative Council;
- (b) "SRC" means the Student Representative Council of the various UFS campuses;
- (c) "governance structures" means the UFS Council, UFS Senate and UFS Executive Management;
- (d) "University" means the University of the Free State;
- (e) "University day" means any weekday (Monday to Friday) during the academic year, excluding public holidays.
- (f) "students" mean all students registered for formal academic programmes at the University

Section 2: Establishment of the CSRC

A Central Student Representative Council (CSRC) for the UFS's campuses is hereby established.

Section 3: Objectives

In cooperation with other representative and governing institutions of all campuses of the UFS, the CSRC will serve the interests of all students as their elected representatives, without bias or prejudice, and in particular:

- (a) represent all students in negotiations and interactions with the UFS governing structures and at public functions or occasions;
- (b) lead the student community towards transformation and academic development by means of strategic planning and visionary leadership;
- (c) facilitate the improvement of the learning, cultural and recreational environment at the UFS; and
- (d) integrate and promote various student activities.

Section 4: Membership of the CSRC

The following conditions apply to become or remain a member of the CSRC:

- (a) Registration as a student for a formal academic programme at the UFS.
- (b) Membership of one of the three campus SRCs of the UFS .

Section 5: Status

- (1) The CSRC recognises the University Council as the highest body of authority at the University.
- (2) The UFS adopts a federal student governance model, whereby the CSRC is the highest student representative body established in terms of section 35 of the Higher Education Act (Act 101 of 1997) and the Statute of the UFS, in respect of student governance issues of common interest. The campus SRCs retain full autonomy over campus-specific affairs.

Section 6: Composition of the Central Student Representative Council

- (1) The CSRC shall consist of twelve (12) members.
- (2) The CSRC shall have the following office-bearers:
 - (a) a president;
 - (b) two (2) vice-presidents;
 - (c) a secretary-general
 - (d) a sport, arts and culture officer;
 - (e) a treasurer;
 - (f) an academics officer;
 - (g) a transformation officer;
 - (h) a residence affairs officer;
 - (i) a constitutional and legal affairs officer;
 - (j) a projects manager; and
 - (k) a communication officer.

Section 7: Election of members of the CSRC

The three campus SRC presidents automatically are members of the CSRC. In addition, each campus SRC of the UFS elects, in terms of its constitution, a number of additional members to represent that SRC in the CSRC, up to a total of: main campus: 5 members, Qwaqwa campus: 4 members, Vista Bloemfontein campus: 3 members. The election must take place at the first meeting of the campus SRCs during their term of office.

Section 8: Election of office bearers

All office bearers of the CSRC shall be elected by a majority vote of members at the first meeting of the CSRC during its term of office, on condition that:

- (a) the presidency shall rotate on a quarterly basis between the presidents of the three campuses (starting on the first day of each academic quarter);
- (b) the two vice-presidents must represent the two campuses not represented by the president

Section 9: Term of office of members of the CSRC

- (1) The term of office of a member of the CSRC extends for a period of 12 months after his/her election, from 1 October of the year in which the member is elected to 30 September of the following year.
- (2) A member may be re-elected once to hold office in the CSRC.

Section 10: Termination of membership of the CSRC

- (1) A person shall cease to be a member of the CSRC if -
 - (a) he/she is no longer a registered student at the UFS;
 - (b) he/she is found guilty of serious misconduct by a UFS disciplinary body;
 - (c) he/she is found guilty, as decided by majority of the CSRC, of serious neglect of duty as a member of the CSRC;
 - (d) he/she resigns as a CSRC member;
 - (e) he/she is recalled by his/her campus SRC, in terms of the applicable campus SRC constitution;
 - (f) he/she ceases to be a member of the campus SRC;
 - (g) he/she accepts a full-time occupation which, in the view of a majority of the CSRC, disqualifies that person from fully executing his/her CSRC duties;
 - (h) a two-thirds majority of the CSRC passes a motion of no-confidence in him/her; or
 - (i) he/she has been sentenced for any crime in the Republic of South Africa or elsewhere to imprisonment without the option of a fine or a fine of more than R5000.
- (2) (a) If the CSRC becomes aware that a member might be in breach of any of the requirements as prescribed in subsection (1) (c), (g) and (h), the CSRC should inform the member in writing that it intends to terminate the office of the CSRC member.

- (b) The CSRC member who has thus been notified shall have the opportunity at a meeting of the CSRC to submit reasons why his/her membership should not be terminated.
 - (c) If the CSRC, having heard the plea of the CSRC member in question, decides to terminate the office of the CSRC member, such termination shall become immediately effective, providing that the CSRC member shall have the right to appeal to the Student Court for a revision of the decision to terminate his/her office, such an appeal to be lodged within 7 days after termination of office.
- (3) (a) The CSRC president or his/her representative will represent the CSRC in University management and governance structures, where applicable.

Section 11: Functions and powers of the CSRC

- (1) As an institution representing the general student body of the UFS as a whole, the CSRC -
- (a) represents all students of the UFS in negotiations and interactions with the University authorities in respect of matters of common interest;
 - (b) represents all students of the UFS at University functions and public occasions;
 - (c) assists with and facilitates the academic development of all UFS students by means of strategic planning and leadership;
 - (d) contributes in accordance with the fundamental values of the UFS to the achievement of the mission statement of the University;
 - (e) promotes and integrates the variety of student activities in so far as they affect matters of common concern for all campuses;
 - (f) promotes unity and a sense of common loyalty towards the UFS among all students.
- (2) The CSRC has all the powers to fulfil the abovementioned functions, and in particular -
- (a) may, within its mandate, resolve student disputes;
 - (b) is authorized to represent students at central University and national level;
 - (c) may convene central student gatherings on matters of concern for the student body;
 - (d) administers and monitors funds allocated to the CSRC by the University;
 - (e) has the power to appoint tasks teams for particular purposes, provided at least one member of the CSRC assumes responsibility of such a team or committee;
 - (f) may issue publications and shall coordinate or distribute information;
 - (g) may appoint subcommittees of the CSRC.

Section 12: Meetings of the CSRC

- (1) The CSRC must meet at least once (1) per term. The first meeting of a newly elected CSRC must be called by the outgoing president within one week of the election.
- (2) A special meeting may be called by the president and at least one vice-president, or at the request of a third of the members of the CSRC if and when necessary.
- (3) The venue of the meetings shall rotate among the various campuses.
- (4) Proper notice of meetings of the CSRC must be given to all members of the CSRC at least five (5) University days before the meeting and must state at least:

- (a) the date, time and place of the meeting; and
 - (b) the full agenda.
- (5) The secretary of the CSRC must ensure that the full minutes of every ordinary CSRC meeting are available to the members of the CSRC and at the various SRC offices no later than one (1) week after the meeting.
- (6) The CSRC may adopt a code of practice to regulate its meeting procedures, which may be attached to this Constitution as an annexure, on condition that it must respect the language policy of the UFS, with the aid of interpreting services as may be necessary.

Section 13: Voting

Every member of the CSRC represents one (1) vote. In the event of a tie, the president has a deciding vote.

Section 14: Dispute resolution

- (1) The CSRC or any campus SRC may refer a conflict between any decision of the CSRC and any campus SRC to the Dean of Students for resolution. The Dean of Students must convene a joint meeting of the CSRC and the campus SRC to resolve the matter. If the matter cannot be resolved during the meeting, it must then be referred to the Vice-Rector: Student Affairs for resolution of the matter.
- (2) In exercising his/her discretion, the Dean and/or Vice-Rector: Student Affairs should consider -
- (a) whether the conflicting decisions deal with a matter that can only be effectively regulated on a University-wide basis;
 - (b) whether the conflicting decisions deal with a matter that, to be dealt with effectively, requires uniformity on all three campuses of the UFS;
 - (c) whether a specific decision will be unnecessarily harmful to the development and maintenance of student unity and harmony on all UFS campuses;
 - (d) whether a specific decision will undermine equal access of educational opportunities on all three campuses; and
 - (e) whether a specific decision impedes the implementation of University rules and policies.

Section 15: Status of the Constitution

All constitutions, regulations, rules, codes, documents, motions and decisions adopted by any organisation or body constituted by this Constitution, are subject to this Constitution and invalid to the extent that they are in conflict with it.

Section 16: Coming into effect

This Constitution comes into effect on a date to be determined by the UFS Council after approval of the Constitution.

Section 17: Amendment

- (1) Proposals for the amendment of this Constitution can be adopted by a two-third (2/3) majority of the CSRC, except the fundamental provisions (defined in subsection (4)), which can only be amended by way of the adoption of the proposed amendment in a University-wide student referendum
- (2) All proposals for amendment of this Constitution are subject to approval by the University Council on the recommendation of the University Executive Management and the Senate.
- (3) Any member of the CSRC, the campus SRCs, the Student Parliament, the Executive Management or the Senate of the UFS may propose an amendment of the Constitution for the consideration of the CSRC.
- (4) The following provisions can be amended only by way of a referendum: Preamble, sections 5, 9 and 10.
- (5) Any amendments must be ready for consideration at the June meeting of the University Council. Changes effected after that date will only be valid for the CSRC term of the following year.
- (6) Sections 6, 7 and 8 will lapse at the end of August 2006 and must be replaced by appropriate negotiated formulations by the June 2006 Council meeting.

Section 18: Preservation and updating

The secretary general of the CSRC must see to it that this Constitution is preserved at the CSRC office and it must be available on demand to any member of the student body. He/ she must also see to it that all valid amendments to this Constitution are recorded on it and that it is likewise available.