



SCIENCE POSTGRADUATE STUDENT FORUM FRAMEWORK

Developed by Postgraduate Science Representatives

January 2023

SPSF COMMITTEE MEMBERS 2023

Chairperson



Fundile Nyaweni

Vice Chairperson



Aphiwe Magaya

Secretary



Mbokazi Ngayeka

Deputy Secretary



Mongikazi Gxilishe

Treasurer



Itumeleng Zosela

Deputy Treasurer



Bouwer Botha

Public Relation officer 1



Luchian Pullen

Public Relation officer 2



Anesu Machite

Web coordinator 1



Dakalo Singo

Web coordinator 2



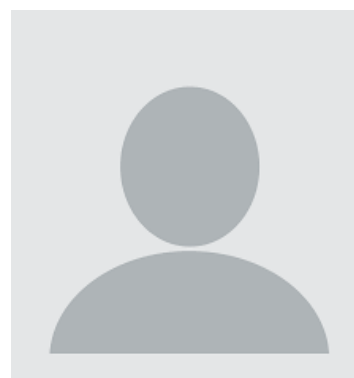
Hermanus Swanepoel

Community engagement officer 1

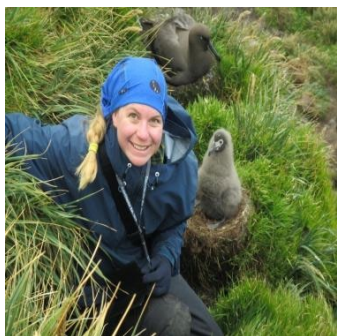


S'busisiwe Vilakati

Community engagement officer 2



Ceica Chioze

Event Coordinator 1*Danielle keys***Event Coordinator 2***Jacqueline Mafemera*

Postgraduate student name	Position in the forum	Qualifications
Fundile S. Nyaweni	Chairperson	2 nd year MSc (Applied Mathematics)
Aphiwe Magaya	Vice-Chairperson	2 nd year MSc(Mathematical Statistics)
Mbokazi Ngayeka	Secretary	2 nd year PhD (Chemistry)
Mongikazi Gxilishe	Deputy Secretary	2 nd year MSc(Geoscience)
Itumeleng Zosela	Treasurer	2 nd year PhD(Physiology)
Bouwer Botha	Deputy Treasure	2 nd year MSc(Computer Science and Information System)
Luchian Pullen	Public Relation officer 1	2 nd year MSc(Physics)
Anesu Machite	Public Relation officer 2	MSc(Botany)
Dakalo Singo	Web coordinator 1	PhD(Physiology)
Hermanus Swanepoel	Web coordinator 2	2 nd year PhD(Natural Conservation)
S'busisiwe Vilakati	Community engagement officer 1	4 th year MSc(Agriculture)
Ceica Chioze	Community engagement officer 2	2 nd year MSc(Oceanography)
Daniele keys	Event coordinator 1	PhD (Zoology)
Jacqueline Mafemera	Event coordinator 2	PhD(Biochemistry)

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Introduction

The Science Postgraduate Student Forum Framework was drafted by representatives of the Faculty of Science as a guide for its interaction and operations within the faculty. All the important agreements that representatives have made on the forum's workings are contained in this document. It is a guide for the members and representatives of the forum and serves as the forum's "founding document."

What is the Science Postgraduate Student Forum (SPSF)?

- This is a forum for postgraduate students, by students. It advocates for the needs of all postgraduate students, addresses issues that arise, and provides support and services that enable the postgraduate experience to be enhanced.
- This forum represents all postgraduate Post diplomas, Honours, Masters, Doctorate, and Postdoctoral fellows enrolled at Nelson Mandela University.
- The purpose of this forum is to advocate for all postgraduate students by working with different stakeholders. The forum is where students can meet and share challenges and solutions to issues they are faced with.
- This Forum stemmed from the Faculty strategy, after the realization of much more needed voices to speak up for postgraduate students regarding the challenges they are faced with in the institution.
- In contrast to the SRC, this structure is separate and independent, primarily focused on postgraduate students.
- This forum is not only in existence to address challenges that postgraduate students are faced with, but thrives to involve postgraduate students in the transformation strategies that the science faculty has planned for its 2030 vision.

Mission Statement

The Science Postgraduate Student Forum will link postgraduate students to decision makers by being a communication link between postgraduate students and the university administration, and also acting as an advocate, protecting the interests of postgraduate students, and working to create a new era where all students can succeed and live in an environment that is substantively equal.

Vision

It is to be a unique forum where postgraduate students do not feel the gap between decision makers and facilitate a successful postgraduate student experience at Nelson Mandela University.

AIMS

- Our aim with this forum is to serve postgraduate students' interests and welfare by directing activities and projects toward their specific needs, which will lead to the development of ethical, engaged, and transdisciplinary research communities for the African Faculty of Science in service to society in the 21st century.
- As a forum, we aim to provide a space to collaborate within the university and other South African institutions in terms of research, development, and innovation since science is universal.
- Provide a space where different departments can communicate with each other in order to collaborate, share resources where possible, and information.
- The forum also intends to support the Faculty of Science goal to be a transdisciplinary African Faculty of Science that responds to society's socioeconomic and environmental challenges.

OBJECTIVES: The objectives of the forum are:

- To provide a platform for postgraduate students to voice their concerns.
- Provide information transfer; communicate postgraduate-related issues to university stakeholders. Also, give back feedback to postgraduate students pertaining to the issues raised.
- Engage the postgraduate science faculty students socially and professionally in a supportive community.
- To assist the science faculty in creating an environment that is friendly and productive for postgraduate students, in that way attracting the quantity and quality of students who decide to further their postgraduate studies at Nelson Mandela University.
- Review policy and correct policies that do not serve postgraduate students.
- Interface with the SRC Science representative on representation on postgraduate matters.

The Pillars of SPSF: The Forum has the following 3 pillars:

- Upholding the community of postgraduate students in the Faculty of Science.
- Transparency and communication between students and the Faculty of Science.
- Integrity and accountability.

FUNCTION OF THE FORUM: The role of this forum is to:

- Facilitate communication and interaction among postgraduate students, undergraduates, post-doctoral fellows, research institutes and researchers.
- Align with the science strategy plan to be a world class Faculty of Science.
- Act as representatives for postgraduate students in the Faculty of Science and bridge a gap between students and faculty(s)/staff. This will be done to allow for grievances, issues and concerns to be raised and heard.
- Seek co-representation of the postgraduate matters with the SRC representative.
- Provide opportunities for different departments in the faculty to work together.

FRAMEWORK OF THE SCIENCE POSTGRADUATE STUDENT FORUM

The Faculty of Science and the SRC have an opportunity to give input to the framework in order to enhance the operational activities of the forum. Amendments can only be made at the general meeting of the forum.

I. Name and Purpose

The Forum constituted in this document shall be called the Science Postgraduate Student Forum (SPSF)

A. The forum shall serve the following purposes:

- Provide open communication, corporation, and exchange of ideas among different departments within the Faculty of Science in Nelson Mandela University.
- To enhance intellectual development between the science faculties and student interactions.

II. Membership for the forum

Any such person, who registers for a Postgraduate degree with the Faculty of Science at Nelson Mandela University gains automatic entry into the forum. i.e. participation in this forum is mandatory for all postgraduate students enrolled at Nelson Mandela University in the faculty of science. Forum members need to have fulfilled the admission requirements and subsequent registration at the faculty. In addition, the following requirements are necessary to constitute active membership:

- a) All members shall accept the framework of the SPSF.
- b) Attendance of at least 75% of all meetings during a given semester.
- c) Active participation in all activities sponsored by the SPSF, unless the event interferes with either scholastic activity or there are financial constraints.

The SPSF openly admits all science postgraduate students as members and does not discriminate on the bases of race, creed, sex, sexual orientation, marital status, personal appearance, age, national origin, political affiliation and physical or mental disability.

III. Representatives

1. All Representatives
 - a) The term of office for each representative shall be approximately one year, until a successor is elected in the following election.
 - b) Re-election of a representative is permitted for a second one year term.
 - c) Only active members who are full-time officially registered students shall be eligible to serve as representative in the SPSF.
 - d) The attendance of each representative at all general and executive meetings shall be mandatory.
 - e) In the event of an unexpected vacancy in any office, vacancies will be filled by a representative vote. An active member may apply to the executive committee to be considered to fill the vacancy.

2. Chairperson

- a) It shall be the duty of the chairperson to preside over all meetings.
- b) The chairperson shall be responsible for the preparation and distribution of agendas for each general membership meeting.
- c) The chairperson shall also serve as chair in the executive committee.
- d) The chairperson shall be particularly responsible for the position of the SPSF within the faculty and university community and to perform his/her duties in such a manner as to maintain the SPSF in the highest esteem.

3. Vice Chairperson

- a) The duties of the Vice Chairperson shall include all the Chairperson duties during the absence of the Chairperson.
- b) The Vice-Chairperson is also charged with the procurement of speakers and other special programming incidental to the regular general membership meetings.

3. Secretary

- a) The duties of the Secretary shall include maintaining all the written records of the Science Postgraduate Student Forum and particularly the minutes of all regular and executive meetings.
- b) Minutes shall be made available to the general membership via emails or the SPSF WhatsApp group.
- c) The secretary duties shall include updating the Science Postgraduate Student Forum committee.
- d) The secretary shall also be responsible for sending out thank-you cards to speakers and other individuals as directed by the Executive Committee.

4. Treasurer

- a) The duties of the Treasurer shall include receiving all SPSF funds, keeping a full and accurate account of these funds and depositing all money into the account at the Finance Office.
- b) The Treasurer shall also interact with the Finance Office on behalf of the SPSF. Fund disbursement may not be made except by approval of the Chairperson or by a majority vote.

- c) The SPSF account shall be current at all times and a full financial report shall be available upon demand of any SPSF member or advisor.
- d) The Treasurer shall be required to be present the account balance and all transactions at each general meeting.
- e) The Treasurer shall arrange transportation to all SPSF functions that require the services of University Fleet Operations.
- f) Finances will be audited.

5. Public Relation officer

- a) The duties of the Public relations officer (PRO) is to communicate, public relations, and public affairs for the forum. The PRO, either alone or with the help of a team, is responsible for conducting and managing all PR events and media relations for the forum
- b) Create innovative and engaging public relations and media campaigns.
- c) Create promotional events to promote the forum and its purpose.
- d) Write, edit and review all media content and press releases.
- e) Handle PR related issues.
- f) Serve as a spokesperson of the forum.
- g) Market the forum to the rest of the university.
- h) Submit PR reports.

6. SPSF- Web coordinator

- a) Up to two Web coordinators to manage and direct the activities of traffic on the forum's website.
- b) To publish content, maintain continuity of themes, design the layout, streamline navigation and increase the forum's online presence.
- c) Produce and update existing web content.
- d) Web-coordinator will be working closely with PR.

7. Community engagement officer:

- a) Up to two community engagement officers will develop and deliver a programme of engagement activities including community engagement, events, exhibitions and school-university engagement.
- b) To develop a programme of engagement that supports the vision of the SPSF.
- c) To horizon scan for new opportunities and keep up to date with development in public engagement.
- d) To coordinate, plan and organise activities events locally and online.
- e) To plan, conduct, analyse and report the findings from evaluation of engagement activities.

8. Event coordinator:

- a) Up to two event coordinators to oversee social event activities of the postgraduate forum.
- b) Assigns responsibilities to forum members.
- c) Ensures that social event tasks are completed by forum members.
- d) Coordinates social events (e.g. meetings, gatherings, etc.).

A members -at -large, who sit on current and future committee as the need arises

Filling unexpired vacancies:

- a) At this meeting, nominees will be considered for the following vacancy and elections will be held as well.
- b) In the event that no candidate obtains the majority (50%+1), the candidate receiving the lowest number of votes is eliminated, and the active members need to cast a second vote.
- c) Whenever unexpired terms are being filled, any member of the Forum may nominate another member by raising his/her hand and indicating so.

IV. General Meetings

- During the academic year, the representative's team of the forum will meet once a month. A quorum is required in order to commence with a meeting.

- During the academic year, the student forum will hold teleconference meetings at least once a month, with all members able to participate. Each student will receive advance notice of meetings and agendas from their local chair. Those wishing to present their ideas/projects to the Forum must notify the chairperson one week in advance, and only items deemed "emergencies" will be considered after that.
- Important proposals such as the amendment of the constitution and termination of any members of the Executive Committee can only be passed when there are votes from two-thirds of the attending active members.

The General Meeting can exercise the following authority:

- a) Explain the constitution
- b) Revise the constitution
- c) Elect or dismiss members of the Executive Committee

Other duties that should be exercised by the General Meeting.

V. Voting

1. Eligibility

- All the SPSF representatives and members will be granted voting privileges (*including any discussed matters or rules*).

2. Election Process:

- a) All officers shall be elected by a majority of eligible voting members of the SPSF. All elections will be held on an annual basis.
- b) Candidates vying for a position within the Executive Committee shall present a brief manifesto to the forum.
- c) The President/Electoral Officer will take nominations from the floor. The nomination process must be closed and the movement seconded.
- d) The nominated parties will be allowed to vote.
- e) Elections shall be conducted by an Open Ballot System.

- f) In the event of a member of the forum resigning, that post should be filled at a meeting of the forum by the same election process as in Article III.

3. Removal

Any representative of the SPSF in violation of the forum's purpose or constitution may be removed from the office by the following process:

- a) A written request by at least three representatives of the form.
- b) Written notification to the representative of the request, asking the officer to be present at the next meeting and defend themselves
- c) In the event a representative in the SPSF department does not perform well, the members of the SPSF can write a written request / petition to remove him/her.

A two-thirds (2/3) majority vote is necessary to remove the representative.

VI. Finances

The SPSF will finance the activities it engages in by the following means:

1. Financial assistance from the Faculty of Science
2. Fundraising activities
3. Sponsorships

The SPSF will submit a budget to the Dean of the Faculty of Science on an annual basis and request funding appropriate to the effective operation of the forum for each year. Such funds will be allocated to a cost centre established for such purposes and will only be accessible by the chairperson and Treasurer of the SPSF.

VII. Elections

The elections will be held according to the same voting process in Article V.

VIII. Amendments to the framework

Section 1: The student forum representatives shall prepare proposed amendments and submit them in writing to all Student Forum members at least two weeks prior to the proposed vote.

Section 2: Student forum representatives will determine the final tally of proposed amendments based on results of the vote at the voting station.

Section 3: A 2/3 majority vote of those present at the meetings is required for the approval of the amendments of this constitution, provided that a quorum has been established and the conditions in Section 1 have been met.

IX. Accessibility of this framework

Copies of this constitution shall be made available to anyone upon request.

X. QUORUM

- a) A general quorum of the SPSF shall be defined as two-thirds ($\frac{2}{3}$)- the average of members (including representatives) present at the previous three meetings
- b) A general quorum is required for any and all agenda items requiring a vote. The secretary shall insure quorum prior to all voting on any matter.
- c) Announcements, outside correspondences, and topic discussion may be performed in the absence of quorum.

XI. Advisor

- a) This Forum must retain an advisor at all times. The advisor will be a full-time Faculty Science or Staff member of the Faculty of Science at the Nelson Mandela University and will be chosen by the forum. He or She will sign a statement acknowledging his or her responsibilities and knowledge of the safety guidelines in place.
- b) This Forum will choose an advisor through a majority vote.