

STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE COUNCIL: ADDRESSING INFORMATION NEEDS OF STUDENTS AND EVALUATION OF INFORMATION DISSEMINATION CHANNELS USED BY THE SRC OF THE UNIVERSITY OF LIMPOPO

M Ntsala and MR Mahlatji

University of Limpopo

ABSTRACT

Students' representative formations in institutions of higher learning are responsible for governance and administration of students' academic matters. That is, they lead and represent students on various platforms on or outside university campuses. For the Student Representative Council (SRC) to be truly representative, it has to have information about matters affecting students and also how the university functions. This will enable students to access information on policies, academic rules and any other information that affect them. The term access, in this article, is taken to mean ability to obtain, read, understand and apply the information efficiently and effectively. It is imperative for students to know the role of the SRC, its activities and challenges that affect students. This will allow active participation of students in university activities and SRC administration to enhance students' wellbeing at the university. This article argues that there are many students who need SRC intervention upon violation of certain academic policies and rules. It is worth noting however, that due to the inaccessibility of SRC, some of such students are left with little or no information to address their challenges. This is in spite of the fact that the SRC is mostly considered to be better positioned to educate and make information accessible to the students. It is for this reason that this article has sought to investigate how the SRC at the University of Limpopo learn about student's information needs. It is important that students get the right information, at the right time, at the right place, in the right format using the right information dissemination channel. Moreover to evaluate the dissemination channels in use to reach the entire student body. The article concludes by illustrating how the accessibility of such channels can be improved.

Keywords: Information needs, Dissemination channels, Communication channels, Student Representative Council, Policies and procedures.

1. INTRODUCTION

Studies on students' governance show that Students Representative Councils (SRCs) remain the important stakeholder of academic institutions worldwide and are responsible for students' governance (Klemenčič, 2012). Klemenčič indicates that SRCs are the fulltime governing body entrusted with specific matters by their constituency and university management. In the South African context, the SRCs are now considered to be statutory structures as provided for in terms of section 35 of the Higher Education Act 101, of 1997. Section 35 of the Higher Education Act 101 of 1997 allows for the establishment of the SRC which has jurisdiction over students' matters. SRCs represent students on forums such as School boards, Faculty boards, Senate and University Councils. In this case the SRC have to exercise authority over students and hear students' cases or issues.

It is clear that the SRCs serve as a link between the student body and the university management. To ensure success of student affairs on campuses, SRCs should liaise closely with students in order to understand the needs and challenges facing students they represent. Through their services, SRCs lead various activities and are responsible for coordinating formation of students' organisations, societies and clubs in order to enhance the university environment for students. This suggests that SRCs, as leadership bodies,

need to have access to quality information for good governance. Characteristics of good information are (Wright, 2013):

- Valid: - information should be accurate and reliable to ensure that no misunderstandings occur, as this could lead to a wrong decision being made.
- Reliable: - To ensure that information is valid and not sourced from someone/somewhere that is known to spread disinformation.
- Fit for purpose: - Information should be relevant to the students, for example information about examination rules should be given to students, not staff promotions.
- Accessible: - making sure that information is available for use by any student that needs it is important because it could be the difference between the correct and wrong decision.
- Timely: - Information should be obtained and used in a timely fashion to ensure that any decisions being made are made as easy as possible.
- Reliable", "timely", "fit for purpose" to mention a few. Quality information is important for the SRC because it can assist it with planning, making informed decisions

and solving students 'problems effectively. As such, information remains an important resource for enabling SRCs to undertake their responsibilities effectively.

- Understandable by the user: - If information isn't understood then it cannot be considered usable information in the first place and would be pointless to gather from the start. When developing information, it is important that it is what the user requires and that they are able to understand it.
- Communicated by an appropriate channel of communication (Lucey, 2005:20)

According to Appiah (2012:3) information dissemination channels and can be grouped as (i) people intensive (room to room campaign, rally/students gathering and encounter in the lectures halls) (ii) mass media (radio, newspapers, magazines, posters), and (iii) information communication technologies (text messages, emails, social networks:- Facebook, twitter and WhatsApp). Hence, this article focuses on how SRCs use information to maintain good governance and which idcs are used at the University of Limpopo. To map out the role of SRCs in addressing information needs of the students at the university, it is crucial to firstly to explain the conceptual framework that underpins this article.

2. CONCEPTUAL AND THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Like any formal structure the SRC should have a constitution. According to Bonakele, *et al* (2003), SRC constitution is a basis for the operation and management of the SRC, and defines the purpose of existence of the SRC as an organisation responsible for the needs of students. Klemenčič (2014), Klemenčič, Luescher and Mugume (2016), and Luescher-Mamashela and Mugume (2014) added that members of the SRC have to execute their duties in accordance with the provisions of the SRC constitution. The SRC constitution is regarded as a written enactment of the will of the student body. Such a constitution also provides for a less chaotic and non-confrontational manner of addressing disagreements with the development of policy and practice within students' governance (Bonakele, Mxenge, Thabakgale, & Tabane, 2003: 7). Some of the functions of SRCs are summarised as follows (Bonakele, *et al*, 2003):

- To address the needs of all students in the university.
- To keep the students informed about the events in the university and in the university community.
- To encourage good relationships within the university between learners and academics, and between students, administrative and support

staff (health centres, library- and counselling services.)

- To establish, for the benefits of students in the university, fruitful links with SRCs in other universities

The UL SRC is also expected to adhere to its constitution. It is the role of the UL SRC to forge links within the university and identify the challenges that the University and its students faces. This can be achieved when the SRC has the responsibility to gather and report valuable information to students and thus show interest in the student daily information needs.

The formation of the SRC in various universities is based on these three models namely, Liberal Democracy Model, Direct Model approach and Representative Democracy Model (RDM) (Perkin 2006; Bukaliya & Rupande, 2012). The Liberal democracy model postulates that a representative democracy is one in which the ability of the elected student representatives to exercise decision-making power is subject to a constitution incepted by the students to guide the operations, a constitution which emphasises the protection of students rights and freedoms and regulates the actions leaders against making unpopular decisions (Dahl, 2000). The direct model approach posits that in an organised institution, students participate in the decision-making of the organisation personally, contrary to relying on intermediaries or representatives. The direct de-

mocracy model gives the voting student population binding orders to its elected representatives, such as recalling them before the expiry of their term in office (Bukaliya & Rupande, 2012). The RDM apparently is of major use today in most institutions of higher learning including the UL. The RDM involves elections and the organisation with plurality of the votes becomes student council to represent the wishes and desires of the student body (Bukaliya & Rupande, 2012). This takes the form of negotiations, and lobbying on behalf of students (SRC Kwame Nkurumah University Science and Technology, 2014/2015). At UL on an annual basis the SRC elections are held whereby different organisations such as South African Student Congress Organisation (SASCO), Pan Africans Student Movement of Azania (PASMA), Students Christian Organisation (SCO), and Economic Freedom Fighters Students Command (EFFSCO) canvases to be elected as student representatives.

The student representatives are elected by the student body to act on their behalf and in their interest; they retain the freedom to exercise their own judgment as how best to do so (Dahl, 2000). The RDM seems to be the most preferred as it clearly describes the role of SRCs as to represent the student body which elected them for that purpose. This does not conclude that the model has no flaws.

Bloch (2016:18) agrees that SRCs

must represent all students. This could be possible if the SRC serves as the voice for all students by presenting issues as are necessary for smooth academic environment. The challenge with this is that even at UL like any democratic organisation, the majority rules. Allegations have been made of the UL SRC as serving the interests of the majority of the students who voted for them. Klemenčič (2014) notes that the SRCs have been blamed for not defending student interests, but end up serving the interests of the political parties to which elected student representatives belong to. SRCs are political party wings and/or student branches. The situation is the same at UL where students' branches belong to political parties such as African National Congress (ANC), Economic Freedom Front (EFF) and Pan African Congress (PAC). There are eleven students' branches at UL in 2016.

The SRC is expected to intervene and act on behalf of students. In representing and providing information to students, the SRC should be able to identify the needs and challenges of the students hence use of the information foraging theory as a framework for this article. The Information Foraging theory is deemed necessary in the context of this article as it describes how UL SRC addresses students' information needs and evaluates information provision channels used.

The *Information Foraging Theory* is drawn from Biology and Anthro-

pology and refers to activities associated with assessing, seeking, and handling information (Pirulli & Card, 1995). The relevance of this theory lies in the fact that in order for the SRC to provide quality information to students, it should be able to assess the quality of information and if it addresses students' information needs. Moreover the SRC has to obtain information from various sources so that they govern effectively. The information foraging theory suggests that people should shape their behaviour to the information environment, and for the information provider (SRC) to know how information environment can be best shaped to people (students). This call for students to know which IDCs are used by the SRC. For example, UL-SRC prefers distribution of pamphlets next to major entrances, walls next around campus, next to SRC offices and more important is for students to attend mass meetings so that they have access to quality information. At the same time the SRC should also be cognisant of the idcs that can reach majority of the students. This theory is critical to this article as it is important to understand how UL SRC assesses and identifies students' information needs to ensure that the right information for the right student at the right time. The foraging of information refers to grouping information items into specific format and sources within space and time.

In addition, the foraging of information includes Information

patch model and information diet model. Pirolli and Card (1995) explain information diet model to refer to ranking the information by its profitability divided by the amount of time required to handle it, while Information patch model refers to displaying of information in reasonable packages and categories in a scrollable manner in which it will be easier to decide which one is relevant or not. The Information diet model alerts the UL SRC that it should recognise that there is too much information circulating at university for students. Moreover, the SRC should determine which information is important for which students. The SRC should take into account that students have academic activities to complete within specific time-frames; as such the information disseminated should be arranged according to its importance and for the students to afforded reasonable time to access it.

On the other hand, the information patch model recommends that information should be arranged according to title/topic/theme so that the students should be able to scan it and decide whether it is relevant for them to read it. For example, it is expected that the agenda to list specific items to be discussed in the meeting. On the same note while in the meeting, the agenda should be followed to avoid derailing the purpose of the meeting. Even the disseminated pamphlets should not cover too many issues which at times are unrelated or have no

relevancy to students 'issues'. Simply stated, the SRC has to provide information which is relevant to students. For example, during university orientation the SRC should talk to new students about what the SRC is about, what they do, university policies, rules as some new students may have no idea about life at a university in general.

The SRC should put across as much information as possible so that students may lead successful and effective academic life during their university years. To have a better understanding SRC governance and information dissemination channels, students' information needs will follow.

3. SRC AND STUDENTS INFORMATION NEEDS

SRCs exist for the benefit of the students in order to help students share ideas, interests, and concerns without tutors, other members of different faculties, administrative staff and to build harmonious relationships between students themselves (Bukaliya & Rupande, 2012: 74). According to Luescher (2009) in most universities in Kenya, the students' unions also supplement the services that are offered by the university. These include information dissemination on matters such as assistance with academic and administrative problems, peer counselling, the provision of financial assistance for needy students, offering study facilities and services, and running

businesses such as bookstores, Internet cafés, tuck shops and restaurants (2012: 74). Ledwaba when interviewed by Luescher-Mamashela (2013: 79) indicated that during his time as SRC leader at University of Cape Town (UCT) SRC focus on an institutional level was on academic matters such as ensuring that the academic calendar was not hostile to students, focused on academic development programmes and academic support staff, and academic exclusion of students. Another generally applicable issue would be engagement to ensure that fees do not necessarily go up, he added.

At some stages students' needs have led to protests that were experienced in most South African universities but the *article* focusses on those that affected UL. i.e

3.1.ACADEMIC MATTERS

It is vital that the SRC gather information from their constituencies about issues brought before the meetings and authorities as well as about any issue that their constituency might have (Bukaliya & Rupande, 2012: 75). This could be information on policies and rules that govern teaching and learning which are very crucial so that students are not taken off guard when they have to appear before disciplinary structures or are excluded from the university depending on the individual circumstances. The role of the SRC when it comes to exclusion is to advise and intercede on behalf of stu-

dents who have become financially or academically excluded in the past academic year (The Dailyvox, 2015). At UL the university rules are covered in printed general university calendars and the website. The SRC is expected to be conversant with application of rules in a practical situation. In most cases when students face academic exclusions the first place they turn to for help is SRC chambers. The UL SRC should be able to provide information such as grounds for students' exclusion, appeals' procedures and the role of students' counselling services in general.

Challenges tackled by UL SRCs are many and varied. There were instances where students raised concerns about extension of library hours, inadequate technologies, financial matters, accommodation and transport. The commitment to serve students was realised when UL SRC attended to the following issues as ... in the letter dated. The letter read as follows;

On the library issue the SRC warned "*that if the management does not comply to this commitment we are going to occupy the library and become the staff of the library unit until the University employs enough staff who are going to be on full operation at 08h00-00h00*".

As from 08 March 2016 the library operated from 08h00 to 00h00,

however the question is whether opening for longer hours has translated into use of library resources or the library is merely used as a space for reading because residences tends to be noisy in most cases.

3.2. TECHNOLOGICAL EQUIPMENTS

Universities need to ensure that students have adequate access to technological equipments such as computers to enable them to improve access to information they need for their studies. Students have to type their assignments, search online databases and internet as well as to access blackboard facilities. The study by Mansor and Nor (2011) established that SRCs also needs to use technology to communicate with students about planned and unplanned notices of the mass meetings, postponement of academic assessments (tests and examination), social events such sports and entertainment. The fact that the university does not have enough computers is frequently mentioned in the SRC memoranda to management (Zha, Gao & Ni 2013).

3.3. FINANCIAL MATTERS

Financial information that students require includes information on how National Students Financial Assistance (NSFAS) operates, when to apply, what other financial assistance such as the merit bursary by the university are available, who qualifies, etc. The SRC intervenes so that students qualify

for NSFAS funding even though it may not cover all the fees. SRC members sometimes are not aware of the information to provide with regard to financial matters. The Department of Higher Education and Training (Maflika, 2016) has organised roadshows to capacitate student leaders on issues such as tuition fees. Some SRC Presidents and Secretaries General submitted a list of demands to the Ministry of Higher Education at a meeting on 15 January 2016 (Ministry Higher Education and Training, Republic of South Africa, 2016). The letter covers progress made on (1) No financial exclusions in 2016 (2) the historic debt that must be cleared (3) free registration for all students. At the meeting of the SRCs with the Minister of Higher education alluded to the fact that some of the issues are the responsibilities of universities, while others are systemic and therefore the responsibility of the Ministry. This response may cause frustrations between the SRC and their constituencies. How much of this information was the SRC aware of? Maflika (2016) indicated that there is communication breakdown between students and university management. The UL SRC like other campuses led marches concerning NSFAS. This reaction by the SRC makes one to question how much information they have on how NSFAS functions or ask why the protests take place on campus instead of directly contacting NSFAS head offices.

3.4.ACCOMMODATION, SECURITY AND TRANSPORT

The other issue that has featured predominantly on the agenda of SRCs across most campuses in South Africa is students' accommodation. South African universities have a challenge of a high number of students who cannot be accommodated on campus and have to find accommodation outside campus. UL also experiences such a challenge. Even though accommodation is available in the neighbouring Mankweng Township, where the university is situated, most students may still need to know about crime and transport to campus. There are times when they have to write tests up to 19h00 or study at the library until late in the evening. The UL provides transport for students who live off campus even though it's still a logistic challenge. It's impossible to drop off students at their respective gates due to narrow streets and footpaths. This make females to remain vulnerable and fear walking late by themselves.

3.5.PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT SKILLS

First entering students arriving on campus university for the first time are responsible for their choices such as making decisions relating to budgeting, health, entertainment to mention a few. Unlike other universities UL has a Peer Support Programme where se-

nior students mentor first entering students (mentees) adjust socially and academically to the university life. Nevertheless the SRC remains an important source of information and support to students in dealing with any form of harassment from other students and lecturers (Klemenčič, 2014). In February of 2016 the UL SRC issued a strong worded pamphlet which read as follows "We would like to urge all our female students to report all cases of sexual harassment to the office of SRC as we are totally against these devilish acts that are being done to our future mothers and parents of this country."

3.6.RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Constitution of the Republic of South Africa 1996 guarantees individual rights. The Constitution guarantees the students' right to protest, the right to information, but these right go with responsibilities. These rights mean that individuals should be informed on how to behave under different situations. Budoo (2016) a project officer at Human Rights Commission commented that some female protestors marched half naked at Rhodes University concerning the rape claim. This action by half naked female students was at the same time violating the Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and related Matters) Amendment Act 2007 Section 3 (2), she added. The Criminal Law (Sexual Offences and related Matters) Amendment Act 2007 Section 3 (2) provides that

'any person who is 18 years or older who wilfully and openly exhibits himself or herself in an indecent dress or manner at any door or window or within view of any public street or place or in any place to which the public have access, shall be guilty of an offence'. This provision was enacted taking into account all the requirements of section 36 of the Constitution of the Republic of South Africa and therefore, irrespective of the emotions that one is experiencing, legally speaking, nudity as a form of protest is not allowed in South Africa (Budoo, 2016). One may question whether the Rhodes University SRC had information regarding violation of others rights and responsibilities by half naked female protesters. Therefore, even if one is filled with emotions, one is not allowed to exhibit himself or herself during protests as this is violation of other peoples' rights. When students are informed they are expected to make better decisions and avoid unnecessary legal repercussions.

3.7.HISTORIC SYMBOLS

UL (formerly University of the North) renamed its buildings, residences, public spaces, and streets after certain political struggle stalwarts as far back as 1993. For instance Tiro Hall is named after Abram Onkgopotse Tiro who was elected president of the Student Representative Council (SRC) in 1972. On other campuses, African students studying in former White universities rejected and destroyed statues associated with colonial-

ism and apartheid. Politicians and concerned individual rejected the move as they indicated that the National Heritage Resources Act of 2009 outlines the consultative processes that should be followed in the case of the removal of a statue. This may be information protesting students and the SRC lack. Matebesi as cited by South African Broadcasting Corporation (2015) maintains that the removal of these statues would deny future generations the opportunity to know the history of South Africa.

4. INFORMATION DISSEMINATION CHANNELS

As the representatives of the student body, the SRC has a responsibility to report valuable information to their fellow students. It is vital that they gather information from their constituencies about issues brought up in meetings with authorities as well as about any issues that their constituency might have (Wang & Salo, 2009). Lines of communication between different sections of the university community must always remain alive, open and never allowed to get blocked (Appiah 2012:3).The information dissemination channels mainly used by UL SRC are;

4.1. Mass meetings

The SRC in most universities are usually expected to hold regular and annual general mass meetings as indicated in their respective constitution. Mass meeting refers to

large or general assembly to discuss or hear discuss some matters of common interest or concern (Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2005). During these meetings, SRC leadership learns about students' needs, informs them about University management decisions and provides information about activities on campus and so on. Mass meetings are used for information gathering exercises in order to allow student leaders to understand the needs of students. Furthermore, it is also a way for students to engage the governing authority so as to ensure that their information needs are met (Ballard, 2008:168).

Despite the mass meetings being a common feature in most campuses, it is notable that they have on many occasions failed to attract large numbers of students. In a study by Mugume and Luescher (2015: 11) on politics of student housing at the University of Ghana, established that some students were discouraged from attending SRC's mass meetings because they tended to turn into party-political contests rather than focusing on trying to constructively resolve the challenges facing students. This implies that mass meeting are not always relevant platforms to disseminate the information to students.

Regarding accountability, the main complaint was that the student leaders do not report back to them on certain matters in mass meetings and that they demonstrate little political willingness to

the student during their term in office (Koen, Cele & Libhaber, 2006: 409). Another challenge is political apathy which according to Nyundu, Naido and Chagon-da, (2015:151) it is when some students do not see the need to be actively involved in SRC or student politics. Apathy can be simply described as the behaviour which reveals a lack of interest in an issue, due to prioritising personal or individualistic concerns. Students have also been described as disinterested in politics, disillusioned with the manner in which protests and negotiations takes place and as wanting on everyday issues (Chimanikire, 2009:46).

4.2.Pamphlets

Another way through which SRCs communicates with students is through distribution of pamphlets throughout the university campuses. Hubbard (2006) indicated that pamphlets have the ability to reach a large audience if distributed correctly. This author further stated that when using pamphlets as channels of information dissemination, one has total control over what is said and how it's said (2006). Pamphlets are regarded as the most basic style that gives information on particular subjects explains how things are done (Dhawan, 2009). At UL pedestrian gates are used as key points for distributing such pamphlets mainly for off campus students. This does not mean that students pick up the pamphlets.

4.3. Participation during Protests

When the SRC calls for protests about students issues it represents all or some students' groups. Badat (2016:18) cites an earlier work by Lenin on four kinds of students' groupings;

- One kind is affiliated to and represents particular positions
- A second kind of students' grouping is 'indifferents'- those that are unresponsive and detached from the student protest movement.
- A third kind, 'reactionaries' are opposed to the protest movement.
- A fourth kind, 'academics' believe that student movements should be concerned with academic issues.

Since the SRC represents all students it has to find a balance to make sure that the rights of those who do not want to join should be respected, however on many occasions students were chased out of classrooms, the library and residences. Mafilika (2016) concluded that protests are largely based on lack of information on matters that affected students.

4.4.Social networking

It is common finding the youth

hooked onto their cell phones accessing social networking sites while on streets, aboard transport, in school and at home (Mansor & Nor 2011). Social networks such as Facebook, twitter, WhatsApp groups may be used during SRC elections or making an announcement on envisaged protests or information on 'going back to academic activities'. The SRC should realise that the power of the #hashtags have grown tremendously in popularity. A warning to both the SRC and students is that they should remember that on social media is sometimes difficult to authenticate the source and accuracy of the information.

4.5.Community Radio

Community Radio has obligation to the community it serves. Community radio is essential, democratic, and participatory and should put the information needs of the community they serve. AT UL Radio Turf caters for the university community and surrounding rural villages. It's one of the channels the UL SRC could use to announce academic related matters. Research is needed to know if students do listen to Radio Turf.

5. CHALLENGES TO IMPROVED INFORMATION PROVISION

Sometimes it does happen that the SRC fails to address some of the demands adequately or at all. Advantages, limitations and issues associated with student participation in university decision making have been explored in

earlier studies (Zuo & Ratsoy, 1999: 3). Bonakele, *et al* (2003:29) warns that the challenges facing student's governance today cannot be resolved simply by constitutional acumen. Proper administration of student governance can, however, go a long way in providing an excellent basis from which these challenges can be tackled.

This article would not attempt to solve all the challenges individually, but will address the role the SRC should play in relation to understanding students' informational needs in order to remain credible among students. Bloch (2016:18) better addresses the SRC role when he stated that while SRC represent all students, they still represent that majority who voted for them as such one expects them to assist students at large. As SRC they have to decide amongst many students priorities. He appealed for them to do the work and give feedback to students. He urges that "By all means, lead the protests, even disrupt and challenge the law where needed. But tell students the consequences of your and their actions. Democracy means telling the students the truth, even as you lead them forward", Bloch concluded.

According to Obondo in Mwangi, (2015: 24), student representatives have also been noted to have the capacity to diffuse potential conflicts. This, they can do through regular meetings with their members and administrations, designing mechanism for regular communication, thereby restraining

their fellow students from unnecessary conflicts. However, reports on some protests that took place in 2015 in South African have shown that in many protests that took place at various campuses from 2015 were infiltrated or hijacked by people who were not students (Laterza & Manqoyi, 2015). Badat (2016) remarks about the actions taken outside the channels of the SRC's, whose credibility has been called into questions in instances, as "hooliganism" is unfortunate, as is the seemingly hostile attitude to student strikes, even if they are mobilised by groups other than the SRC. Bloch warns that the SRC should not allow minority take over, and should insist on recognition of the votes of the students by doing the work required (Bloch, 2016:18).

The interference of politicians in students' affairs has become a problem in the various universities, it is high time students resisted such a phenomenon (National Union of Ghana Students NUGS, 2011). The NUGS communiqué pointed out that such elected students leaders become "pawns" of politicians neglecting their key responsibilities such as championing the cause of Ghanaian students for which reason they were elected. Jansen is the only vice-chancellor, who, in light of experiences in the rest of Africa, has on the Bloemfontein campus prohibited political party affiliation. The SRC is non-partisan; candidates must be non-partisan although they wear party insignia (Cloete, 2008).

The other negative impact includes high levels of competition between parties, especially around election time. This allows for national politics to invade student politics, and for student leaders to become so 'captured' to the extent that their activism no longer represent students' interests but those of their respective political parties. In 2013, Mugume and Luescher-Mamashela (2015) undertook a more detailed study of Makerere University in Uganda. In this study, they found that different kinds of resource exchanges are contributing towards understanding the relationships, which include the financial and political strength of a political party and student leaders' ambitions of a future political career. Mugume and Luescher-Mamashela (2015) concluded that the main negative effect of this relationship is that student leaders are inducted into a patron-client relationship within the political party machinery, which constantly rewards student leaders as they submit to the whims of party bosses. The relationship distracts student leaders from representing students' interests. On 08 September, Ghana News Agency (GNA) the (NUGS), called on politicians not to interfere in students affairs but allow them to remain focused. This may affect the information that must be provided to students. Since students are eligible for voting they information about different political parties. With this information students will know different manifestos and more, but it should be

at the time when students need it.

The SRC further should concern itself with all issues that threaten the congenial atmosphere of learning. In line with governance, the roles and responsibilities of SRCs may include participation in the development and implementation of institutional and national policies on higher education; advice and support on the development of academic programmes and student-learning experiences; participate in institutional decision making structures; and manage and administer students' representation at different levels.

6. CONCLUSION

The purpose of this article was to indicate idcs used by UL SRC when communicating with the student body. Moreover, this article indicated various information needs and challenges for students and how SRC could address information needs of the students. The expectation is that the SRC has to show interest in daily students' matters and also take action to correct challenges of the students rather than be passive. SRCs should liaise with many academic formations and engage with various stakeholders on and off campus. Once the SRC is in place it needs to focus on understanding the students' information needs. Such needs are important because they represent the experiences of the individuals or groups involved. There are instances whereby the SRC priorities may not match the priorities of the stu-

dent body and their services may not be offered to students who do not recognize it as useful. The more information available about the students' needs the better are chances of students viewing it as relevant. It is notable that the SRC also employs different channels such as mass meetings, pamphlets or posters that are pasted against walls within campus, pamphlets with are usually disseminated at the pedestrian gate which is mainly used by students who stay off campus, those who buy at the nearest shopping complex and those catching taxis to reach various destinations. Most universities have community radio station on campus wherein The UL SRC can reach students via Radio Turf is a platform intended for students. What is crucial is that the information should be packaged to suit the behaviour of the students as per the information foraging model. Timing of when students listen to the radio is very important if the SRC values the students.

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