

**‘Getting Involved on Campus’:  
Student Identities, Student Politics, and Perceptions  
of the Student Representative Council (SRC)**

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**KEYWORDS** Student Representative Council (SRC). Gender Differences. Racial Identity. Year of Study. Residential Background. Post-apartheid Student Perceptions

**ABSTRACT** Since 1976 when school students in Soweto took to the streets in active defiance of the apartheid state, students as a political constituency have always been admired, noted and feared for the political positions they have taken and campaigns launched. South African student organisations in the 1980s and 1990s aligned themselves with mass democratic movements and engaged with and shaped their agendas. Commentators suggest however, that the nature and character of student organisations have changed in post-apartheid South Africa, and consequently, also students’ interest in ‘getting involved’. With regard to SRCs, while many authors argue that SRCs are no longer a ‘revolutionary force’ and have become either retrogressive or disempowered, others suggest that more effort needs to be made to understand the content of ‘new’ SRCs in post-apartheid South Africa and their appeal to diverse student populations. This paper seeks to establish the *attitudes* of University of Johannesburg (UJ) students towards voting for, and supporting, the Students Representative Council (SRC), and, for involving themselves in student politics at UJ. In making sense of students’ perceptions, the paper probes differences and similarities in terms of four key factors: gender, race, year of study, and residential background.