



Student Parliament

Accountability, Transparency and Consultative Governance
UNIVERSITEIT IYUNIVESITHI STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

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Secretary General Term Report 2

Preamble

The report herein is a summation of my operations during my appointment as the External Deputy Speaker (Secretary General) 2022. Due to my late appointment as Secretary General, this report serves to the singular calendar term for which I have served and speaks to the challenges and issues which, as Student Parliament, we collectively undertook. It is of my general view that, although the leadership terms are drawing to a close, our work therein will provide a lasting legacy for those who will subsequently assume our roles.

Term Overview

Upon partaking in the interview and selection processes of the Deputy Speaker elections, my appointment was confirmed on Friday 6th of May. Due to the nature of my appointment, in that the Secretary General before me had resigned, my start was rather haphazard. It was relatively difficult finding my footing with regards to communicating with the previous Secretary to figure out exactly where their responsibilities had lapsed and where mine had begun. It had come to my attention that, although the work before me had been done well, a lot of it was “up in the air.” There was very little time for me to comfortably familiarise myself with the duties of the role without the pressing urgency of its responsibilities.

Student Parliament’s second plenary sitting, hosted on the 12th of May, allowed for me to closely observe the workings and operations of Student Parliament in a more public setting. The sitting was incredibly insightful and provided valuable information with regards to the work within the jurisdiction of Student Parliament. More so, it provided valuable insight of the intimate workings of the people employed within the various leadership structures. The attendance of North-West University delegates made the evening incredibly interactive—it was interesting to hear of how other student bodies beyond our university conduct their respective operations. Within reasonable bounds, I assume that the sitting was successful for all its relevant intents and purposes.

Given that much of my duties and responsibilities beyond my chairing of the Policy Forum are largely administrative, I employ my discretion to further discuss my duties regarding the Policy Forum. To be frank, the reporting of administrative work leaves much to be desired.

Policy Forum Overview

As mandated by the Student Parliament Constitution, the chairing of the Policy Forum falls within the duties and responsibilities of the Secretary General. As many of my responsibilities were inherited, the nature and status of the work pursued by the Policy Forum does not differ. I am obliged to duly and respectfully note that the Policy Forum that I inherited offered little to no purposeful objectives or direction within the work it wanted to pursue. Not only had the preceding arrangements with Student Court fallen disappointingly awry, the time upon which I had to fulfil the mandated meeting in the first semester was incredibly short. During this time, I had to create a purpose and direction for the Policy Forum as well as how it could be utilised as an instrument to further promote constitutional democracy, equality, and fairness.

The first meeting which I conducted on the 6th of June was during difficult and awkward academic times—mainly due to the protesting of racism and discrimination that had occurred as well as the shifting of the academic timetable. Although it can be perceived that the timing of my meeting was ill-advised, the insight that it provided afforded me the opportunity to further lament and draft a mandate discussion document that would create a foundation for our subsequent work. The mandate discussion which I drafted provided a more in-depth analysis into the introduction of a general mandate that would serve to influence policy making to uphold the constitutional principles student bodies are bound by.

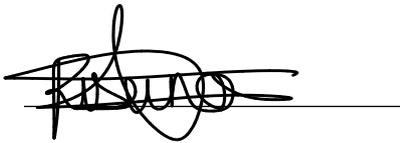
It is to be noted that the Policy Forum in itself only has its authority and slight jurisdictions provided for in the Student Parliament Constitution—beyond that, it falls unto the shoulders of its members to decide the kind of work it does and its purpose. Although it has left me feeling somewhat lost, the development of a mandate allows for me to feel hopeful about the future of the Policy Forum and the policies it can subsequently impact.

Goals

As the Secretary General of Student Parliament, my goal for this following term is to be more concise and timeous in the execution of my duty. A body is as most organised as its administration, and I duly hope that my work will be more efficient and productive in this regard. As the chairperson of the Policy Forum, my overarching goal is that my work creates a legacy for which subsequent leaders can pursue much after my tenure has come to an end. I am hopeful that I will encourage my colleagues to fulfil the objectives of Student Parliament and to work together to ensure we realise our goals.

Concluding Remarks

Although I have not been in Student Parliament for very long, the work that I have done and will continue to do is of utmost value to me. I will continue my very best to dedicate enough time, energy and resources to the realisation of important goals and the transformation of our society as Stellenbosch University students. I am hopeful and excited for the legacy our work will leave and the future of accountable and responsible leadership.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Risuna Risimati', written over a horizontal line.

Risuna Risimati

Deputy Speaker Internal / Secretary General