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Second Term Report of the Accountability Committee Deputy Chairperson

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# Introduction

This is the term report of the Accountability Committee Deputy Chairperson of Student Parliament. It is written in accordance with Student Constitution and the Student Parliament Constitution of the University of Stellenbosch. The undertakings of the Student Parliament Committee and the Accountability Committee in the second term of 2021 will be discussed. The report will set out challenges faced during this term and goals for the future.

# Second Term

In the second term, Student Parliament aimed to continue with the momentum established in previous terms. I undertook my constitutional mandate of assisting the Accountability Committee Chairperson in duties delegated to me. I endeavoured to attend SRC meetings wherever possible and at least one TSP meeting in this semester. The Accountability Forum had been duly constituted in term one and we were able to able to undertake our first project in term two.

## SRC Accountability Committee Review

Thus far in the year, the Accountability Committee has yet to receive a complaint submitted by a member of the student body. In a desire to maximise the efficacy of the Accountability Committee, a proposal was submitted to the Policy Unit, which would allow the Accountability Committee to take a more proactive stance, rather than reactive, on issues of accountability and transparency of student leadership structures. According to the Student Parliament Constitution, we are empowered to formulate our own policies where necessary. The Policy Unit approved the proposal. As a result, the Accountability Committee was empowered to launch a review process to determine the constitutional compliance of SRC’s conduct. At the end of the second term, the Committee began the investigative process by considering relevant documentation that is accessible to the average student. A report detailing the findings will be sent to the SRC and other concerned parties at the start of the third term.

## Social media takeover

The visibility of Student Parliament has been a challenge in the past. In an effort to improve our visibility on campus, the Communications Officer organised a social media takeover on the Student Parliament Instagram account. In this initiative, each member of the Student Parliament Committee oversaw the Instagram account for a day and had to facilitate engagement. My takeover took place on the 18th of June. Overall, I believe it was successful, as I was able to answer questions about Student Parliament’s operations, and hopefully contribute to improving our campus presence.

## Second Sitting

The 2nd sitting of Student Parliament was held on the 17th of June at 18h00. Due to COVID-19 safety precautions, the sitting took place virtually via Microsoft Teams. The sitting was successful overall and there was considerable engagement from the House on various agenda points. A member of the student body utilised the sitting as a platform to engage with the SRC about gender-based violence procedures. This aligns with the mandate of Student Parliament and might encourage other students to engage more in the future.

# Challenges

The Accountability Committee still faces the challenge of a lack of engagement from the student body. As mentioned previously, after 3 terms in office, we have not yet received a submission of a complaint. This presents the challenge of the Accountability Committee being under-utilised and the goals of transparency, accountability and consultative governance not being fulfilled. However, we have attempted to overcome this challenge. The passing of the policy allowing the Accountability Committee to take a proactive stance enables our mandate to be fulfilled. Furthermore, we recognise the barriers faced by individual students, where they might not have the time, resources or knowledge to submit a compliant or do not feel otherwise empowered to do so. Aforementioned initiatives to improve visibility on campus will hopefully also improve the likelihood that a student submits a complaint.

# Goals

In term 3, the Accountability Committee will aim to conclude the review process into the SRC’s adherence to their constitutional mandate. We will submit the report to the SRC and hopefully receive an engaging response. Based on the response from the SRC, the Accountability Committee will undertake the appropriate action, as prescribed by the Student Constitution and the Student Parliament Constitution.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the Student Parliament Committee is working diligently to uphold our constitutional mandate and maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the student body. I will strive to advance my portfolio and the goals of our committee, including the emphasising the importance of accountability and transparency in student leadership structures.