

Student Parliament

*Accountability, Transparency and Consultative Governance*

UNIVERSITEIT iYUNIVESITHI STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

**FIRST TERM REPORT 2019**

**SECRETARY GENERAL (DEPUTY SPAKER EXTERNAL)**

**TN SELAHLE**

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# DETAILS

NAME: Thatego Nthamane

SURNAME: Selahle

DEGREE: BCOM(Law) F

STUDENT NUMBER: 20857446

POSITION: Secretary General (Deputy Speaker External)

# KEY ROLES OF THE SECRETARY GENERAL:

The duties of the Secretary General are laid out in S8 on the Student Parliament Committee:

## Secretary General (Deputy Speaker External)-

(a) Maintaining internal communication within the Student Parliament Committee;

(b) Keeping Speaker accountable and transparent by serving on Steering Committee;

(c) Serves as chief administrating officer (CAO) of Student Parliament

(d) In conjunction with the Speaker for setting up all SP committees and structures;

(e) Maintaining official channels of communication with the Student Representative Council Communications Officer;

(f) Managing knowledge and institutional memory within Student Parliament and the Student Parliament Committee;

(g) Ensuring that meetings associated with Student Parliament, where the Student Parliament Committee desires record keeping, are properly recorded;

(h) Updating, safekeeping and making available records, policies and other documents of Student Parliament and all her structures;

(i) Tasked with setting up guidelines for acceptable sponsors with Treasurer;

(j) Liaises with Secretary-Generals of other bodies SU internal and External to SU;

(k) Liaise with relevant student representative bodies outside of South Africa;

(l) Secretariat of Policy Unit;

(m) Ensure that all minutes are available as per the Constitution;

(n) Member of all SP committees and forums;

(o) Attend all SRC meetings where possible;

(p) Attend TSP meeting once a semester;

(q) xvii) Attend TSR meetings at least once a semester

(r) In Addition, he acts as Policy Officer which entails:

## The Policy Officer:

1. Ensuring that policy of the Student Parliament and Student Parliament Committee is formulated and continually revised

2. In conjunction with Speaker and Deputy Speakers, to set up a Policy Unit Forum in association with all relevant structures of Student representation; which consists of the Policy Unit officer or their delegate for:

a) Student Representative Council, Tygerberg Student Representative Council, Military Academy Student Council, Societies Council, Academic Affairs Council, Prim Committee;

b) Which will meet at least once per semester in a formal setting to discuss pertinent matter as set out in the agenda which must be received at least five (5) University days before the meeting;

c) Informal meetings may be set up as decided by fifty percent plus one (50%+1) of members;

d) This forum may also request one special sitting of Student Parliament before the end of the fourth term in conjunction with the Chair of Student Court to ensure that all are informed as to the Student Constitution, Student Court rhythms and processes, Role and interactions between Student Court, Student Representative Council and Student Parliament;

i) All students will be invited to this session

ii) Members in 8(e)(ii)(1) are required to send a delegate if they are unable to attend due to valid reasons.

# VISION AND MISSION:

My vision for my term in Student Parliament is to rebrand Student Parliament and to instill a new knowledge in students concerning the role and mandate of student parliament. I find that the knowledge of student parliament and the role that it serves on campus is too often misunderstood, overlooked and, in some instances, undermined. There are of course several note-worthy reasons for this but it’s I think it’s time that Student parliament began rebuilding its name. My portfolio is mainly administrative, but I believe that if I am able to effectively convey information between both the committee and the students and contact the relevant parties responsible for any issue in question, then half of the vision is achieved.

It is my goal to act in accordance with all my duties as laid out in S8 of the Student Parliament Constitution and the list of my immediate priorities for the second term are included below.

# SECOND TERM PRIORITIES

Student Parliament Committee meetings are set to be held on the following days:

Tuesday, 9 April at 18h00

Tuesday, 23 April at 18h00

Tuesday, 7 May at 18h00

Tuesday, 21 May at 18h00

(The times are subject to change however to accommodate test schedules of the members of the committee).

It is my duty as the Secretary General to make the minutes of meeting available to students in terms of S24 of the Student Parliament. An official committee meeting has not yet been held so minutes are not yet available for the current year. We have sat with Student Governance for our first meeting on the 1st of April and plans have been made to receive training. Training is set for the 12th of April. We also have a follow-up meeting with Student Governance on the 16th to discuss further training and priorities for Student Parliament.

A lot of the planning for the committee as a whole can therefore only occur during the meeting on the 9th and 23rd of April, pending which I shall act in accordance with S8 and formulate the Policy Unit forum and the team can strategize and plan for the year ahead and produce the report as mandated by S12 of the Student Parliament Constitution. A lot of the delays we face are due to the late appointment of executive members.

# REFLECTION:

## First sitting

The current executive team had their interviews on the 15th of March 2019 and communication of success was given out to successful candidates on the 18th of March. Our positions were only formally acknowledged by Student Governance on the 20th of March as per email sent by the Speaker of Parliament. The meeting we had as a team on the 18th was aimed at briefing the team on the proceedings of the first sitting that was to be held on the evening of the 19th. The team entered unprepared but eager to learn and the first sitting provided the space.

It was a very short sitting as only two agenda points had been brought before the house that evening. The first thing that I picked up was the fact that only university student leaders engaged in parliament and the students present were reluctant. This may have been due to a number of reasons, but the response I got from one of the students after the event was that they were not aware of the fact that they were empowered by the SP Constitution to engage. I sense that this lack of information and uncertainty regarding student parliament proceedings exists campus-wide and students tend not to know what role student parliament serves and how students can get involved. This is one of the matters I have suggested to the current speaker, Keitumetse Lebesa, as an obligation that Student Parliament ought to address.

Generally, I think that the first sitting was a success. It highlighted many aspects of both Student Parliament and other Stellenbosch University leadership structures that need to be addressed, the most prominent of which I think more effective communication within the two bodies (and other university leadership structures) as well as with students. Complaints were raised as to the late notice of the first sitting as well as the late distribution of agenda points to the public. Matters were also brought forth at the sitting that had not been reported to the responsible bodies (i.e. the university language policy agenda point). I thought these matters are issues that should be avoided in future and that Student Parliament and relevant leadership should communicate more regularly and more clearly with each other and with students. The committee is currently discussing the possibility of hosting events and information sessions that inform students of the role they play in the larger Stellenbosch University democracy and how they may use Student Parliament as a channel of effecting the change that they seek.

## Commuinication

The current issue that I face as a Secretary General that hinders me from fulfilling my duty to convey information is my inability to access the Student Parliament mailbox. Student Governance has assisted me with this dilemma by referring my matter to the IT department of the university who have assured me that the problem will be tended to with urgency but has not yet been solved. I am reliant on the Speaker to share minutes of meetings and sittings and he has informed me that his failure to distribute the minutes of the sitting on the 19 of March is due to the mailing list being outdated and that he too is waiting for assistance from IT.

# SUMMARY

The current team has been in office for a short space of time so much work must be done to catch up for the duties that were supposed to have been complied with in the fourth quarter of 2018. As the team has official meetings and training throughout the second semester to plan, the team will be able to plan more efficiently, and information will be made available to the university and students. The team thanks you in advance.

