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Third Term Report of the Deputy Speaker External

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# Introduction

This is the third term report of the Deputy Speaker of Student Parliament External, written in accordance with the Student Constitution and Student Parliament Constitution of the University of Stellenbosch. Being my penultimate report, this report seeks to reflect on the progress made thus far and highlight the hindrances I have faced in my capacity as Deputy and how I aim to address these hindrances in achieving my term four goals.

# Third Term Overview

The third term was geared mostly towards the SRC’s end of term in that the Accountability Committee report was delivered as a means of ensuring that the end of the SRC term would not occur without accountability, we have been tasked with monitoring the independence and impartiality of the elections, and the Policy Unit has been focused on ensuring continuity with the previous SRC’s new replacements. We have also focused on the oncoming end of our term: this term was meant to be dedicated to finalising our Constitutional Review process and finalising all unfinished projects. Additionally, our efforts were directed at the hosting of the third sitting.

# Projects

# Third Extraordinary sitting

As a team we aimed to host two sittings this term: one, an extraordinary sitting, would serve as an opportunity for Ms Mngadi to give the Accountability report and for me to deliver my Policy report, and then to vote in the list of priorities for the in-coming SRC. This sitting would therefore serve as a source of engagement on various important issues. This was to be separate from the constitutionally mandated Speaker elections, which are to be held during the third ordinary sitting. However, because no Speaker applications had been received, the latter sitting had to be cancelled.

## Policy Forum 2021

The policy Forum was held on the 21st of August 2021. It was altogether successful. For more in depth analysis on this, please refer to the Policy Report 2021 that I have submitted to our website.

## Constitutional Review Committee

The Constitutional Review process has proven to be incredibly difficult, which was an eventuality I foresaw when engaging with the SRC’s Constitutional Review Committee on the ways in which the new Student Constitution would affect our structure. This committee now comprises only of the Steering Committee and one additional member, as our fifth member has resigned due to health complications. Again, my concerns regarding how thinly spread the Steering Committee is, as articulated in my term two report, are present. The issues faced by this Committee will be elaborated on under the “challenges” section.

## Co-curriculum Application

Unfortunately, due to a variety of concerns and factors considered, Student Parliament decided not to submit a co-curriculum application. While I was initially very excited for this process and was hesitant to end it, the reasoning of my colleagues combined with the ostensible unsuitability of such an application to a leadership structure like ours now makes sense to me and I stand by this decision.

## Public statements

During this term, engagement with the public was significantly higher than usual. This is due to a series of controversies surrounding the SRC elections which are sure to be explained in the Speaker report. As a part of the Steering Committee, I helped manage Student Parliament’s role in these disputes and helped draft the public statements sent out.

# Challenges

# Broad overview

Much of the concerns I have raised in my term two report remain. This term was incredibly busy, a business that is exacerbated by how the Steering Committee is expected to fulfil a variety of roles. It is also exacerbated by the very nature of this time of year: most of my other leadership positions engaged in handover processes and academics are also beginning to become crucial. That Student Parliament’s term only ends on 1 November makes it difficult to be in sync with other leadership structures and the academic calendar.

## Policy issues

The drafting of our two new constitutions has proved virtually insurmountable. The Committee is overwhelmed by the task at hand and not skilled enough in policy matters to approach this issue with the efficiency required. Furthermore, it is frustrating because the issues that make this process so difficult – the vagueness and incomprehensibility of the relationship between the Student Imbizo and Student Assembly, for example, - were all issues raised at the beginning of this year. Given how busy this time of the year is, and now given that one member of the Committee has resigned, it has been difficult to meet. Furthermore, our attempts to receive guidance from a member of the SRC CRC have been unsuccessful due to their scheduling concerns, and now the end of their term. I cannot find myself to be upset with our Committee’s lack of agency and motivation in light of the above – I too am struggling to balance the work to be done on this committee and my other constitutional obligations, and I feel just as confused as to the way forward as them. Overall, I am disappointed and sorry to say that we will not have the properly drafted constitutions finished by 1 November.

## Issues re the end of our term

Our inability to host Speaker elections during the third term, and the lack of interest now despite the re-opening of applications is concerning. This might result in an inability to elect a Speaker by our next sitting. This is not uncommon and results in adverse consequences almost every year. I have agreed to “stay on” to help our current Speaker should he have to remain as acting Speaker until 2022 should no Speaker be elected. In the meantime, we are trying to generate interest via social media, posters, and word of mouth.

# Goals for the fourth term:

In addition to my general goals, like the planning of the fourth sitting and the facilitation of a successful handover, I have two main goals. Firstly, I aim to have a follow up Policy Forum so as to ensure continuity. Secondly, I aim to draft a request to Student Governance that calls for greater support and training for Policy Officers in the leadership structures within our jurisdiction.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, I am proud of the progress Student Parliament has made this term and somewhat disappointed that a lot of our goals have not been achieved. This term especially has flown by and I am filled with anxiety regarding how I intend to make a lasting impact and wrap up my duties in such a way that the person in this position after me will have a strong foundation to rely on. I am grateful to my team mates for their support and for their awe-inspiring work ethics.