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First Term Report of the [Speaker/Chairperson]

# Introduction

This is the term report of the Speaker of Student Parliament written in accordance with the Student Constitution and Student Parliament Constitution of the University of Stellenbosch. This report will speak of the goals achieved by Student Parliament in the fourth term and first term respectively, that is from the date of the election the speaker of Student Parliament. This term report will also critically analyse the milestones set out and achieved by Student Parliament, the challenges we faced in our first term as well as our plans and goals for the second term.

# Fourth Term

I was elected on the 5th of October 2020. This election had a myriad of troubles attached to it. The fourth sitting, as per the Student Parliament Constitution (Constitution) serves as the forum where the new speaker is elected. However, due to the tumultuous year of 2020, Student Parliament had no sittings, this would be the first and last sitting by my predecessor. This naturally caused a lot of frustration among the students, due to the shortcomings of Student Parliament in 2020. The sitting/election, quickly turned into a session for students to excavate their greviences with Student Parliament and to an extent failed to engage with me as potential candidate. I found myself having to offer a lot of defences for the shortcomings of my predecessor.

Two rounds of voting were opened for those in attendance. The first round of votes resulted in me receiving an ordinary majority of 51% of the votes. As I was running unopposed I needed to secure a 2/3’s majority of the vote. The members present felt it necessary to open up an additional round of voting. The results of this additional round of voting saw me receive 76% of the vote, thus I was duly elected as Speaker of Student Parliament 2020/2021.

As per addendum J1, as Speaker I needed to create my committee. This was done in accordance with the processes set out in Addendum J1 of the Constitution. The applications opened on the 15th of and closed on the 23rd of October 2020. With the help of my panel I was able to successfully elect the Student Parliament Committee ( SPC)- Thank you to Student Governance for all their assistance in this regard. Upon completion of this committee, one of my elected committee members declined the offer, that offer was then extend to the next best candidate who accepted.

2.1 Missing documents

As our term in office was set to commence on the 1st of November, we had to finalise our budget as well as our vision and mission. Due to the tight time constraints that we were facing and the looming exam season, the committee made the very difficult decisions to extend the submission deadline of these documents- this was properly articulated to the Students. The decision was taken to ensure that these documents were made available on our website and social media pages by the 22nd of February 2021.

# First Term

During the first term (with some processes already having started during the vacation period ) the committee and I set out to finalize the formulation of our budget as well as our vision and mission. We also set out to meet individually with each student leadership structure, to discuss and fully realize the understanding of Student Parliament- Thank you to Student Governance for creating the platform that allowed us to meet with these bodies. The committee made it very clear that they required training and institutional understanding of the role of Student Parliament- Once again thank you to Student Governance for facilitating this training session for myself and my committee. We also within the vacation period embarked on a journey to complete the Constitutional Review process that was started in 2019, this came with its own particular set of challenges that will be fully set out below.

## Vision Mission

Due to the committee and myself making the diffuclt decision to delay the release of our Vision Mission and Budget, we spent a large portion of our vacation working on this. The main challenge that I faced here was I had developed a defeatist attitude, as these documents were late and I felt that I had already failed in my mandate as Speaker. However, the support my committee and the collaborative approach we took in penning a new vision and mission re-invigorated my energy and faith in the success of Student Parliament for the upcoming year. These documents were published on the 22nd of February and have been made available on our website.

## Budget

We faced a number of challenges when it came to our budget. The first being the limited funds that we received, not having access to previous years funds that were unused as well as the honorarium amounts which had been set out. We spent a lot of time engaging with Student Governance on the matter, although we were not happy with the outcome of these engagements- we had to accept them.

Or strained funds and financial standing has further been exacerbated by the ultimate decision of the SPC to not accept any sponsorships in a bid to protect and conserve the independent and impartial nature of Student Parliament. However, through all of this we have been able to successfully stretch the limited funds we have at our disposal- The budget can be located on our website.

## Joint monthly meetings

In a bid to ensure that our trias politica on campus functioned in a harmonious way. The Chief Justice, SRC Chairperson and myself, have decided to hold our monthly meetings as a collective- In the spirit of consulative governance. These meetings have been going well and have helped establish clear lines of communication between our structures and have made collaborations (where possible) far easier and fruitful.

## First Sitting

The first sitting was held on the 8th of April 2021 at 18:00, virtually on Microsoft teams. I would like to thank Justice Edwin Cameron who was our keynote speaker, who spoke on the importance of value driven leadership. I would further like to thank the students who availed themselves for this special occasion as well as the engagement we received from the house. The sitting did come with its challenges; The first being the lack of attendance- which I attribute to subpar marketing and advertising for the session. We also faced a number of technological issues during the sitting, but I want to thank my team for the support they provided during this sitting and the as well as their swiftness in sorting out the issues faced. Myself as speaker and all other relevant parties undertook the committee to unity in front of all assembled, in accordance with the the relevant provisions of the constitution.

# Challenges

* 1. Communication

Communication has been one of the largest challenges I’ve faced this term and will continue to face throughout the year. There is a lack of consensus among student leaders with regards to the implications of the identified delegates of Student Parliament as set out in the Student Constitution. During the first sitting we saw a number of structures failing to abide by this provision, through not attending, not providing us with a complete list of delegates and further not furnishing their absence with a valid reason.

At the top of this term (2nd term), I want to send out clear communication to our student leaders that sets out what their responsibilities are with regards to student Parliament and what the implactions of flaunting their parliamentary obligations entails – I hope this will assist in alleviating some of the communication issues.

There have been a few communication failures with Tygerberg Student Parliament (TSP), however those have become less frequent as we’ve been able to successfully set out the role of each of our structures.

These communication breakdowns and failures with fellow student leaders have made it very hard for the SPC to successfully fulfil their mandate.

## Co curricular application

The co curricular application is one that is proving to be a bit of challenge. This is largely due to the fact that I have never dealt with this application before,as well as the tight deadlines that have been imposed. There was a bit of friction from the TSP with regards to this application and them not feeling adequately supported in this venture by myself. However once I was able to communicate my lack of knowledge and understanding on this front we were able to successfully move past this. Going forward with this application I plan to be quite frank with my lack of understanding to Kate Roodt, clearly laying out where I’m having issues and where I need assistance- I sincerely hope this will result in a successful co curricular application for 2021.

* 1. Constitutional Review

The SPC and myself embarked on the journey of completing the 2019 constitutional review process. However, this was halted due to the Student Constitution Review process, which placed a lot of structural changes on Parliament. We were reluctant to accept the proposed changes made by the SRC review committee as it changed our understanding of our structure. However, after many engagements and consultations with the SRC we gained a better understanding of this change and more importantly the necessity for this change.

# Goals

# Second term goals:

# To open applications for the two review committees.

* To complete the co curricular application.
* Increase campus visibility and social media presences.
* Have our second sitting.
* To facilitate a stronger SPC bond and working relationship.

# Conclusion

It has been a challenging first term, but one that had its triumphs- the main one being that I’ve remained consistent in my mandate. Going forward I hope to figure out better ways of navigating the communications issues that we’ve been facing, applying different techniques and approaches and relying more on the support available to us from student governance. I want to thank my SPC for making this term a little bit easier and I look forward to wrapping up this year with this amazing group of people.