



# Student Parliament

*Accountability, Transparency and Consultative Governance*  
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## Deputy Speaker and Accountability Committee Chairperson Term Report 1

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### Preamble

This first report is seen as a mid-year report that displays the operations of the Deputy Speaker: Internal and Accountability Committee Chairperson of Student Parliament 2022. It is a first report and not mid-year report due to the late appointment of myself into this role. This report elaborates on the challenges that Student Parliament faces in its functioning role as proving a platform for accountability, transparency, and consultative governance. Nonetheless, I believe as the team can foster confidence in their actions once the uncertainties are ironed out. And ultimately become a structure that fosters a good relationship with students to ensure that Student Parliament fulfils their mandate.

### Term Overview

My interview took place the 16 February, upon which I received the email to confirm my appointment into the role, the following day. The appointment of roles occurred very late and not all roles were fulfilled. As a result, we had a meeting later that week whereby it was the Steering Committee with the communications officer. This meeting was to confirm that everyone knew what was expected of them. This is where the first problem was flagged, the new Student Constitution and the Student Parliament Constitution did not coincide. This sparked the urgent need to finalise the new Student Parliament Constitution.

Thus, on 8 March, Student Parliament alongside the SRC Policy Officer and Tygerberg Student Parliament sat together to delegate the drafting of the new Student Parliament Constitution. The drafting of this constitution in terms of creating provisions for the two houses are well underway. If all follows plan before the end of Term two, the new structure can be followed.

Additionally, in this time, I reached out to the previous Deputy Speaker to gain some insight on how to approach the role and what to expect. Grace Mgadi and Corlia Kritzinger furthermore, provided me with additional documents and reports to help make the transition period into the new role much smoother.

On the 11 and 12 of March, the four Student Parliament members underwent two days of extensive training provided by Student Governance. This training gave insight into the need

and role of Student Parliament and how the structure interlinks with other student leadership structures. I did, however, feel that doing the training online made it very counter-productive.

Our first sitting occurred on 23 March, here I announced the role and committee members of the Accountability Committee alongside presenting the sitting rules. I found this sitting to be successful to an extent. This is because it was “short and sweet” creating the assumption that all is well. However, when no agenda points are given from outside of Student Parliament it creates great difficulty to fulfil our role of being able to discuss issues that affect our community as often, we are privately confided, or unaware of certain issues meaning that we are unable to mention these problems in the sitting.

## Accountability Committee Overview

On 22 March, I appointed the fifth member of the Accountability Committee. Applications were open for a week and unfortunately, we only received one applicant. We were pushed for time, and it was noted that Nqobile Mtolo had good institutional knowledge along with the passion for accountability. As a result, we decided not to extend the application time but rather to appoint her. It is also pivotal to note that the Speaker struggled to appoint a Deputy Chairperson for the Accountability Committee and only on 16 March was this position fulfilled. This meant that prior to this, half the committee was not elected making operations quite difficult. Additionally, we received the SRC reports very late. Considering we were so few members in the committee and with no previous reports to compare anything to, we opted not to call anyone into account but rather to send out a document that has complied all our concerns and recommendations for the SRC. This document will be sent after reviewing the latest reports of the SRC. Thus, being in the second/third week of term 2. The role of the Accountability Committee is one that is proactive. The committee cannot go out of its way and look for problems which in turn creates a very stagnant workflow, despite knowing of issues that exist. To try and combat this problem, upon brainstorming in the steering committee, we decided to do a quarterly report of on the SRC reports rather than one big final report at the end of the year. This allows for red flags to be spotted earlier on and to prevent mishaps from turning into something greater as they are stopped at the source. These quarterly reports will occur from Term 2 onwards due to once again the late appointments into the roles.

### Challenges



As my predecessor had mentioned before, I face the same issues in term of constitutional ambiguity as they did. Despite knowing that the constitution is well on its way to be finalised. Because of still having to follow the old Student Parliament Constitution, myself and Student Parliament Committee find ourselves every now and again in a grey area of not knowing when exactly to advocate for transparent communication and accountability in a friendly versus professional manner. This is because one is cautious of the possibility of being seen as biased.

Additionally, the distinction between SRC, Student Parliament and Student Court is blurred. It is known that SRC has its own processes of dealing with internal disciplinary and Student Court's role is to interpret the Constitution in disputes. But Student Parliament also has the power to recommend disciplinary proceedings for SRC members that are to be approved by

Student Court and aid in dispute resolutions amongst student leadership despite SRC already having processes in place for it.

My general understanding of parliament as taken from various countries, is that Parliament would have an active role in approving policies. However, this is a role that exists and is shared between SRC and Student Court. It is very easy to assume that Student Parliament is redundant, however the need to hold other student leadership structures accountable including the SRC, remains a role of utmost importance. Thus, proving once again, the dire need for a new Student Parliament Constitution that lays out precisely the roles and procedures to be adopted by Student Parliament.

## Goals

The goal for the following term is help move the process along faster to ensure that the new Student Parliament Constitution is adopted before the end of Term 2. This will allow for the final term to restructure Student Parliament and see if the structure then works. I also aim to send out comprehensive feedback to the SRC that explains the Accountability Committee's concerns and recommendations based off their reports on a quarterly basis, the first being the second/third week of term 2. Lastly, I aim to keep the Executive Committee task orientated as often in meetings, everyone gets side tracked or finishes tasks late.

## Remarks

My role as Accountability Chair has been moderately quite as no formal complaints have been laid for an investigation. However, the Committee has been reviewing and delivering feedback on the SRC reports of the previous term. The Steering Committee has been busy with applications, inquiries of the functioning of Student Parliament and the general operation of keeping Student Parliament functioning. In order to sustain Student Parliament, a clear mandate and clarity on the jurisdiction of Student Parliament must be provided, hopefully by the new Student Parliament Constitution.



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Alexa Keon

Deputy Speaker (Internal): Accountability Com...