

Student Parliament

*Accountability, Transparency and Consultative Governance*

UNIVERSITEIT iYUNIVESITHI STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

**MINUTES OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY’S STUDENT PARLIAMENT EXECUTIVE MEETING**

**HELD ON** Tuesday 6 August **IN** Seminar Room 2053- SU Library **AT** 18h00

**ATTENDANCE:**

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

KEITUMETSE LEBESA Speaker of Parliament

NHLAKANIPHO MKHIZE Deputy Speaker Internal (Accountability Chair)

PHILASANDE SHONGWE Treasurer

TSHENOLO NTWAGAE Deputy Accountability Chair

**ABSENT WITH EXCUSE:**

THATEGO SELAHLE Deputy Speaker External (Secretary General)

**ABSENT WITHOUT EXCUSE:**

N/A

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**AGENDA:**

1. Second ordinary Sitting Keitumetse
2. Constitutional Amendment Keitumetse
3. Extra-ordinary sitting (Vote on Constitution) Keitumetse
4. General feedback Open ­­­­­­

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# OPENING

Sitting opened at 18h12 by the Speaker.

The speaker announces the formal resignation of the Communications Officer, Mr. Suhail Islam.

This meeting was recorded for minutes purposes.

# ATTENDENCE

All attendees were present with the exception of the Secretary General, Ms. Thatego Selahle, who, prior to the meeting, submitted an excuse for her absence.

# DISCUSSIONS

## Second Sitting:

First part of the second sitting did not go as well as we had hoped. That therefore served as a learning curve and puts us in a position to constructively criticise how sitting functions.

Solutions:

1. Time keeping:

Every sitting is to strictly have a timekeeper who will time a member of parliament who raises a point to be ruled upon by the speaker. The speaker will have a timer of his own this time but requires the help of an external time keeper (someone who is not in the SPC) and internal (a member of the SPC).

Question: What method of time keeping do we use?

Response/Suggestion: A method that is currently being used by the TSP in which we can incorporate is using coloured cards. A green card to indicate that the person raising the point still has time, orange to indicate that their time Is running out and red to indicate that their time has run out.

A second way to go about this to keep time to each point on the agenda: At the end of the allocated time, a ruling is made on the agenda point and the speaker moves on to the next agenda point. It is important that all agenda points have equally allocated time as one point is not being prioritised over another. Giving time to each agenda point provides certainty within the house in terms of how we as the SPC are presiding over the point.

Suggestion: it is important to consider how long the venue has been booked for when allocating times to the agenda points. This ensures that the sitting had concluded 10 minutes before the venue has to be closed. This allows for people to leave the meeting and further avoids a similar situation to last sitting where the person who had to close the venue had to wait for us to adjourn the meeting and wait for people to evacuate.

## Avoiding continuous points of orders being raised:

1. This delays the agenda as other points are not attended to in the sitting.

Response: The first solution is that at the beginning of the sitting, the speaker will make a ruling in his opening speech. The ruling will mention that all members are entitled to a point of order, but it is important for them no to abuse that entitlement. Further highlighting that a point of order is given to people to have the opportunity to raise their opinion however, when a point of order is used to shut down a member, it is not fulfilling its mandate.

1. Members of the executive should not refrain from using point of privilege:

Raising a point of privilege helps the speaker recognise any situation in the room which the speaker may not notice by himself while in the heat of the debate. An example being an adjustment to the air-conditioning. As stated within parliamentary proceedings, the speaker is obligated to take it into account, therefore the speaker has to make a ruling, and the debate may then continue.

1. Meet at the venue at least an hour before the allocated time in order to set up the slides:

This is to avoid running into the debate time trying to set up the computer in order to commence the sitting. The hour will be to ensure that the computer works, the slide show is projected, and the microphones have working batteries. This would therefore mean that roles will need to be allocated beyond just sitting during the proceedings of the sitting.

Suggested roles:

* Passing around the microphone
* Fetching the keys of the safe, where the microphone stays, before the time of the sitting and before the building manager leaves.
1. Strict with throwing people, who aren’t acting constitutionally, out of the venue:

Second strike is when the member will be asked to leave. There is no third warning.

1. Members (of the executive) should not refrain from raising points of orders:

The speaker is an impartial body of parliament can only make rulings therefore, when an important constitutional provision is to be raised, members should point it out in order for the speaker to make a ruling.

Additional remarks regarding second sitting:

Treasurer has been in contact with Student Governance and awaits the Student Governance finance office to authorise the payment, there have been continuous deferrals. Student Governance has been CCed in emails. The treasurer has completed the necessary forms and has sent forward the amount that has to be paid to secure the booking. The payment is to be made tomorrow (7 August) which is the deadline.

As the executive, we are meant to defend members of parliament, but we should be careful to not compromise our impartiality. The line can be very easily crossed.

## Constitutional Amendment:

Members are urged to read through the constitution, especially their portfolios. Anything that members have done and realised that provisions should be added into the constitution should be noted. Our powers will be legally binding and therefore there should be more procedural rules as to how we conduct our powers. Previous members of the executive have suggested that we created code of conducts. If provisions that you (as an exec member) have provided are too long and strenuous for the constitution, that indicates that those provisions should rather be outlined in a code of conduct and the constitution will serve as an outline of the provisions.

To deal with:

1. Explanation of the steering committee
2. Constitutional provisions which have disappeared. Have they been removed by Student court?
3. Ensure that each department, within SP, has provisions that detail the scope and the extent of powers within the forum. This also ensures an easy transition with the next executive group.

Additional remarks regarding the constitutional amendment:

As discussed in the previous meeting (SPC meeting), there were dates provided as to when to submit any comments that may exist from members’ individual portfolios and any room for improvements. It is important to have policies beyond the constitution but the constitution too, is to be revised.

Question: From the last sitting, the treasure took away that either a code of conduct it to be drawn up or the option to file for an additional constitutional provision, therefore, as he has drawn up a code of conduct for the Treasurer’s forum, is it necessary to also submit queries for constitutional amendment?

Response: It will have to be incorporated by reference to the constitution. There is an existing culture of addendums in the constitution, therefore an addendum can be included which details the Treasurer’s forum. However, it is important to consider the total pages in the constitution, too many pages will result in the constitution encompassing the forum and the code of conduct will detail it.

## Extraordinary sitting to vote in the constitution:

We need to hold an extraordinary meeting. The sitting would have to be before third sitting but after the continuation of the second sitting (on Thursday 8 August). With this meeting, we are pressed with time as there are other sittings which have to take place.

There are three notifications to relay to students:

1. Speaker election
2. Extraordinary meeting
3. Third sitting

Third sitting may be our last sitting as an executive and therefore members are requested to writeup feedback in terms of their portfolios which will be presented at the house.

Question: Our term ends in November, does this not require us to have a fourth sitting?

Response: Constitutionally, we may not be mandated to hold the fourth sitting.

Proposition: our term only ends in November; therefore, the new executive will be shadowing us. The new speaker is elected and therefore has to shadow the current speaker. In that time, the current committee is still in office. When the new committee is elected, they shadow the current committee. Only when our term as the committee end does the new committee take over.

Response: Therefore, as the current committee will still be in office and the constitution mandates us to hold a sitting every term, the sitting in the fourth term has to be held within the first two weeks of the term as it is an exam term.

Question: Do we elect the new committee before or after the fourth sitting?

Response: It doesn’t matter as our term ends on the 1st of November, as stated in the current constitution. The committee is still mandated to continue the duty. Although, it is advised that the new committee are given a period to shadow the current committee therefore it would be best to elect them before the current committee leaves office to provide them with better knowledge as to how the SP functions. This also prevents the new committee from relying on the old committee to help them with fulfilling their roles after the office period of the old committee has come to an end.

Additional remarks regarding the constitutional amendment:

Reminder: There is a two-week span to advertise the extraordinary meeting and to set an agenda.

Response: The agenda of an extraordinary meeting is the title of the meeting. In this case, the title is the amendment of the constitution. This thus does not require us to go into depth in the advertising of the meeting.

Members will bring forward certain provisions which need amending and the house to review. If the amendment requires a referendum, a referendum will present out to students. With this, student need to be provided with reason for the amendment of the provisions brought forward. This is what will happen in the meeting.

All members will probably be required to stand in front of the house to explain their amendments and provide feedback to any inconsistencies within the portfolio.

# FEEDBACK

The Accountability forum:

The speaker’s suspension has been suspended. The report was put up online, after being submitted to the secretary general, before the minutes of the previous meeting were put up.

The accountability committee has a lot of work ahead as there are problems with the SRC.

The AC chair has sent a message to the head of the Prim Committee to send a message to each residence prim to send a detailed report of the elections’ proceedings. The elections should detail who are the new HK members, how the proceedings went about and to provide future election dates. A detailed analysis of the reports will be done by the Accountability forum to ensure that the elections ran in a constitutional manner. The AC chair asked for reports as there are not enough members in the SPC to allocate to attend the elections which ongoing in the various residences. Some of which happen on the same day. However, it is important that we attend a few HK elections.

Register all meeting with Lauren Stevenson, Treasurer of SRC, is still to take place. The meeting has been delayed as she had been absent. The meeting will take place in the presence of the SRC treasurer and SRC Secretary General/ Communications Officer, Leighton September.

Question: When do you propose a meeting with the treasurer.

Response: The problem that currently resides is Mr. September’s resistance to account to SP but, the AC chair will propose a date with the treasurer for next week (12 August – 16 August).

Proposition: The problem is, general feedback on this matter will need to be provided in a future sitting and we need to prevent getting questions on why this matter has not been revised.

Comm officer: posters

The Executive Treasurer:

There was a poor attendance at the previous Treasurer’s forum (31 August). Excuses were submitted a few minutes before the commencing time of the meeting. This matter has enlightened that behavioural consequences need to be enshrined in the constitution as, currently, people can easily get away missing compulsory meetings.

There is still one more Treasurer’s forum to take place, the date is still under deliberation as the current treasurers within the different institutions of the university are undergoing changes. SRC treasurer proses that the meeting should take place after new treasurers are voted in. The treasurer is also awaiting feedback from the other treasurers as to when they see best for the next meeting. A survey via SurveyMonkey has been sent out with dates to be voted upon for a suitable date for the meeting.

The Speaker:

Prof. Madonsela has not responded with regards with the t-shirts. Emails have been sent out with no response from her and her assistant.

Last sitting indicated that they do not know the order of proceedings. The solution is to host a seminar to inform students on the SP. The sitting will inform students of parliamentary proceedings. It will inform the differences between the different the different points (point of order, point of information, point of clarity etc.). In the seminar, it is also important to highlight that when rising on a point of order, the provision of the constitution which is being raised upon is mentioned.

Suggestions: Find videos online which illustrate the certain behaviours in parliament which we can post on our social media platforms. This would create a better understanding of what is expected in parliament.

We need to make student aware of the role of the SP as they do not know that they can ask SP to account on SRC behaviour. This role of the SP also seems to be unknown by the SRC. Therefore, a meeting with the new SRC is necessary to explain the role SP plays. Currently, there is a lot of resistance to account with the current SRC.

Suggestion: Revise addendum E, make the procedure clear to avoid SRC being held accountable. Add that upon sufficient finding, the accountability committee can ask relevant SRC members to account. Currently, the SRC hides behind students’ lack of interest in governance.

Response: The suggestion is agreed on as this will increase critical engagement between students and governing bodies. This will also put SRC in a position where they have to account in front of students as well.

Seminar time and details to be confirmed as communication with the transformation office has not reached a conclusion. Speaker proposes that food and drinks be offered at the seminar to entice the students to attend.

# IMPORTANT DATES

Since the dates are held by the Secretary general, these can be sent out on the WhatsApp group chat.

Current dates that we are aware of is the continuation of the second sitting on the 8th of August.

The date of the next treasurer’s forum is still to be confirmed.

There is an executive meeting on Thursday 8th of August, before the sitting.

Picture taking dates have not been set as there is no clarity from the person who had agreed to take pictures for us. Pictures will be taken at parliament we will therefore use a good quality phone camera or borrow a camera from someone.

TSR sitting tomorrow (August 7th)

# CLOSING REMARKS

The Justices of student court have asked to share transport to Tygerberg for the TSR sitting, as, they too, are required to be there. This is still to be confirmed with the Chief Justice.

We are still required to search for a designated driver to Tygerberg as the driver is currently suspended.

Reminder to read constitutions to further prepare for the next sitting. Members are thanked for attending.

Meeting is adjourned at 19:29