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**COMMUNICATIONS OFFICER**

**BA HONS (HISTORY) IV**

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First Term Report of the Communications Officer

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# Introduction

This is the term report of the Communications Officer for 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 it from the date of the election the speaker of Student Parliament. This term report will also critically analyse the communications related goals set out and achieved by me in my official capacity and will mention the challenges faced when trying to achieve those goals.

# Fourth Term

I was elected on 31 of October 2020. I was appointed after the initial candidate decided to step back from their position as communications officer. I was tasked with updating our social media channels on the newly appointed committee for 2020/2021. Not much was required during this time as we as a committee were planning for our term ahead and as a result only a few social media posts were created to communicate with our social media. In addition, due to Covid related restrictions, our only mode of communication to the students was via online means of communication, that was MS Teams and social media posts. I was also able to create Student Parliament committee current email signatures that we use aside from the one that the Speaker uses as they received that one before my appointment.

# First Term

In the first term my main goal was to adequately inform the members of parliament on matters relating to Student Parliament, for instance on our first sitting which was held on 8th April 2021. An update of the website was needed as it had not been updated since 2019, with all the relevant information on the structures of student parliament as well as an update of documents such as minutes from meetings and the budget. I was also tasked with creating and managing our MS Teams channels, two were created as a result. One for all the members of parliament which is available to the public and the second which is for committee meetings. In addition, I was placed on the co-curricular task team to assist with any matters relating to completing this task. Finally, I also collaborated with the SRC Communications Officer Eduard Zehrt to create a social media post on the language policy that is currently being revised.

## Updating the website.

I updated the website which had not been updated since I believe 2019 as the last documents and information pertaining to Student Parliament were from that year. It has now been put up to date and will continue to be updated as our term progresses. The infographics on the structure of student parliament have also been uploaded as a way for members of parliament to understand what we do. However, I shall note that the Speakers address is still yet to be uploaded which will be done as soon as possible. The updating of the website is not a difficult task especially with the training provided from the university regarding how to use Sharepoint and so updating the website is manageable.

## Section 8

Section 8 of the constitution stipulates the responsibilities of the Communications Officer, (a) states that I am responsible for the banding and communication of Student Parliament. I feel like I am doing so, and also learning as I go. The training that was given to Student Parliament and Student Court earlier in the year proved to be quite helpful in assisting me on how to go about in doing my job.

## First Sitting

The first sitting was held of Student Parliament was held on the 8th of April 2021 on MS Teams. All the attendees were notified firstly via the mass mailer a week or two earlier and then via our Instagram as well as by use of physical posters that were printed out and placed all over campus. I tried to contact the Neelsie management to ask if we could use the big screen, to which I was promptly replied to and notified of the necessary qualifications in order to get our advertisement out however, once the advert/poster of the first sitting was created and I sent it through to be assessed I was never replied to and as a result I was not able to advertise on the Neelsie big screen.

# Challenges

# Attention of Members of Parliament

Aside from the first sitting of Student Parliament it has been quite difficult in terms of having meaningful engagement with the members of Student Parliament, our Instagram following has grown quite a bit, but the engagement is not there yet. When applications are put out for various things such as applying to be in a task team or for submissions of agenda points the is little to no response from the public which then leads to not having more engaging sessions during sittings.

## Social Media Channels

Another issue is that we are unable to access the already made social media channels of Facebook and Twitter as the previous accounts’ owner is unreachable. Having these other channels of communication can broaden our reach to more members, the only issue is figuring out how to create a Facebook page that would not be linked to my own and could then be transferred to the next communications officer without having the trouble of unlinking the page from one’s own personal account.

# Goals

* 1. Firstly, I want to create the new social media pages in order to broaden our reach.
  2. Ask, on these channels, for feedback from students as part of Section 8 (c).

# Conclusion

In conclusion, I will continue to maintain the branding and communications of Student Parliament and also all that is mandated of me in order to make Student Parliament effective as possible. I am willing to do all that I possibly can in order to assist the rest of the committee in communicating what we need to communicate to our members of parliament. I will also work in bridging the gap of engagement with the members of communication as well as try to reach a broader audience.