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BCOM LAW (4TH YEAR)

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Third Term Report of the Accountability Committee Deputy Chairperson

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# Introduction

This is the third term report of the Accountability Committee Deputy Chairperson of Student Parliament. It is written in accordance with Student Constitution and the Student Parliament Constitution of the University of Stellenbosch. The undertakings of the Student Parliament Committee and the Accountability Committee in the third term of 2021 will be discussed. The report will set out challenges faced during this term and goals for the future.

# Third Term

In the third term, Student Parliament upheld our constitutional mandate to the best of our ability and continued with projects established in previous terms. I undertook my constitutional mandate of assisting the Accountability Committee Chairperson in duties delegated to me. I endeavoured to attend SRC meetings wherever possible and at least one TSP meeting in this semester. A significant undertaking in term three was the continuation of the SRC Accountability Committee review and the subsequent compilation of the Accountability Committee report.

## Accountability Committee Report

In Term 2, the Accountability Committee undertook a review into the constitutional compliance of the 2020/2021 SRC. After the submission of our preliminary findings, the SRC issued their response. The Accountability Committee had a subsequent meeting with the SRC, where they elucidated issues raised in their response. A final report was compiled and presented by the Chairperson of the Accountability Committee at the first extraordinary sitting. The report contained our initial submissions, the SRC’s response, our further submissions on the merits of the response and any recommendations. The Chairperson was also able to meaningfully engage with the house on questions raised about the report. While there are potential points of improvement to take into consideration, the investigation and report were successful. Several of the 2021/2022 SRC candidates referenced issues raised in the report in the caucuses as recommendations and areas of improvement for the incoming SRC.

## First Extraordinary Sitting

The 1st extraordinary sitting of Student Parliament took place on the 9th of September, via MS Teams, due to COVID-19 safety regulations. The purpose of holding an extraordinary sitting was to avoid and overly lengthy third sitting. The agenda of the extraordinary sitting included the presentation of the SRC Accountability Committee report, voting in a list of priorities for the 2021/2022 SRC and the Policy Forum report. Members of the house engaged with these submissions and overall, the sitting was a success.

## Third Sitting

The third ordinary sitting of Student Parliament was scheduled for the 16th of September. The main agenda point was the election of the incoming Speaker of Student Parliament. Unfortunately, the third sitting was cancelled as we had not received any applications for Speaker at the time.

# Challenges

A challenge was the timing in the investigation and presentation of the Accountability Committee report. There was criticism that the report was presented too late in the SRC’s term. This might have contributed to the SRC’s perception that the investigation was undertaken in bad faith. It must be noted that prior to the promulgation of the policy enabling us to undertake this investigation, we operated under a complaints-based system. We would not have been able to perform the review at another time, as we did not receive a complaint pertaining to that. Furthermore, there is a point of efficacy in conducting a review towards the end of SRC’s term, as it allows for a holistic review of constitutional compliance. Although, there is less capacity to meaningfully rectify failings. Given that there is now a precedent for conducting such an investigation, future Accountability Committees can exercise their discretion in what timing would be most effective.

# Goals

Nearing the end of the 2020/2021 Student Parliament term, a goal for term four is to assist in creating a smooth transition for the incoming Student Parliament Committee. With regards to the incoming Accountability Committee, we can guide them in building on the foundation of transparency and accountability. Particularly, we can raise logistical concerns, such as the timing of the SRC constitutionality review.

# Conclusion

In conclusion, the Student Parliament Committee is working diligently to uphold our constitutional mandate and maintain legitimacy in the eyes of the student body. I will strive to advance my portfolio and the goals of our committee, including the emphasising the importance of accountability and transparency in student leadership structures and creating a smooth transition for the incoming Student Parliament Committee.