



## Student Parliament

*Accountability, Transparency and Consultative Governance*  
UNIVERSITEIT iYUNIVESITHI STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY

# REPORT OF STELLENBOSCH UNIVERSITY'S STUDENT PARLIAMENT ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE

# REPORT ON REGISTER ALL POLICY AND SUI PORTFOLIO BUDGET COMPLAINT



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## **1. Introduction:**

The Student Parliament Accountability Committee received a complaint from a student in line with Addendum F of the Student Parliament Constitution on the 8<sup>th</sup> of April 2019. The matter alluded to in the complaint was for the Accountability Committee to investigate into the mismanagement of the Register All Policy, the unjustified delays in the release of the mandated managerial budgets and lack of transparency in the office of Treasury and the Executive of the SRC.

Following this complaint, an investigation was conducted into the matter and the findings of this investigation as well as the recommended solutions to this matter are outlined in this report.

## **2. Investigation:**

### **2.1. Meeting with Complainant:**

I met with the complainant on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 to follow up on the complaint and begin the investigation process by getting more background information behind the details of the complaint.

#### **2.1.1. Register All Policy**

The complainant informed me that during the registration period, the Treasurer and the Secretary-General of the SRC were in charge of the policy however there was no transparency as to how they were put in charge of the policy. The policy promised to pay a portion of the student's registration fees, however, there has been no payment processed to date that they are aware of.

According to the complainant, some applicants were not responded to promptly but received a response to their application within the second week of the 1<sup>st</sup> term which was already into the start of the semester.

While conversing with the complainant, a few key questions came up which needed to be answered with regards to the Register All Policy. These questions were:

- Who oversees the policy and how were they put in charge of the policy?
- Why was a generic email sent to all students regarding this matter?
- What is the vetting process behind this policy?
- Does the policy encompass international students as well and if so, does it recognize the fact that international registrations are calculated differently than domestic student fees?

Following my meeting with the complainant, the decision was made to investigate further by meeting with the Treasurer of the SRC and the Vice-Chair of the SRC

#### 2.1.2. SUI portfolio Budget

The complainant noted that the budgets were released rather late thus the members of the portfolio had no way to access the funds to fulfil their duties. The SUI budget had been approved preliminarily until the SRC meeting on the 13 of March 2019, however, there has been no final approval to for the funds to be released.

Payments were processed rather late taking into consideration that the portfolio members had functions to plan for. The funds up till to this point had not yet been released.

The complainant claimed that they messaged the Vice Chair (for internal disciplinary) to handle the matter further.

#### 2.2. Meeting with SRC Treasurer:

Following my meeting with the complainant on the 12<sup>th</sup> of April 2019, the Accountability Committee met with the Treasurer of the SRC on the 15<sup>th</sup> of April 2019 to obtain some answers for the questions brought forth during my meeting with the complainant as part of the investigation.

### Register All Policy:

The Treasurer provided me with a copy of the Register All Policy to answer most of the questions raised during my initial meeting with the complainant.

The policy may be held by the Treasurer of the SRC, but it has its own allocation committee whose members consist of:

- The Chairperson of the SRC,
- The Treasurer of the SRC,
- Student Access Portfolio Holder,
- An additional Member elected by the SRC,
- A staff member within the department of Bursaries and Loans.

This brought about more clarity with regards to how members of the committee are chosen.

During the registration period, the Treasurer and the Secretary-General were the two captains of the policy, however, they were not in charge of the policy. The Treasurer clarified that the policy is intended to help all students within the institution, including international students, thus they are aware that international students will also be applying and have taken into consideration that registration fees for international students are calculated differently than those of domestic students.

Students who were allocated to receive financial assistance under the fund all received a generic email which had been sent individually to each student along with an explanation of the process.

The maximum budget under this policy is R150 000 but there has been no limit stipulated as to the maximum number of students who can apply for financial assistance under this policy. In fact, the committee has come to an arrangement which enables every student who applies and qualifies under the vetting process to receive assistance.

It was mentioned that they are aware that no payments have yet been made as they are still in the middle of negotiations to allow academic registration to students under this policy despite the deadline for registration payments being past.

The Committee found that the policy was poorly communicated to students as it was only advertised via social media pages, through volunteers and by the admin block which does not effectively cover the entire student population.

### 2.2.1. SUI Portfolio Budget:

The Treasurer informed me that the budgets to each portfolio had been approved and allocated to each respective portfolio holder, as well as that each portfolio has had access to their respective budgets since the SRC meeting on the 27<sup>th</sup> of February.

### 2.3. Meeting with Vice-Chair of the SRC:

#### 2.3.1. SUI Portfolio Budget:

The Vice-Chairperson of the SRC informed me that no formal complaint had been received by the Internal Disciplinary Committee in accordance with S7 of the SRC Code of Conduct with regards to the matter and thus the Vice-Chairperson could not act on the matter.

### **3. Recommendations:**

Following the investigation and after consulting with The Student Parliament Accountability Committee, it was found that there had been a lack of communication between the SRC treasury, which holds the Register All Policy, and the recipients of the policy with regards to the delays. The Committee recommends that feedback is provided to students with regards to the current status of the policy and what ought to happen next. There is vital information not being received by the due recipients and this information needs to be communicated to students.

The Committee recommends that this matter be brought forth to the house at a Student Parliament Sitting where members can not only get feedback but may be free to ask any questions which they may have relating to the Register All Policy.

With Regards to the SUI Portfolio budget, since the budgets have been released, we recommend that information on how to access the budget be sent out and that all the relevant portfolio members are informed on how to access their budgets.

### **4. Conclusion:**

Firstly, speaking on the matter of the SUI portfolio budget, it is in the findings of this investigation that the budgets were allocated and released on within a reasonable time period however information regarding how to access the budgets was poorly communicated which led to a misunderstanding that the budget had not been

approved and released as was the case rather not having information on how to access the allocated funds.

Secondly, with regards to the Register All Policy, according to section 21 (f) of the Student Constitution, one of the core functions of the Student Representative Council is “to inform students continuously, and obtain feedback, about its activities” and we have found the Treasury to be in breach of this section of the Student Constitution as the lack of communication between the policy committee and the recipients seems to indicate.

