

CHAPTER 3

Models of Student Governance

The merger of two or more institutions will result in the existence of multi-campus institutions. There will therefore be a need to develop a constitution that will ensure effective, democratic participation of students in the SRC affairs in some of these multi-campus institutions. A unitary or federal SRC structure could be considered in order to ensure effective participation of students. The different models outlined below can be applicable to both federal and unitary SRC.

Federal Structure

With this model you have two or more SRCs co-existing at different satellite campuses. The two or more SRCs will then meet to coordinate their activities and seek consensus on matters. You may also have the different SRCs establishing joint coordinating committees, or having the same office bearers with SRC substructures existing in satellite campuses. In this instance students from different campuses will vote on different voter's rolls. In instances where they have the same office bearers, there could be two ballot papers – one electing campus SRC while the other elects office bearers for the central SRC.

Unitary Structure

The unitary SRC will exist in cases where there is only one SRC representing students of the institution. This can take place in a single-campus institution or in a multi-campus institution. In this instance, students from different campuses will vote on a single voter's roll.



The provisions of the constitution outlined in detail in Chapter 2 can be organised in a variety of ways, depending on the model of student government you choose for your student body.

The elections clause of a model where the entire student body participates in the election of the SRC will be different from election clauses in a constituency based system, where various interest groups are expected to elect representatives.

In the South African setting, there are generally three streams of governance model that are in use. These are the executive model, the parliamentary model and the hybrid model, (which combines elements from both other models).

1. The Executive Model

In this model of student governance, the SRC is elected directly in its entirety and has overriding authority in the periods between the AGM and any mass meetings.

EXAMPLE

Executive Model Organogram



In this model –

- The AGM is the highest decision-making body followed by the SRC's regular mass meetings and then the SRC.
- Student structures, clubs and societies are involved in governance in an advisory capacity.

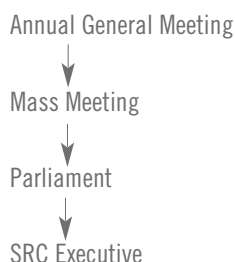
Hint: This model is suitable for a highly active student body to keep the SRC executive on check in terms of delivery.



2. The Parliamentary Model

EXAMPLE

Organogram of the Parliamentary Model



In this model –

- The AGM is the highest decision-making body followed by the SRC's regular mass meetings and then the Student Parliament. The SRC operates as part of the executive of Parliament and is completely accountable to it.
- Student structures, clubs and societies are involved in governance with authority. In a variation of this model, seats are allocated to clubs and societies in what could become a vibrant forum for the exchange of views.

The University of the North Student Representative Assembly (SRA) is a current example of an SRC run according to the Parliamentary Model.

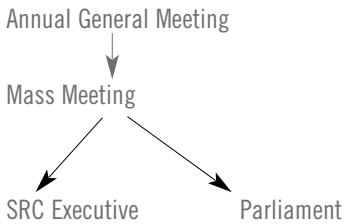
Hint: This model is suitable for institutions with a large pool of student leaders because parliamentary work is too demanding.

3. The Hybrid Model

In this model of student governance, elements of both previously mentioned models are combined. The SRC is elected directly in its entirety and has executive functions. The parliament is constituted by representatives of all student structures.



EXAMPLE Hybrid Model Organogram



In this model –

- The AGM is the highest decision-making body, followed by the SRC’s regular mass meetings, and then the SRC and Parliament alongside each other with clearly defined powers and duties.

In the process of reviewing the SRC constitution, it is important to set out a clear process by which the student body can arrive at a decision about which model that is most suitable for their context. This must be based on the challenges facing a particular student body.

The legitimacy and therefore sustainability of a constitutional order depends heavily on a properly crafted process to establish such an order. Think back a little to the days of CODESA. Had it been flawed, the current South African constitution, hailed as a masterpiece all over the world, would not exist.

If a thorough procedure is followed to decide on a model, that constitution will, most likely, be maintained for a long time. Once a model is agreed upon the rest will fall into place. The next chapter will look at this process closely and how it makes the entire constitutional process hang together.

Hint: The Hybrid Model requires clear conflict-resolution mechanisms that are agreed upon by all.

