EFF, AfriForum in stand-off at Stellies

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MEMBERS of the EFF Student Command and the AfriForum Youth were involved in a tense stand-off on Stellenbosch University’s Rooi Plein yesterday.

The EFF Student Command, joined by other students, came to demand an end to what they called victimisation and criminalisation of black students, said Jeff Ngobeni, of the EFF Student Command.

“They (AfriForum) came to fight, but we came peacefully and do not entertain racists. Our goal is to transform this campus for all the students to be treated equally,” said Ngobeni.

AfriForum Youth spokesperson Marcus Pawson said they had invited members to clean the JH Marais statue on Rooi Plein. “All we wanted to do was clean the statue and celebrate our heritage. Management has created this situation by allowing those within the EFF to break our agreement when they posed on the statue,” said Pawson.

He said there were chants of “umshini wami” and “AfriForum doesn’t speak for me”, but other than that he had to admit the EFF did later respect their cleaning of the statue.

“We don’t care about the statue of a thief; it can be here for 100 more years,” said Ngobeni.

Stellenbosch University spokesperson Martin Viljoen said: “We had security and police monitoring the situation and thankfully it did not get violent. They showed composure and restraint and dispersed after the statue was cleaned.”

Meanwhile, a group of College of Cape Town (CCT) students disrupted lectures at its Athlone campus for a second day yesterday. They said their protests were due to a delay in the payment of travel allowances and bursaries.

CCT said 51 percent of students had not yet signed their schedule of particulars (SOPs) despite receiving SMSes from the NSFAS to sign online; 3 percent had not verified their sBux accounts; 5 percent had invalid cellphone numbers and therefore couldn’t sign their SOPs; while 16 percent of disbursements had to be done manually.

CCT spokesperson Sharon Grobbelaar said: “Management are in continuous discussions on behalf of students to resolve the matter and have made an agreement with NSFAS to assist affected students financially.”

Student activist Khayalethu Kama said about half of students at the campus had not received transport allowances since lectures began in January.

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