‘No final decision’ in language dispute

Quinton Mtyala

STELLENBOSCH University (SU) says its new language policy is still being reviewed despite counter-claims from AfriForum’s youth wing over a high court settlement.

On Saturday the university’s council debated the language policy, formulating several principles through consensus or a majority of votes. These principles would later be presented at a “language revision work group”.

A final decision would then be taken on June 22.

“There’s no final decision. The council is giving input to the review process,” said SU spokesperson Martin Viljoen.

The university council accepted that its English offering should be expanded so that no student would be excluded.

“At the same time, it should be ensured that the Afrikaans offering is not decreased and that Afrikaans, as language of instruction, should be further promoted. In addition, council also expressed that it was in favour of a commitment to the development and promotion of Xhosa as an academic language,” said Viljoen.

AfriForum Youth’s co-ordinator at SU, Bernard Pieters, said it would continue to challenge the university’s council after this weekend’s decision, claiming that it was “unconstitutional”.

“Seeing as it happened on the weekend, we will ask our lawyers to look into the case on Monday (today),” said Pieters.

AfriForum Youth insists that the university should stick to its existing 30/30 language policy, which ensures that English and Afrikaans are treated equally.

“Afrikaans is being taught at the university, so it is feasible; there is a market, there is a demand, there is need because it’s the majority language (in the Cape). You’ll include more people by having two languages as an option rather than only one.”

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