Stellenbosch students protesting ... The university that has lagged behind on transformation says it will now be give equal pay to men and women

Equal pay at Stellenbosch University

Stellenbosch University, which continues to grapple with issues of transformation, has taken a decision to remunerate its female and male staff equally.

Inequality in pay between men and women has generally remained high across various sectors, including the education sector. The country's academic landscape also remains male-dominated despite the introduction of policies to increase and develop more black women academics.

The Human Resources Division of Stellenbosch University said this week it will be implementing a decision by the Rector's Management Team to eliminate the last remaining instances of inequality in the remuneration of men and women on comparable levels.

The management team accepted the Human Resources Division's recommendation that each of the affected women should, backdated to 1 January 2016, receive parity adjustments that will ensure equitable remuneration with their comparable male counterparts.

The Human Resources Committee of the university council requested that the Human Resources Division should, from a parity perspective, determine whether, in terms of remuneration women and male employees at the university are treated in an equitable manner.

Human Resources identified a limited number of instances where women are being remunerated at a lower level than comparable male employees on the same level. The university said it will now implement the pay parity decision, in consultation with the various deans and heads of professional, administrative, support and service divisions.

Stellenbosch University Vice Chancellor Wim de Villiers, said the institution was committed to the equitable treatment of all employees.

“This is non-negotiable in Stellenbosch University's continued pursuit of establishing itself as the employer of first choice in the South African higher education sector,” he said.

Prof de Villiers has previously said he would drive greater transformation and increase representation for black staff and students.

About 20% of the academic staff are black and 3,5% of professors are black Africans. (Nationally 8,9% of all SA professors are black Africans.) The goal is for Stellenbosch University’s entire staff to be more than 50% black by 2018.

Stellenbosch University is just one of a number of traditionally Afrikaans universities grappling with transformation. The University earlier this year told MPs that its push to give English and Afrikaans equal status has added pressure on its academic staff, as extra teaching will be required to maintain the Afrikaans offering.

Late last year, the Stellenbosch University council, which has oversight responsibilities of academic and operational issues, decided to give English and Afrikaans equal status, despite support from the rector's management team for the adoption of English as the primary language of communication and administration from this year.