Maties commits to language policy

Ilse Fredericks
EDUCATION WRITER
ilse.fredericks@nlon.co.za

STELLENBOSCH University’s new language policy, which received the green light from the institution’s council, will promote access and multilingualism, the council chairman, George Steyn, says.

The council has “expressed its unequivocal support for multilingualism, without excluding students who are not proficient in either Afrikaans or English”, said Steyn in a statement following the meeting.

The policy states that the university supports the academic use of Afrikaans and English “through a combination of facilitated learning opportunities”.

The dual medium option under the current policy means where the lecturer uses 50 percent Afrikaans and 50 percent English, a student with no academic proficiency in either language could be excluded from 50 percent of that lecture.

In terms of the new policy for undergraduate modules where Afrikaans and English are used, all information will be conveyed in English with a summary or emphasis also repeated in Afrikaans.

For first-year modules, simultaneous interpreting would be available during each lecture, and for second and subsequent years, interpreting would be provided upon request by a faculty.

According to Steyn, the new policy also makes provision for mechanisms of academic oversight and effective management.

The Student Representative Council welcomed the council’s decision, noting that the “document strikes a difficult balance between the practicability and the need for multilingualism at this campus”.

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