Maties, Tuks say yes to English

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Stellenbosch University (Maties) and the University of Pretoria (Tuks) have decided to adopt a new language policy in support of multilingualism, even if the decision was met with hostility.

Both institutions, which had been using Afrikaans as a medium of instruction for a century, were adamant they were not excluding students who were not proficient in Afrikaans or English.

The Maties Council chairperson George Steyn said the new policy was based on the principles that the university would promote access and academic success.

“The revised Language Policy reaffirms our commitment to the users of Afrikaans, English and isiXhosa, being the official languages of the Western Cape,” said Steyn.

The new policy came after a debate at a transformation Lekgotla earlier this year. As from January, English and Afrikaans will receive equal status.

Tuks spokesperson Anna-Reetha Bouwer said English would become the primary language of instruction and assessment. “For students who are registered, Afrikaans as a language of instruction will be phased out gradually.”

However, the decision was met with some hostility. AfriForum described the decision as “a genuflection to anarchy”, while Paul Roos Gymnasium rector Janni van der Westhuizen resigned from the council with immediate effect. – batlilep@citizen.co.za