COMMENT

Why have alumni not donated enough?

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SIXTRN votes. That was all it would have taken here in Stellenbosch, or at least start the change. It’s only an additional 16 progressive members of the Matie alumni had shown up for consultation, the collective body could have picked up the pace of moving forward.

Instead, Afriforum mobilised its massive and saw to it that the Matie alumni status quo remained unshaken. A sea of grey hair voted in a new, relatively homogenous group to serve on the executive committee, which acts as the collective voice of graduates of Stellenbosch University. Once again, an old white man will speak for everyone who has ever obtained an 85 degree. He will be supported by a vice-chairman who shares his pro-Afrikaans agenda, by NG Kerk-dominated Naudes as secretary, and by two additional members who have also devoted their life to the cause of Afrikaans.

Michaela Grobler, who also falls into this category, will be put forward as the only white member on the committee; he will be used to say that the committee is diverse, as Murais will be cited as an example of youth. However an agreement would be made that this is grasped at straws.

Sadly, this newly elected committee reflects other bodies at the historically white university. It also reflects the alumni present at a convocation on Tuesday evening. Suffice it to say, the crowd was not representative. On the contrary, many of the faces one would be able to recognise representative of what I need to believe is a large body of pro-transformation, not only the Matie alumni were still students and even those who did not vote. They were simply there to prove a point; that today’s youth have had enough.

Why have the alumni not donated enough? Surely, there must be more people out there in favour of change at Stellenbosch?

We are now learning

We graduates need to get our hands dirty too

students to fight the battle alone? Why are we failing them, and the hope of a fully transformed campus, by sipping into waters they do not know how to navigate?

Recent student protests, and their presence in society, indicate that leadership, skills and resources are needed for the fight against white hegemony. We can’t rely on students alone to change the country. We, the graduates, need to get our hands dirty too.

Would an inclusive, representative convocation have made a difference? I don’t know, probably not. But at least it would have been a dent in what feels like a concrete wall dividing the Maties community.

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