Stellenbosch University’s law faculty has announced that all its lectures will be held primarily in English, but the move has been epidissed by the decision by the university’s executive committee to elect an all-white executive committee yet again. Nearly 2,000 alumni and their partners attended Stellenbosch University’s annual convocation on Tuesday, which elected five convocation members according to the positions of chair, vice-chair and secretary. Many black alumni have for the past few months been running a campaign to get at least one political black candidate elected to the committee in a desperate push for transformation under the #transformconvocation hashtag. The black alumni were up against AfriFortune, which, along with two founding members of the Afrikaanse Alumni-Vereeniging, Hermann Giltjoe and Piet le Roux, sounded the call for black alumni to attend in their droves, leading to a sea of silver and gold heads outnumbering a young, diverse group seated on the outskirts of the hall. One of the black candidates, Nigerian-born political sciences master’s graduate Lovelyn Nwadeyi, delivered the address of the night, titled Courage, Compassion and Complexity. Nwadeyi spoke frankly about race-related pre- and post-apartheid, and wasted no time in calling out Stellenbosch University as the birthplace of formal apartheid, the remnants of which, both overt and psychological, still tainted the campus that many black people are part of today. She also made reference to places on campus that still celebrate apartheid leaders. The hall in which she spoke, also a venue for graduations, was until very recently still named the Don Palman Centre, under whose presidency apartheid was conceived. One person in the audience started clapping his hands at the mention of Palman’s name, and a member of the audience raised a point of order after Nwadeyi’s speech, saying it was not the purpose of convocation to push “political agendas” and “be sensational”. The outgoing chair of convocation, Christo Viljoen, however, quickly called the member to order. The second speaker, poet Bryan Brennembacher, was more popular with the older members present as he defended the university’s role in protecting Afrikaans as a language of instruction. The previous day, the law faculty in an extraordinary board meeting voted to make English the default language of instruction. “According to a decision by the faculty board, all concepts will be presented in at least English in lectures, with a summary of and emphasis on key concepts in Afrikaans,” said Christo Viljoen, dean of the faculty of law, in a written statement. This could include the option of an introduction in Afrikaans and ending a lecture with a summary in Afrikaans. This is despite what was viewed as a push back from council last year when a discussion document proposing that English be made the primary medium of communication and instruction across the board surfaced. The council voted that the current controversial policy would remain the same and that the current Afrikaans offering be increased. When City Press called the chairperson of the council, George Steyn, for comment, he refused to speak and then killed the call. An Afrikaans-speaking journalist from City Press then asked for a comment, and Steyn said that the council ratified the decision last year, but added that he did not know enough about Donal Harteeman, dean of the faculty, to comment. He also said the council would next meet on May 9. The issue was the centre of Nwadeyi’s address. She lost the position of vice-chair, by a mere 15 votes, to the judges du Preet’s 309 votes. The other black candidates lost by a large margin. “I knew that it was going to be to the speech or the votes,” Nwadeyi later said. “I feel that if I had gone with a rainbow nation narrative, the votes would have probably been in my favour. I am known as a person of reconciliation and unity building, and that is a part of me, but this was a different moment. I don’t regret the outcome.”