

Bracing for the long haul

Sense of unity as students clean up at Wits after sleep-over

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THE SARAFINA! soundtrack. Struggle music reminiscent of freedom marches, played softly yesterday morning as Wits students cleaned what has become their house.

They have been occupying Senate House, which they renamed Solomon House, as part of the ongoing protest over the proposed fees increment since the university council refused to meet them there on Monday.

I've lived in this country for only two weeks, but I've been

told by locals that protests in South Africa are often chaotic and violent.

Wits student leaders have emphasised to their peers that this particular one needs to be a peaceful demonstration, and they seem to be taking that mandate seriously.

They have also taken that a step further, demonstrating a sense of community.

They used mops and brooms to clean the floors. One man refilled the toilet paper in the bathrooms, which had run out since many of the university services shut down with the protest.

The Solomon House banner



hung from an upper floor. A projector displayed the latest #NationalShutdown tweets.

A few students, including one who has been active in the protest since the students blocked Wits's gates, were still in sleeping bags after spending the night in the hall.

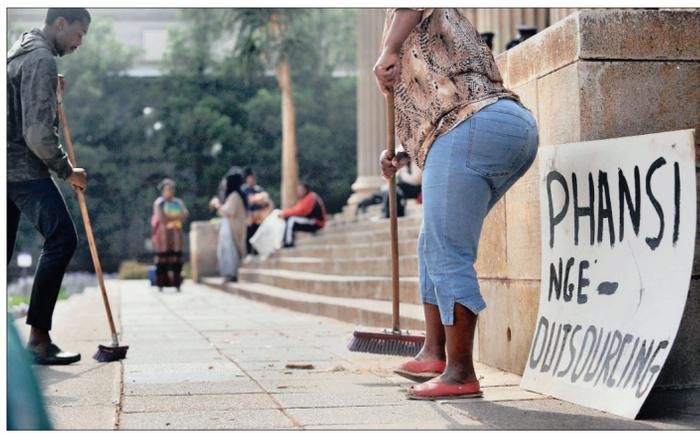
Outside the Great Hall, the sun lit a jacaranda tree from

the perfect angle. One student paused to take a picture of it. Other students swept the stairs and picked up trash.

The clean-up crew's sense of community and team spirit has been a part of the protest since it began, cultivated especially by two bold female leaders, Shaera Kalla and Nompndulo Mkatshwa.

After they finished cleaning, the students gathered in Senate House to eat the breakfast that other students had carried in. They had bread and apples, tea, coffee and soft drinks.

They have created a donation process via Twitter so that



NOT LEAVING A MESS: Wits students cleaning up outside Senate House after they slept and spent the night waiting for the vice-chancellor to address them on campus. PICTURE: DUMSANI DUBE

they can continue to feed themselves. They are encouraging

both supply and money donations. It's clear that these stu-

dents are prepared for the long haul.

Classes called off for now

MANDLA KHOZA

STUDENTS at the Mbombela campus of the Tshwane University of Technology (TUT) have joined the national #FeesMustFall campaign, causing classes to be suspended yesterday.

The branch chairman of the South African Students Congress on campus, Jacob Tau, said the Mbombela students were supporting the general protest against fees, but also drafted their own memorandum to raise problems specific to them.

"We drafted our own issues which directly affect us, especially issues of residency. Less than 10 percent of our students here are in residence, whereas the Higher Education Act says it should be at least 50 percent," he said.

Tau was also critical of the National Student Financial Aid Scheme. "NSFAS does not help us, it only benefits a few students, which is not what the constitution and the Freedom Charter say," said Tau.

He said that if the TUT campus did not address the students' concerns, particularly the issue of residency, the students would shut it down.

Student Neo Mhlabane said she arrived to find the gates had been locked and had to return home.

"We stayed outside for a while and were told to return home. Some started singing Struggle songs."

"As students, we like what is happening because fees are too expensive. Our parents are struggling," said Mhlabane.

Dr Annemarie Breytenbach, the acting campus director at TUT Mbombela, confirmed that all TUT campuses, including Mbombela, had been shut.

"Yes, the campus has been closed until further notice. This includes the others," she said.

TUT spokeswoman Willa de Ruyter couldn't be reached for comment because her cellphone was off. - African Eye News Service



WRESTLING ACTS: EFF members are thrown out of parliament after chanting "Fees Must Fall" in support of the protesting students outside Parliament yesterday. PICTURE: MICHAEL WALKER

With mayhem outside, Nene forges ahead with his speech

MARIANNE MERTEN

AS STUN grenades were fired in the parliamentary precinct to try to disperse several hundred #FeesMustFall student protesters, Finance Minister Nhlhlanhla Nene put on his poker face and pushed on with his medium-term budget policy statement.

Inside the House, the students' chant of *Asina mali* (We don't have money) was not heard. Instead, Nene emphasised the long-term view to solve the higher education funding problem.

"It needs to be said that disruption of learning is not conducive..."

"But Higher Education Minister Blade Nzimande has rightly indicated the need to strengthen student financing further and find solutions where current arrangements are inadequate," Nene told MPs.

His comments follow an agreement to cap the 2016 fee increases at 6 percent following a meeting between Nzimande, university vice-chancellors and student representatives, although this proposal remains subject to acceptance following



ON GUARD: Riot police closely watch protesting University of Cape Town students protest outside Parliament before the budget policy speech. PICTURE: MICHAEL WALKER

negotiations at individual institutions of tertiary education.

ANC MP Paul Mashatile, who chairs the appropriations committee, which will from today deal with the medium-term budget policy statement,

said it would be up to Parliament to proceed with the engagement on student fees.

While hundreds of students broke through the security barrier to enter the Parliamentary grounds, inside, all EFF MPs

were thrown out of the National Assembly after they drowned out Nene as he began delivering his medium-term budget policy statement with chants of "fees must fall". Presiding officer Thoko

Didiza responded by individually ordering each EFF MP to leave the chamber before calling on parliamentary protection officers to remove them.

Plainclothes officers entered the National Assembly

and pushed EFF MPs from their benches, the first time this has happened since the party was booted out ahead of President Jacob Zuma's State of the Nation Address. - Additional reporting by ANA

FIVE-DAY FORECAST FOR JOHANNESBURG

Today 22nd	Fri 23rd	Sat 24th	Sun 25th	Mon 26th
14 28	14 29	14 31	15 31	15 34
30%			30%	30%

TOMORROW'S WEATHER SA Weather Service Tel 082 162

GAUTENG Partly Cloudy

Minimum	Maximum
13	28

MAIN CITIES Minimum Maximum °C

Cape Town	13	28	Durban	16	23	Mbombela	14	24
Bloemfontein	11	31	East London	15	23	Port Elizabeth	14	22
Polokwane	11	26	Kimberley	15	34	Rustenburg	15	30

WORLD TEMPERATURES Minimum Maximum °C

Amsterdam	8	14	Cloudy	Cairo	24	34	PCloudy	Paris	9	15	Cloudy
Athens	9	26	Clear	Chicago	10	16	PCloudy	Rome	11	20	PCloudy
Auckland	14	21	PCloudy	Harare	13	30	PCloudy	Sydney	13	20	Rain
Barcelona	14	21	Clear	Lisbon	14	24	Clear	Taipei	22	26	CloudyR
Beirut	23	28	PCloudy	London	4	14	PCloudy	Tel Aviv	21	30	PCloudy
Berlin	9	11	CloudyR	Nairobi	17	28	PCloudy	Tokyo	15	22	PCloudy
Brussels	6	13	PCloudy	New York	11	24	PCloudy	Tunis	17	21	CloudyR

Exorbitant fees seen as big barrier to education

YOLISA TSWANYA

IF YOUR child was born in 2015, by the time they reach 18, university fees for an average four-year bachelor's degree could cost R1.2 million.

This is according to an analysis by PPS Investments and Hugo Malherbe, who said the figure was based on the approximate cost of a four-year qualification at a South African university in today's terms, adjusted in line with the education inflation average.

Malherbe added that if parents wanted to save for a child born this year, they would have to save roughly R2 000 a month or R140 000 once-off a year, assuming an 11 percent return, and if delayed, this amount could increase.

The figures include accommodation but exclude study material, and may vary according to the institution.

A recent study by PPS showed that 62 percent of students believed that

tertiary education fees were too high. The survey was conducted with about 900 students in their fourth year or above.

Product specialist Motshabi Nomvetho said the cost of tertiary education was seen as a huge entry barrier.

"So many young people want to study further so that they can have access to the same opportunities as those who can afford to study. However, the rising cost of education hinders them."

She added that although universities were funded by the government, students fees and third stream income also contributed. "The government must recognise the value of generating skilled professionals to ensure key skills - such as medical doctors, engineers and lawyers - are developed and retained in the country."

"It's time the government looked for ways to increase its funding to universities," Nomvetho added.

This isn't Marikana, cops told during Kimberley campus standoff

BENIDA PHILLIPS

SOL PLAATJE University students at the former NIHE campus in Kimberley yesterday said classes would be allowed to resume today following a protest at the institution.

Chaos erupted on campus after students demonstrated their unhappiness with a preliminary increase of 8 percent in tuition fees.

Students also accused management of not being transparent with regard to how student bursaries are being utilised.

The police were called in to bring the rowdy students under control. They, however, became aggravated and started throwing stones after the officers arrived.

Two stun grenades were fired by police to disperse the crowd, and one student was arrested, which then resulted in a standoff between the students and the police.

"Students are fighting for their rights but, instead, they are being victimised by the

police. This is not Marikana and the police should not come with their Marikana mentality," some students shouted.

Students called for a zero percent increase and said management had even overstepped the 6 percent increase proposed by the Department of Higher Education.

"Management said they will increase the fees by 8 percent... that is just madness. There are students who do not have money and still have outstanding fees they need to pay. If the fees are increasing, how are they going to make the payment?" one student asked.

Another accused the institution of not being honest with the financial management of the students' finances.

"There are students who received bursaries to study, but they do not know how their bursaries are being utilised by the institution."

"We just go to class and have to continue with our studies but are in complete darkness about where we stand finan-

cially... we do not even receive financial statements stating how much of our bursaries are being utilised and on what, and then you are just informed that you owe the institution money."

The president of the recently elected student representative council (SRC), Tiro Cwaile, said they had reached an agreement with management to halt all protests pending feedback from Minister of Higher Education Blade Nzimande.

"We will continue with classes as normal and have also agreed that the increase (in fees) will be suspended. We will again hold a meeting after we have heard from the minister," he said. Cwaile added that they had also resolved other outstanding matters.

"We have agreed that students should not be financially excluded due to outstanding fees. We will assist those who do not have funds to pay their fees by hosting fund-raisers and will ask private companies to assist."

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