

Dear Esteemed Witsie!

The election for the SRC is one of the most energetic, drama-driven and thought-provoking times of the Wits year. We, as students, are given the opportunity to look at our experience at Wits so far and assess our feelings toward academics, toward housing and residence, and toward service delivery. It also gives us the opportunity to examine our SRC – the Voice of the Wits student community – and decide what makes us proud of them, and what looks like a chain of promises never to be fulfilled*.*

*Project W* is an independent, nonpartisan student organization. We are inclusive, and prioritize diversity and tolerance, with our membership consisting of Black, White, Coloured, Indian and Asian students. We welcome all creeds and beliefs: Christians, Muslims, Jews, Agnostics and Atheists, and all students regardless of sexual preference. We are passionate about student issues at Wits University and involved in making wits better.

One of the core beliefs of Project W is **transparency**. This is an ideal that every SRC party should have; it is an ideal that every, single student on campus deserves. It is only through transparency that a proper SRC can operate: students ought to know all the decisions of the SRC openly and in an unbiased manner. It is therefore disturbing that a party serving on the SRC (essentially that President of that party) would hide critical and controversial information regarding residence policies for 2015 and beyond, solely for political gains. As a result of significant misunderstanding circulating campus, concerning both the policy as a whole and Project W’s attitude towards it, an explanation of the policy and Project W’s stance has been included below.

Project W believes in a **diverse** and **tolerant** student body. The policy on residence for 2015 aims to make residences more diverse and cosmopolitan, and reflect our university as a world-respected institution. Project W agrees with this part of the policy on diversity as it expresses the inclusivity that we affirm in our manifesto. However, the percentage of students in residences that are needed to properly diversify the residence (according to the policy, twenty-five percent), Project W finds *excessive*. Project W believes that a much smaller percentage of the residence, perhaps 5 – 10%, should be set aside to *try* diversification, and this number should be kept constant for two years before reassessing if the policy is successful. Moreover, Project W believes that the application fee for residence should be a *set sum* and not more expensive if one is applying for a single room.

It must be stressed that certain rumours about the policy have been circulating around campus and are simply *untrue*. **No one is being evicted from residence to make space for diversity.** As people graduate from the university and move out, or as people move out for other reasons such as academic underperformance or personal reasons, spaces become available. Of these available spaces, some will be set aside for diversity and the rest will exist as residence openings. No one in the residence will be forced to move out.

**Students will not be allowed single rooms based on race alone, and first-years will almost certainly have to share a room.** The concept of more single rooms becoming available to “attract whites” into residence is simply absurd and unconstitutional. There are no incentives or “white-scholarships” to attract white people specifically to single rooms. No university in the world would adopt such a stance, especially not Wits which currently stands as one of the best universities in Africa. It can be assured that the increased availability of single rooms has been made from a financial standpoint and not from a diversity-related standpoint. Furthermore, **seniors will still keep their single rooms**. The policy will not affect seniors having single rooms – in fact, Wits is expanding its residences to accommodate more first-years so seniors are not affected.

**The policy on residences in 2015 was approved by the current President of the SRC in June this year.** Although the policy has been displayed as a “shocking” development, it was actually approved almost three months ago by the current President of the SRC, who sits on the Senate during policy making. The reason for its emergence now is either a result of lack of transparency of the current SRC leadership, or as a means political sway during election time.

Overall, Project W believes strongly in diversity at Wits, we believe that the new residence policy should be implemented at a much, much slower rate than suggested, and we *strongly condemn* restricting vital information from students for individual or political party gain.

The policy also provides residence for those with sports scholarships, in order to increase our reputation at sports; it aims to house more people with commendable academic performance to increase university ratings and it has a provision to allow for more postgraduates to stay as residence, along with their spouses, all of which Project W supports.

We at Project W are dedicated to improving every aspect of student life, whether it be financial, academic or service related and we are committed to making Wits **even better**.

Find out more on our website [www.projectw.co.za](http://www.projectw.co.za), or visit our Facebook page.

Project W

Making Wits Even Better