



AfriForum in court over student election dispute

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THE disputed election of a student representative body at the University of Pretoria is now headed for court, amid intervention by AfriForum.

This follows a ruling by the university that last year's student elections at the institution were "unfair" after unauthorised pamphlets, some accusing independent candidates of having undeclared political affiliations, were distributed on election day.

The university has declined to release the results and has since appointed a temporary Students Representative Council (SRC).

AfriForum Youth is demanding the original results be respected and has instituted legal action against the university for declaring the elections unfair. The application will be heard in the high court on February 17.

AfriForum Youth chairman Charl Oberholzer said yesterday the appointment of a temporary SRC at the University of Pretoria had been "secretive" and was unrepresentative of student preference.

The temporary SRC included several members of the South African Students Congress Organisation, "notwithstanding the fact that this group had failed to win seats in the

student representative council for the past two years", he said.

University spokeswoman Nicolize Mulder said invitations had been extended to all political organisations to put forward candidates prior to the formulation of the "temporary" structure. The temporary SRC had further been constituted to ensure a "balance between race and gender", she said.

Every effort had been made to reach an agreement on how to proceed after last year's unfair elections, but this had failed, Ms Mulder said.

The chairman of the Democratic Alliance Students Organisation at University of Pretoria, Jordan Griffiths, said the pamphlet distribution during the election had indeed "compromised" the results.

However, the university "clearly had problems with political society" and restricted political activity on campus, he said.

The "censorship" of political pamphlets, ostensibly to reduce tension and prevent "hate speech", went too far, Mr Griffiths said.

Last year, the University of the Free State banned political organisations from operating at the university. All student governance candidates are now required to run as independents.

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