Election battle moves to varsities

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AFTER a gruelling round of municipal elections, the political battle has shifted to universities.

Political parties are waging fierce battles to see who will lead next year’s student representative councils (SRCs) at the various universities.

At Stellenbosch University, AfriForum Youth is embroiled in a dispute with the institution after eight of its SRC representatives were suspended from taking part in the elections. They were found to have broken election protocol regarding campaign posters, electioneering, monetary limits and student suspensions.

The elections have been postponed indefinitely, and AfriForum Youth is trying all it can not to be excluded.

For North-West University national spokesman Morne Mostert, said the appeal court is at the university’s law faculty, and a committee has been set up to deal with the matter.

Mostert said the organisation believed it had been treated unfairly “There is bias towards AfriForum candidates. There are other candidates who break the rules but are not punished. We are excluded from ever taking part in elections.”

Bernard Pieters, a candidate for the SRC chairmanship, said the allegations that the student court acted unconstitutionally and that AfriForum Youth did not violate any election rules.

Meanwhile, at Wits University and Unisa, students are anxiously awaiting the election results, which are due to be released this week. Students went to the polls last week. Unisa elections were for a national SRC and eight regional SRCs in campuses across the country, said spokesman Martin Ramotsela.

The national elections were contested by nine organisations and the regional elections by 51.

“What was significant about this election is that electronic voting was used. Students have three options: to use either their cellphones for SMS voting, or to vote on a computer, laptop or tablet, or to vote at a kiosk provided at the regional centres,” Ramotsela said.

He said the voting infrastructure was similar to that used in electronic banking and involved advanced features to prevent electoral fraud.

EFF national student commandant leader Peter Keetse said he was confident his party would win key positions in most institutions.

At the North-West University’s Vaal campus, it has won six seats.

“We are confident that we will win key seats at TUT (Tshwane University of Technology), North-West University Mafikeng campus, Unisa and Wits. We are also ready to win the Vaal University of Technology.”

Elections in Mafikeng are due to take place on Thursday and Friday.

Keetse claimed students on campuses were disillusioned with the ANC-aligned South African Students Congress.

“Our winning campuses is a clear indication of what is happening in mainstream politics. Sasco’s mother body has lost relevance with the ordinary masses, so the same thing should be expected from people in academia,” Keetse said.

However, Sasco national president Thabo Molosa said he hoped the recent municipal elections would prove to students that the EFF was in cahoots with the DA.

The EFF voted for DA leaders in some municipalities.

“We are confident this will make students vote for us. They will realise you can’t trust the EFF,” Molosa said, adding that he was certain his party would do well at Wits, the University of Venda and the Tshwane University of Technology.

“We have done well at the University of Johannesburg and Fort Hare. We are confident that we will win the other universities. We are confident we will reclaim the Mafikeng campus and get Uni-

ven (University of Venda). No other party will perform as well as we have,” Molosa conceded, however, that Sasco would probably lose Unisa headquarters in Pretoria, which is run by the EFF.

‘There has been bias towards AfriForum’