



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

Democracy alive and well at University of Queensland

University of Queensland – 20th August 2012 – The allegations of corruption and secrecy surrounding the annual election process for the University of Queensland Union are incorrect and intended to damage the credibility of the FRESH electoral group, claims current Union President Colin Finke.

The nomination process resulted in a total of five different teams nominating, only one of which was disqualified for non-compliance with the electoral regulations. All teams were made aware of the regulations governing the election following their widespread distribution. A number of members of the Pulse group including Presidential Candidate Abraham O’Neil attended the Union Council meeting where it is alleged that secret changes to the regulations were made.

The independent Returning Officer, Alexa Faros-Dowling has confirmed that the nomination submitted by the Pulse group was constitutionally valid and would have resulted in them appearing as a registered electoral group on the ‘Above-the-Line’ ballot paper that is distributed to all voting students by default. The Returning Officer gave them the opportunity to change the name of their electoral group in compliance with regulations, but they declined and withdrew their nominations.

Despite the protests she is proceeding to conduct the voting process between the remaining groups next week, ensuring that the democratic process within the UQ Union elections is upheld.

Similar claims of corruption were made during the election process by the Pulse group in previous years, most recently in 2011 but were later deemed to be without merit by an independent electoral tribunal comprising senior legal practitioners appointed by the Queensland Law Society, Queensland Bar Association and the University of Queensland Alumni Association respectively.

The accusation that FRESH engaged in conduct intended to reduce these elections to a one horse race is absurd, according to 2013 Presidential Candidate, Rohan Watt. “For the past five years, the students of UQ have placed their trust in us to deliver for them. They have resoundingly stated to us that they support our vision for the Union and we are confident that our platform for 2013 will be endorsed once again without the need to engage in the behaviour that is being alleged.”

The UQ Union intends to continue its tradition of conducting democratic, transparent and equitable elections. The UQ Union supports and encourages healthy student political debate and competition for the valued and critical roles that students occupy within the organisation.

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