

Tuks 'must nurture black academics'

It could be among world's top 10

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Professor Jonathan Jansen, outgoing dean of the faculty of education at the University of Pretoria, has called on the institution to speed up transformation and said Tuks could be ranked among the top 10 academic institutions of the world if it nurtured its women and black academics.

Speaking to the Pretoria News about his resignation, Jansen said Tuks was currently "a university that punches below its weight" – but that it had massive potential.

"Senior management is largely white and male, which is not very different from 10 years ago," said Jansen.

Jansen also said the university was authoritarian-driven and that a more democratic system would open doors for greater academic achievement within the institution.

"If we develop a broader base of black and women scholars and emphatically change the competence of senior leadership so that people at the university are intellectually vibrant and not afraid of conflict in a system which allows everyone to have a say," he said, "then the University of Pretoria will be one of the top 10 academic institutions in the world."

He said that with Tuks already being the largest research producer in the country, combined with huge infrastructure and a total student population of more than 50 000, the university had the raw materials but did not have the kinds of energies in leadership which could transform it into something bigger.

"It (Tuks) operates with less than a third of its talents," said Jansen. He said the academics producing the cur-

rent research were just a fraction of the active researchers from the university, which meant that Tuks had the potential to produce even more research documents.

Jansen said he was extremely sad to leave the institution at which he had worked since 2001 and that he would miss his students, staff and the opportunities offered there. He said his open-door policy with first-year students from his faculty and time spent around the university, as opposed to just in his office, had led to him learning about many different issues from many different people.

During his term at the University of Pretoria, he served as a member of the council of the University and also received the Chancellor's Award for research achievement.

In August Jansen was seconded as administrator to the Durban University of Technology (DUT) on a full-time basis.

Announcing Jansen's resignation at a council meeting last week, Professor Calie Pistorius, Tuks vice-chancellor and principal, said: "Prof Jansen contributed immensely to developing the reputation and stature of the faculty of education to one which is widely regarded as outstanding. His work in the area of research and post-graduate studies was especially significant. Our best wishes accompany him."

Jansen said that while he would be working at DUT for the next few months, he did not plan on remaining in Durban and hoped to get a new position at an institution "bubbling with enthusiasm for change".

"I love instability. I love a challenge. I would like to work in an institution where the problems of change are a concern with the stakeholders who are willing to do something about it."