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Jansen seeks to instil governance at Durban University

Sue Blaine

Education Correspondent

THE Durban University of Technology is now under administration after an independent assessor found a breakdown in management was so severe that it could no longer continue under its council.

The newly appointed administrator, Prof Jonathan Jansen, said his first impression — after three days in the job — was that the chief cause of the

crisis was a breakdown in the relationship between the institution's council and its management.

"I start the real work tomorrow morning, I've been reading and preparing," said Jansen, dean of education at Pretoria University.

Education Minister Naledi Pandor appointed Jansen administrator of the university on August 12 on the recommendation of an independent assessor, Prof Chabani Manganyi.

The report found mismanagement

and poor governance was mostly caused by the now dissolved council's failure to govern properly, which "created opportunities for arbitrary decisions" to be taken.

This abrogation of duty led to disenchantment with the council and its standing committees. There was frustration and anger and an increasing disregard for the rules as well as procedures and systems that kept separate the roles of the executive and council. "Everything must be done to

save the university from expending more resources on account of the chronic state of organisational paralysis, rising council costs, chronic uncertainty and endless bickering," Manganyi concluded in his report.

He also criticised the university's vice-chancellor, Prof Banganjalo Goba, for his weak management.

Jansen has six months to restore proper governance and management, reconstitute the council in terms of new institutional statutes and oversee

the conclusion of a forensic audit.

"The idea is to break the logjams so that the managers can do their work with effectiveness and efficiency and reach their goals at minimal cost," Jansen said.

Auditors are still at work, but have uncovered 40 "events" involving 11 staff members which have the potential for disciplinary action and a possible six criminal acts. In four cases there was the possibility of civil recovery. Auditors' costs could reach R7m.