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Jansen to straighten out DUT

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Education Minister Naledi Pandor has appointed the Dean of Education at the University of Pretoria, Professor Jonathan Jansen, to help the Durban University of Technology get back on its feet.

DUT's vice-chancellor, Bonganjalo Goba, said yesterday that Jansen, who is highly regarded in higher education circles, will begin his work tomorrow. Jansen is also vice-president of the Academy of Science of South Africa.

The decision to appoint an administrator came in the wake of revelations that the Durban institution has deep divisions and broken relations between its council and management, as well as financial irregularities involving R150-million.

According to Jansen's terms of reference, he will:

- Take over the authority of the university's council for an initial period of six months, with the possibility of a six-month extension;

- Identify how proper governance and management could be restored;

- Conclude the ongoing forensic audit of the university initiated by the council; and

- Ensure that the university has a legally constituted council in terms of the new statute of the DUT.

However, Students' Representative Council president Thami Shezi said Pandor's decision was an "insult" to students.

According to Shezi, the university did not need an administrator as the problems between management and the council had been "reduced to issues of personalities".

Jansen would not be able to solve this and would only frustrate those involved, he said.

Jansen in turn said he did not want his appointment to be seen as "a dramatic intervention or fact-finding mission". He said his job was to enable and empower the university's management and council to do their jobs well.

"It is no secret that this university has been plagued by governance problems," said Goba.

"I have publicly acknowledged the deficiencies in some of our management systems. Since I took office a little more than a year ago we have put a lot of energy into ironing out the glitches."

Goba said the institution was busy with an operational plan which set goals and performance targets for all its sectors.

He said it was an intensive exercise that would chart the university's course for the next five years.

■ *Jansen writes for us: Page 9*