

EDUCATION

Durban University of Technology outlines growth plans

NATASHA ODENDAAL
ONLINE WRITER

THE Durban University of Technology (DUT) plans to expand its existing infrastructure, establish new learning centres and partner with further education and training (FET) colleges as part of its proposed growth strategy.

Addressing Higher Education and Training Minister Dr **Blade Nzimande** at the university, in Pietermaritzburg, Professor **Ahmed Bawa** stated that a focus point for the institution was ensuring that 50% of its programmes were established on a technology platform in conjunction with FET colleges.

The Department of Higher Education and Training (DHET), which allocated R2.5-billion for the refurbishment and construction of new FET campuses over the next three years, has been meeting with stakeholders at various higher education and training institutions throughout KwaZulu-Natal to assess their challenges, plans for growth and infrastructure expansion.

The department noted in a statement that Mthashana FET College – one of the 12 priority FET infrastructure development sites – was central to the growth of FET education in the region.

The government allocation would see the construction and refurbishment of workshops, lecture halls, equipment, information technology systems and networks, as well as student accommodation at the college.

During the Minister's visit to Mthashana FET College, it emerged that the Kwa Gqikazi and Emandleni campuses had insufficient National Student Financial Aid Scheme support, poor residential and lecture hall infrastructure and water shortages, and required programmes "relevant to South Africa's market and economic growth projections".

Nzimande was expected to undertake a site visit to Umgungundlovu FET College, to which the DHET had committed a R57.3-million conditional grant and a bursary fund of R25.9-million for the year.

The DHET pointed out that government's bursary support for qualifying FET college students increased from R318-million in 2010, to R1.7-billion in 2012.