



POSITION PAPER ON AN EXPANDED POST-
SCHOOL EDUCATION SYSTEM

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Background and Introduction

As part of its Strategic Framework for 2010-2020, Higher Education South Africa (HESA) committed itself to developing a “shared conceptual view on the character, form and content” of a re-conceptualised post-school education system and the position and distinct role of universities in such a system¹. To this end, the HESA Board commissioned Prof Peliwe Lolwana to produce a discussion document on the subject and subsequently appointed an expert Task Team with the following mandate:

General objectives

The primary responsibility of the Task Team is to finalise the draft discussion document, present it to the Board and support the Executive Committee in advocating its message to relevant government departments and agencies.

Specific objectives

The Task Team’s specific responsibilities will include the following:

- Discuss and comment on the draft discussion document developed by Prof Lolwana;
- Propose a set of principles and policy options to underpin a reconceptualised post-school system;
- Spell out the distinct role of the Higher Education sector in such a system, including the development of a set of practical commitments/undertakings to be considered by the HESA Board in support of a reconceptualised post-school system;
- Spell out the role and relationship between the FET college sector and Higher Education Institutions;
- Suggest possible models for the capacity development of the FET college sector by the Higher Education Institutions.

Deliberations of the PSE Task Team

The HESA PSE Task Team has had three meetings, at which key experts in various domains made commissioned presentations. An outcome of their valuable contributions has been the co-option of two of these presenters to the Task Team².

As a consequence of the difficulty of securing the attendance of members of the Task Team, all of whom have many other commitments, it was unable to complete its work within the initial timeframe envisaged by HESA. Nonetheless, news that the Department of Higher Education and Training had initiated the process of developing a Green Paper on the post-school system led the Task Team to expedite its work and submit the following section of this document to the HESA Board for its consideration. The Team believes that while this is a relatively brief document, it captures the key

¹ Terms of Reference for the HESA Post-School Education Task Team, May 2010

² They are Prof Anthony Staak, DVC Academic at the Cape Peninsula University of Technology, and Prof Heather Nel, Senior Director of Strategic Planning at Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University.

elements that have emerged from the commissioned paper, subsequent presentations and the deliberations of the Task Team.

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A. An Expanded Post-School Education System

1. Shape, size and character of the current post-school education sector

Context

The circumstances described below are well known and have been widely aired and debated. They are rehearsed here very briefly in order to establish the basic context for the views expressed in the rest of this document.

Post-apartheid South Africa inherited a horizontally differentiated PSE system consisting of universities, technikons, technical colleges and colleges of education, police, nursing and agriculture. Through a variety of restructuring processes much of this differentiation has been lost. But this has not just been a loss of differentiation among institutions, it has also been a fundamental loss of places and spaces, of educational opportunities for school-leavers. This has had a number of serious consequences for the post-school scenario.

The first is an exacerbation of the already top-heavy structure of the post-school system. As early as 1996, the National Commission on Higher Education lamented the 'inverted pyramid' structure of post-school education (1996, p 93) and this situation has worsened, not improved. University is 'first-choice' and 'only choice' for many school-leavers. As Lolwana puts it:

Post-secondary education in developing countries takes the form of an expanding and widening pyramid, with a widening college system at the base and a somewhat smaller university sector, each growing as more and more progression routes are made available. In the South African education system, the widening college base has disappeared, leaving the university system to cater for all post-secondary education needs. (Lolwana, 2010: p14)

But even if it were appropriate for them to do so, universities have limited scope for expansion. Their total enrolment nationally is relatively steady at about 800 000 and the Minister's target for growth of the sector by 2013 sees it expanding to 935 710. This will provide only a marginal answer to the access demand. As Bunting and Cloete (2008) argue, it is not more universities that are needed but more post-school options at pre-university level. This is not only an access issue but also one of human resources. There are just not enough appropriately trained and experienced academic personnel available to properly staff a significant expansion of the university sub-sector.

The second consequence is that there are hardly any institutions offering the kinds of qualifications in intermediate skills in technical and vocational fields that are sorely needed in the labour market. This is not the domain of the universities, and it is only very partially the domain and level of FET colleges in their present form (Cosser, 2010). In so far as this need is being met at all, it is by the colleges in the private sector.

Another factor of great significance in this context is the huge social crisis that has been given measurable dimensions in the CHET study of 2009, that estimates the number of youth not in employment, education or training at about 2.8 million (Cloete, 2009). In the midst of immense skills shortages in the labour market, this is unconscionable.

There are, in other words, both supply and demand issues to which the present form of the sector is unable to respond adequately. There is no doubt that change is needed: the question is what form the change should take, and to what ends?

Interests of HE in an expanded post-school system

It is legitimate to ask why higher education, particularly in the form of the public universities, should feel the need to express its collective view on the expansion of the post-school system and the form it should take. What are its interests in this regard? It certainly speaks from the experience of many applicants for university places who are perhaps not best suited to university study, but who have no other options. But more importantly, higher education has a public role and responsibility in relation to the sound intellectual health of post-school educational institutions, and therefore of the nation.

One of the primary roles of universities is to create new knowledge and ensure its incorporation into courses and curricula so that students may proceed into the job market from a knowledge base that keeps pace with the demands of the changing knowledge economy. The non-university post-school education sector is not required to do research and produce new knowledge but it is tasked to produce graduates with up-to-the minute, functional skills that are immediately useful in the economy. How are they to maintain the contemporary relevance of their course offerings? In part it will be done through their industry linkages, but industry itself needs to be fed with new knowledge. To be vocational, college qualifications must develop employment-related knowledge and skills in specific occupational fields *and* provide access to the disciplinary knowledge that has been involved in the transformation of different occupations and sectors and in the development of new occupations. Here the role of the universities becomes evident. **It is the public responsibility of the universities, as society's primary new knowledge producer, to be directly concerned with the health of the post-school sector as a whole**, particularly with those institutions, the colleges, that require this assistance to remain renewed and viable on an on-going basis. The universities are, and should be, responsible for ensuring that the new knowledge filters down to the colleges in a way that can be assimilated by teaching staff, and through the curriculum, by students. The only way they can do this is by entering into strategic partnerships with colleges, to safeguard the continuing probity of their qualifications, to make sure that learners are not locked into dead-end qualifications and that the college subsector is appropriately linked into the post-school sector as a whole, and thereby to the knowledge economy.

Long-term, future possibilities

The form that a future post-school education sector might take, and that underpins this document, is of a properly articulated *system* in which the university sector is a relatively small component in relation to a strong base that offers a wide range of education and training opportunities to school-leavers, and is

attuned to social and economic needs, particularly those of the labour market, in ways that are not apparent in the present configuration. For school-leavers, it would offer a range of different programmes that might include second-chance opportunities to complete the NSC or NC(V), or bridging programmes that would give access to other colleges or universities, as well as vocational and career-oriented programmes that would lead straight to the job market. For working and adult learners, it would offer opportunities to deepen or extend their current proficiencies, or branch out into new fields. And for local communities, it would offer both contextually relevant and personally enriching learning possibilities.

These could be offered in a variety of institutional settings, including colleges of different types, workplace training sites and universities. For Lolwana (2010), “It means a diverse and differentiated institutional base that functions as an integrated whole with meaningful learning pathways across institutional and workplace education and training forms.”

Institutions within this system would be differentiated by level (some offering up to NQF level 4 qualifications and others in the HE band above 4), and by purpose (single and multi-purpose institutions). They could include technical colleges, specialised colleges offering intermediate qualifications for mid-level workers in a number of fields such as health, social work and education, and community colleges.

This is an ambitious ideal and its realisation is constrained by some serious limitations that it will be the business of this paper to elucidate, as they have a very specific bearing on the contribution that universities can make to bringing about a reconfigured post-school education system. But first, some matters of principle should be addressed.

For such a reconfigured post-school education system:

- What should its governing principles be?
- What should its goals and objectives be?
- What are the strategies and mechanisms to achieve these?
- What would the relationships be between its constituent parts, and particularly, what would the role of universities be?

2. Governing principles for a post-school education system

Equity of access

The fundamental governing principle for a post-school education system must be to enable access to educational and training opportunities further to the level of basic education achieved by any school-leaver irrespective of race, gender, or social and economic circumstances.

Quality provision for success

The quality of educational provision in terms of facilities, infrastructure, student support and staff capacity should establish the optimal conditions for student success.

Operation as a system

The institutions offering post-school education and training should operate together as a *system*. This is a *relational* requirement – the parts cannot operate as a system unless they relate to one another in clearly defined ways that also indicate the respective roles and responsibilities of the constituent parts.

Public and private provision

Post-school educational opportunities should be offered by both public and private providers, with private colleges seen as complementing the public system and subject to the same quality and other regulatory mechanisms as are private higher education institutions.

Mobility and progression

In order for post-school education to operate as a system, the mobility of students between and among institutions should be ensured through the development of articulation pathways and a credit transfer mechanism. Curricula for programmes should be constructed with a sufficient academic foundation to allow for further progression, not leading to dead-ends.

Geographical distribution

Institutions should be sufficiently widely distributed geographically to allow for relatively easy access to some form of PSE in most parts of the country. Establishing landmark institutions in rural areas would be especially important, with staff trained for and attuned to the needs of rural communities.

Differentiation

A post-school education system would need to be differentiated both vertically and horizontally. Vertical differentiation would be determined by accreditation to offer qualifications up to certain levels, while horizontal differentiation would enable the creation of a 'differentiated-for-purpose' college sector with some single and some multi-purpose institutions.

3. Goals and objectives

To extend access and opportunity

The fundamental goal for a post-school education system must be to offer access to educational and training opportunities further to the level of basic education achieved by any school-leaver. This goal implies addressing the needs of a number of target groups:

- Those who have left school without completing the NSC or NC(V);
- Those who have left school with the NSC or NC(V) but without meeting university entrance requirements;
- Those who have achieved the NSC or NC(V) and meet the minimum legal university entrance requirements but do not find a university place;
- Those who meet admission and selection criteria for university study and are admitted;
- Working and other adults.

To expand offerings

The inadequacy of the current form of the post-school education sector to meet the needs identified above requires that it should be expanded. The possible forms that such an expansion might take will be discussed below, but a primary objective would be:

- a) To offer post-secondary educational opportunities and qualifications that lie somewhere between those offered at present by schools and FET colleges on the one hand, and universities on the other, in particular, something akin to the N qualifications (4-6) and NQF level 5 certificates in technical and vocational fields, including the social sciences and humanities.

A second objective would be:

- b) To offer education and training opportunities to young adults who are unemployed and currently not in education or training. Some of these may be able to access the opportunities mentioned in a), above, but many may well lack the basic educational platform needed for post-secondary education.

These two needs are not identical and should not be confused, even though there may be some overlap.

To offer training and education relevant to labour market needs

The majority of learners entering the post-school education system at pre-university level will be seeking a qualification that will improve their employment opportunities and life prospects. This requires a high level of alignment of qualifications with labour market needs and the relevance of curricula to contemporary employment destinations.

To expand the range of institutional types

For a post-school education system to meet the many needs that have been identified, it is almost inevitable that, in the long run, new institutional types would have to be introduced. The policy options here would be to go for a 'big bang' approach and build a whole new stratum of institutions, or to go for a phased approach that would aim to build on existing strengths in the FET colleges and selectively expand their scope and change their character in ways that will be determined by capacity, regional, local and community needs. Given existing capacity constraints, the first of these options is simply unrealistic. As Lolwana (2010) puts it, *"Whilst it is the non-university institutions that present a serious opportunity to expand access [to] higher education, it is also this sub-system that presents many challenges."* A phased approach, however, implemented in a concerted and planned manner would have the potential to build the sector relatively quickly towards the goal of a fully-fledged, differentiated and massified system.

To develop linkages for articulation and progression

A key objective for a post-school education system, and critical to its operation as a system, would be the building of formal linkages between and among all the sub-sectors of the system. In particular, there needs to be better alignment between the FET and HE sectors. For students who choose to do so, and who demonstrate the requisite levels of competency, it should be possible to move horizontally between institutions and progress vertically to higher level qualifications. Such movements, however, cannot be automatic or seamless. To work properly, they depend on having a number of things in place such as:

- Coordinated quality assurance and funding systems
- Formal articulation agreements between institutions
- Careful alignment of curricula in common fields
- Review of NC(V) curricula and re-structuring of subject combinations for the certificate to enable strong articulation with the labour market on the one hand, and easier articulation with HE on the other. The second of these objectives may also be facilitated by the development of custom-designed foundation or bridging programmes.

The experience and evidence from pilot projects conducted in this area will be discussed in greater detail in the section on the role of universities, but it is important to note at this point that these initiatives take considerable time to initiate and develop.

4. Strategies and mechanisms

Expansion and building of capacity

The single largest challenge to any expansion of the post-school sector at pre-university level is that of capacity, both academic and leadership/managerial. Muller (February, 2011) argues in a paper prepared for the Task Team that the principal characteristic of the current FET colleges, barring a handful of them, is their poor quality and their sub-optimal delivery of the new upgraded FET curriculum. This underlines the *capacity problem* in the colleges. Neither the universities nor the private colleges (some of which have their own quality problems) are in a position to release any spare capacity and in many respects are still struggling to meet their own academic HR needs. Compared to the time needed for the erection of buildings or installation of infrastructure, building human resource capacity takes a long time. Nonetheless, the universities could make a significant contribution in this regard (see below). The point that needs to be emphasised is that any expansion at this level of the post-school sector, whether of the range of qualifications or the forms of institutions, will be dependent on first meeting the fundamental condition of building capacity.

Formation of ‘federations’ or regional consortia of linked institutions

As part of system-formation, Lolwana (2010) recommends the development of regionally based sub-systems or ‘federations’ that would bring institutions from different sectors into relationship with one another around a variety of activities and issues. These could include the franchising of university programmes (e.g. certificate programmes at NQF level 5) to FET colleges, the offering of access or bridging (foundation) programmes, the co-teaching and assessment of HE programmes in colleges, the development of articulation pathways, the building of capacity, collaborative research, and common links to communities, businesses and industries. Such strategic partnerships can also be used for planning in order to meet particular regional needs.

In relation to articulation, she warns that the existence of the NQF is not a sufficient mechanism to ensure articulation. The differentiation of knowledge in post-school education, especially in vocational

education, means that it is difficult to grasp the connectivity of the different kinds of knowledge in different programmes and institutions. Addressing this issue requires long-term relationships and careful work.

Governance arrangements

Differences in *policy and funding regimes* for HE institutions and FET colleges complicate the emergence of boundary-spanning interventions, such as offering joint qualifications or implementing collaborative access/bridging initiatives. Limited financial incentives exist for collaborative ventures between universities and FET Colleges to compensate institutions for the time and resources that must be invested to set up cross-sectoral interventions. This raises the question of whether there is a need for a more structured and systematic approach to the funding, quality assurance and enrolment planning arrangements for HE-FET collaboration.

Funding

The funding for post-school education should be reviewed to take the new system requirements into account. In particular, funding should be used to incentivise cooperation among institutions, and to help build capacity in colleges. SETAs, companies and businesses should all be urged to contribute to the building of the sector through incentives such as tax-breaks. Bursaries should also be provided to poor students to help them access the system.

Quality assurance

Rigorous and coherent quality assurance mechanisms need to be in place to engender trust and confidence in the quality and relevance of post-school qualifications and establish a sound platform for articulation and progression. Quality Councils with oversight responsibilities for different sectors should base their accreditation and regulation of qualifications on an understanding of all the types of institutions in a regional 'federation'. The NQF Act, Act 67 of 2008, establishes three separate quality councils (HEQF, QCTO and Umalusi) and it needs to be questioned whether this will facilitate or hinder articulation between the various education and training sectors in our country.

Transfer arrangements

Curricular barriers may make it difficult for students to transfer from FET to HE institutions or *vice versa*. Students moving between the FET and HE sectors often experience difficulties centred on the sudden changes in the depth and detail of subject knowledge, pedagogical approach and assessment, and the level, genre and independent nature of academic research and writing. This suggests that FET-HE collaboration raises fundamental issues of what is regarded by educational providers and employers as appropriate curriculum design and pedagogical approaches in a vocational context. These debates need to be informed by a set of coherent national guidelines and policies advancing HE-FET college collaboration.

B. Strategy for Higher Education

1. A phased approach

The primary recommendation of this paper is that expansion of the post-school education sector needs to occur at the pre-university level, but for this expansion to be successful, it should be:

- Approached in a phased manner
- Predicated on an initial concerted effort to build capacity in selected FET colleges
- Rapidly expanded outwards to other colleges
- Supported in the long term by specific training of teachers for this sector.

The strategy proposed, in a context of great need but also of resource and capacity constraints, is one of initial expansion of capacity leading to an expansion of scope through targeted partnerships.

2. Targeted partnerships

Synergy between FET colleges and HE institutions cannot be assumed automatically, and even where the potential for such synergies is identified, it has to be consciously developed, as the examples of CPUT, NMMU and others demonstrate. There are three objectives that may be realised through appropriately targeted partnerships between universities and FET colleges.

The first is the building of academic capacity through the partnering of universities with FET colleges in capacity-building and mentoring roles. However, as Muller (2011) argues, “epistemic support has to be informed by knowledge of the vocational/ professional milieu of the respective qualifications.” In this respect, comprehensive universities and universities of technology are likely to find a greater ‘fit’ between their programmes and those offered in neighbouring colleges, although, again, this cannot be assumed and would have to be explored. The advantages to be gained from this kind of partnership lie in the potential to ensure that the college curriculum is better calibrated to progression on the one hand, and together with the broader regional role of the mentor institution, help ensure that the college offers a curriculum in tune with regional needs.

The second is the building of leadership and managerial capacity, and in this respect, a wide pool of HE institutions could be drawn into partnerships to share their expertise in capacity-building and mentoring roles.

The third is the development of articulation and progression pathways between institutions, bearing in mind the following considerations:

- Articulation is knowledge field /qualification specific, it is not across the board;

- The main articulation/pathway is from level 4 in (some) FET college programmes to a level 5 qualification at a university (see examples of CPUT and NMMU);
- It rests on substantial prior work to match curriculum requirements and accomplishments;
- In some instances, tailored access or bridging courses could be developed (see the CPUT example) to improve students' chances of success.

Not all FET colleges will offer the kinds of curricula match that will enable smooth articulation. The ones that can should be identified as a first step. These should be partnered with a neighbouring university in a formal mentor-partnership relationship³. The mentor institution can also then develop qualification paths for FET lecturing staff to consolidate and develop their capacities.

When stable articulation routes have been developed, these can be transferred to other potential college-university partnerships. In other words, successful partnerships can be expected to mentor new partnerships in their region on the basis of 'what works'. In time this should lead to the development of a national framework to regulate it (Muller, 2011).

These objectives should all be pursued in the context of a clear understanding of regional development priorities with other linkages developed to schools, SETAs and local industry.

3. Teacher training for FET and other colleges

University Education Faculties need to develop and expand specific training programmes for teachers for the post-school college sector in order to augment existing capacity and provide a steady long-term supply of personnel.

4. Stages in a phased approach

Partnerships are the basis of the following stages that are recommended to HESA:

1. A *preliminary model-testing phase* where a limited number of college/university partnerships are identified on the basis of known 'fit', and the model is developed further.
2. When a workable model can be identified, it can be *rolled out rapidly* to a larger set of congruent institutions. In this respect, it must be noted that interventions are needed at a systemic level to overcome the barriers to articulation and progression of learners from FET to HE. The review of the HE Funding Framework should make provision for incentives for higher education institutions that build on good practice in respect of admission, credit accumulation and transfer (CAT), and articulation arrangements for FET learners since this could go a long way

³ See Stumpf *et al*, 2009 for a similar proposal.

towards fostering closer partnerships between the further and higher education sectors. Other funding arrangements for FET capacity development initiatives also need to be explored through partnerships with SETAs and industry.

3. When the college/university quadrant of the emerging PSE sector has been stabilised, extend the scope of some colleges to enable them to *offer NQF level 5 (Higher Certificate) qualifications* as distinct from other colleges that are licensed to offer up to level 4.
4. Where there is proven capacity, begin to build a new educational sub-sector through the designation of *some single purpose colleges* that operate exclusively at the post-secondary level (NQF 5 and upwards).
5. Designate other colleges as *community-based and multi-purpose with more relaxed entry requirements*. This step is not consequent upon achievement of the preceding steps and could be initiated wherever there is sufficient capacity. Such colleges could provide a first chance for youth wanting to access higher education to achieve university endorsement, a second chance for others to complete their NSC or NC(V), and an opportunity for youth wanting to re-enter formal education to access education and training opportunities in other (single-purpose) college types (Cosser, 2010).

4. Examples of existing partnerships and collaborations

COLLABORATION BETWEEN UNIVERSITIES OF TECHNOLOGY AND FET COLLEGES

The table below provides a summary of areas of collaboration that exist between Universities of Technology and FET Colleges. The collaborative activity has been categorised according to the areas of co-operation identified in the MoU between the South African Technology Network (SATN) and SACPO.

Articulation and Access

CPUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Northlink Engineering Access Project: In terms of the MoU between CPUT and Northlink FET College, students who have been rejected on initial application to CPUT can apply to undergo a further year of training at Northlink College. On exit from Northlink, students who meet the criteria (a minimum of 50% on all Access subjects) are accepted into Engineering departments at CPUT. The project was initiated and run successfully in 2010, and continues in 2011. • Collaborative agreement with Northlink FET College in Food Technology with support of FoodBev SETA and Food Technology advisory committee. Students who have been rejected on initial application to CPUT can apply to undergo a further year of training at Northlink College to improve Mathematics and Physics marks.
DUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration in Civil Engineering with Umgungundlovu FET College (PMB). The FET college makes provision for students who do not meet the DUT minimum entrance requirements (>50% for N4 Mathematics and Science). Students from the FET college who only have passes for N3 Maths & Science are admitted to the DUT Engineering Access Programme. Recognition of credit for Mathematics 1 is given to students with >50% pass in N5 & N6 Mathematics

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration in Electronic Engineering with Berea Technical College. FET college students progress into the DUT programme (N4/N5/NLY). There has been collaboration around the upgrading of college lecturer qualifications (ND required), improvements in retention and throughput, and curriculum analyses have been conducted to ensure smooth progression from FET to DUT. There has been collaboration with regard to career guidance. • Collaboration with Northdale campus of Umgungundlovu FET College in OMT. The NCV programme is approved for progression into the diploma programme at DUT.
MUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A pass at an N4 level is set as an entry requirement into a relevant National Diploma. Programmes in the fields of Agriculture, Business Studies and Engineering award credits for subjects passed by at least 50% at N4 and N5 levels.
TUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration in Building Science with Tshwane South College FET (Atteridgeville Campus): Building Science first year students spend one week doing Building practicals at TSC. Applicants that do not satisfy the minimum requirements in this department are referred to the FET colleges. N6 Quantity Surveying students are recruited for progression in the Building Science Department.

Upgrading College Lecturer's Qualifications

CPUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offering of the Vocational Education Orientation Programme (VEOP), a 30 credit qualification aimed at improving teaching skills of FET lecturers in collaboration with UWC/Further Education and Training Institute - 32 students on the programme. • Enrolment of FET college educators (who already have a degree) in Post Graduate Certificate in Education (approximately 20 per year). • Enrolment of FET college educators without a degree in the National Professional Diploma in Education (approximately 40 per year). • Sole regional (Western Cape) provider of college lecturer qualifications.
CUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Goldfields FET College – Staff members are included in discussions about a PG Diploma in Higher Education. • Motheo FET College – The School of Teacher Education is offering a PGCE on a part time basis. In the last five years, many lecturers of the college have completed the certificate, improving their competence in teaching and learning. • Maluti FET College – Conversations are currently in progress about the extension of the PGCE to this institution.

Curriculum analysis and development

CPUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part of a national consultative consortium and reference group coordinated by ECSECC (Eastern Cape Socio Economic Consultative Council) and UWC/FETI developing curricula for the college lecturer development framework. • Discussions on collaboration in Design programmes with Cape Town FET College in planning stages.
MUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Staff members, especially from the Coastal KZN FET College, serve on the Advisory Committees of some of the departments within the Institution. This engagement provides a platform for curriculum analysis and areas of emphasis.

Other

CPUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Signed Memoranda of Understanding (Dec 2009) with Boland FET College, West Coast FET College, South Cape FET College, Northlink FET College, False Bay FET College and Cape Town FET College. Areas of cooperation include: Articulation for college students with CPUT, bridging programmes, upgrading of lecturer qualifications, RPL for FET college sector, partnerships aimed at improved retention and throughput rates at NQF level 5, curriculum analysis and development as well as career guidance. • Collaborative agreement with South Cape FET College, Oudtshoorn in Tourism and Public Management came to an end in December 2010. Placement of B Ed and PGCE students at FET colleges for Teaching Practice. • The Department of Mechanical Engineering co-teaches CNC programmes with Northlink FET College. • The Department of Maritime Studies has an arrangement with Northlink FET College to use laboratories on their Wingfield campus.
CUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Motheo FET College – Discussions took place at the end of 2010 to investigate areas of mutual interest. It is envisaged that this process will continue in 2011
DUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaboration in Industrial Engineering with eThekweni FET College: DUT staff act as external examiner for FET colleges and communicate with other examiners on a regular basis. • Collaboration in Quality Management with Berea Technical College. A proposal is being formulated with regard to articulation for FET students. There has also been collaboration around short courses and a one-year certificate programme.
MUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some staff members from Coastal KZN are teaching in the Bridging Programmes and, in some instances, they are used as tutors for senior classes. This could provide an opportunity for formal collaboration in the offering of the Bridging Programme and possibly, a Higher Certificate programme through an FET College.
TUT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Currently there is collaboration in Mechanical Engineering with Tshwane South FET College (Centurion Campus) on the offering of in-service training in Basic Hand Skills. • ICT faculty had a meeting with a delegation from the Tshwane North FET College (TNC), Mamelodi Campus to discuss a number of potential areas for collaboration.

The Engineering Faculty at CPUT turns away approximately 2000 applicants every year. Many of this group meet minimum admission requirements, but are displaced by students with higher NSC scores. The objective of the Northlink Engineering Access Project is to create an alternative access channel whereby these students can undergo further preparation in technical subjects through the FET stream, rather than being lost to the system.

Ideally these students could have been referred to the FET college to complete the final year of the NCV(4). However articulation from the academically-focused NSC to the vocationally-focused NCV remains problematic. Hence there is a need for a purpose designed access programme which focuses on developing competencies in Mathematics, Science and Engineering Drawing.

COLLABORATION BETWEEN NMMU AND FET COLLEGES IN THE EASTERN AND SOUTHERN CAPE

As a comprehensive university, NMMU has worked to facilitate access and articulation pathways for learners from the FET sector who fulfil the admissions criteria for career-focused university qualifications in the field of study for which they obtained an FET qualification.

Activities have been in three main focus areas:

- 1. Refined access and articulation opportunities for FET learners** who have obtained an FET qualification and fulfil NMMU admissions criteria to pursue career-oriented university qualifications in scarce skills areas. The Centre for Access and Admissions Research at NMMU has mapped NC(V) learning programmes onto cognate qualifications in vocational fields of study such as Engineering, ICT, Finance and Accounting, Management, Marketing and Tourism and produced a brochure to guide FET staff and learners in respect of the admission requirements for NC(V) learners to obtain access to vocational qualifications offered at NMMU. NMMU is also conducting detailed curriculum analyses in Engineering and ICT, to facilitate articulation
- 2. Professional development opportunities for FET lecturers and managers:** The Faculty of Education at NMMU is in the process of implementing the credit-bearing pilot Vocational Education Orientation Programme (VEOP) for FET lecturers. NMMU's Faculty of Engineering, Built Environment and Information Technology has been partnering with MERSETA in providing capacity development programmes for Engineering FET lecturers at three colleges in the Eastern Cape. Furthermore, NMMU's Business School offers customised credit-bearing leadership development programmes for FET College Principals and other managers.
- 3. Policy advocacy and systemic interventions** required at regional and national levels to expand post-schooling educational opportunities for South African youth. A significant innovation is an analysis of existing data sets for the purposes of GIS mapping to pinpoint the location of existing universities and FET Colleges in the Eastern and Southern Cape, their programme offerings, and their student enrolments in relation to the location of youth who are currently not employed, educated or trained (NEETs).

C. Conclusion

There is no doubt that the universities can make a significant contribution to the reconfiguration and expansion of the existing post-school education sector. In part, however, this will depend on arriving at a shared vision, with other role players and stakeholders, of the form that this sector should take in the long run. A key objective is to enable many more young people to acquire the education and training qualifications that will allow them to become economically active citizens with decent life prospects. The vision that underpins this document is of a properly articulated *system* in which the university sector is relatively small in relation to a strong base that offers a much wider range of education and training

opportunities to school-leavers than is presently the case, and is attuned to social and economic needs, particularly those of the labour market, in ways that are not apparent in the present configuration.

As a *system*, it will require forms of governance that are also articulated, such as close collaboration between Quality Councils in the matter of accreditation of qualifications, admission criteria and credit transfer. Enrolment planning in all sectors of the system would need to be powerfully cognisant of regional needs and capacities. Arriving at this goal is likely to be fairly arduous, but in terms of the greatest challenge to realising this goal, namely the lack of capacity in the system, HE has much to offer.

This Task Team recommends a *phased approach*:

- Identification of existing working partnerships and high-capacity FET colleges (e.g. by using the data on the HSRC audit of FET colleges).
- Building on existing working partnerships between HE, FET and industry (curriculum alignment, articulation pathways, stable links, and capacity development of academic and managerial staff).
- Generalising the model outwards by establishing the building blocks upon which an expanded PSE system can be built that is differentiated by both purpose and levels.
- Extending the model to other regions/institutions – towards the development of a national framework.
- Establishing new types of colleges with multiple purposes.

The model or mechanism recommended for HE is *targeted partnerships*. Specific contributions that HE can make include the following:

- Academic, leadership and managerial capacity building.
- Teacher training for the college sector
- Curriculum alignment; quality assurance of assessment practices such as joint setting and moderating of NC(V) examinations.
- Development of articulation pathways.

A cautionary note must be sounded in relation to articulation. Articulation is not a solution to the major problems currently besetting the post-school sector, nor can it be considered to be a key driver in reconfiguration of the sector. HE will only be able to absorb a small proportion of the students who will enter the sub-sectors of the system, and progression pathways are necessarily 'bounded' in the ways spelt out above. Nonetheless, this is an important element in creating a *system* out of the sector through linking the qualifications offered by different institutions, and offering potential progression routes to students.

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List of abbreviations and acronyms

CAT	Credit Accumulation and Transfer
CHET	Centre for Higher Education Transformation
CNC	Computer Numerical Control
CPUT	Cape Peninsula University of Technology
DUT	Durban University of Technology
ECSECC	Eastern Cape Socio-Economic Consultative Council
FET	Further Education and Training
FETI	Further Education and Training Institute
HE	Higher Education
HESA	Higher Education South Africa
KZN	Kwa ZuluNatal
NC(V)	National Certificate (Vocational)
ND	National Diploma
NMMU	Nelson Mandela Metropolitan University
NQF	National Qualifications Framework
NSC	National Senior Certificate
OMT	Office Management and Technology
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate in Education
PSE	Post-School Education
RPL	Recognition of Prior Learning
SETA	Sector Education and Training Authority
UWC	University of the Western Cape
VEOP	Vocational Education Orientation Programme

