

Constructing engagement between a provincial government and regional consortium of HEIs in South Africa

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National Policies

- **Goals for the Transformation of Higher Education (1997): equity, responsiveness**
 - **National Plan for Higher Education (2001): tightened steering mechanisms to enhance responsiveness and equity**
 - **New Quality Assurance regime: linked quality to transformation (personal, value for money, social justice)**
- Higher Education is a national competence**

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HE Participation rates by race and selected home languages

SA Higher education participation rates by race and language (Est 2002)			
Race	# in age interval 20-24 yrs (1)	HE enrolment (2)	Participation rate (3) %
Black African	3544598	383898	10.8
Coloured (Tot)	353659	33541	9.5
Afrikaans	281583	12683	4.5
English/	72076	20858	28.9
Indian	102241	43649	42.7
White (Tot)	294033	174001	59.2
Afrikaans	175773	89153	50.7
English/	118260	84848	71.7
TOTAL	4294531	635089	14.8
Notes			
1. Census 2001			
2. <i>Education Statistics in SA at a glance 2001</i> , Department of Education.			
3. <i>Gross participation rate</i> , viz all enrolments divided by number in age cohort 20-24			

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Cape Higher Education Consortium

- **Regional consortia established to promote collaboration and regional planning**
- **Overtaken by process of reconfiguring apartheid higher education landscape so only 2 surviving**
- **CHEC: 4 institutions (3 traditional, 1 University of Technology, and recently national partner)**
- **Compact: promote socio-economic development in the Western Cape and engagement in the province and awareness of higher education as an asset in development**

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Institutional interpretations of 3rd role

- Address 3rd role in their missions and strategic plans but have different interpretations of this role and structures
- 1. **Social responsiveness** i.e engagement with development needs at national, provincial or local levels (through scholarship and voluntary community service)
- 2. Community Interaction Policy & Implementation Plan – focuses on knowledge-based interactions & partnerships
- 3. Industry and Community Focus
 - Work-integrated Learning and Service Learning
- 4. Students-in-communities academic departure point through: Service learning & Community-based Education cultivates sense of civic engagement;
- 5. Multiple structures playing different roles, specific Division, specific or distributed Executive accountability
- 6. At various points with regard to the development of enabling policy environment
- 7. All include in performance and institutional reviews (but in different ways)
- 8. Ongoing debate about 3rd role

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Provincial context

- Western Cape (1 of 9 provinces)
- About 4.5million – second biggest economic region
- Skills gaps and mismatches
 - 41% broad unemployment (2004)
 - 52% of 15-24 year olds unable to find work (2004)
 - 52% of learners who enter in Gr 1 complete Grade 12 (huge drop outs and poor success rates)
 - 30% jobs in informal sector
- Huge backlogs with regard to access to infrastructure
- (11.2% no electricity, 15.6% no piped water on site, 12.5% no flush toilets)
- 23% functional illiteracy
- Widening inequality in relation to income along racial lines

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Moving from institutional to regional engagement

- Western Cape potential to become learning region and engine for economic growth, but HE marginalised from provincial policy and planning processes e.g. Human Resources Development Strategy
- CHEC and Premier meet
- Joint task team drafts a Prospectus for a Summit between HE and the Province
- Provincial Ministers and Vice-Chancellors approve Prospectus
- Summit convened in October 2006 (Premier and cabinet, senior politicians, top echelons of bureaucracy, senior leadership in HEIs)
- Goals: better alignment between supply of graduates and demand, establish strategic partnerships to support growth and development
- Summit presentations designed to foster debate about the role of higher education and the development strategies of the province (not narrow instrumentalism but recognition of accountability of public HEIs)
- Shared information about provincial plans and priorities and higher education educational offerings and research expertise

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Building a Structured Relationship

- Joint task team designs terms of reference (short, medium and long term initiatives)
- Building trust through short term projects whilst laying the basis for longer term planning
- Information sharing e.g. schooling information and HE long term plans
- Identified areas for collaborative projects (improving retention and equity in HE, Economic Growth sectors, social cohesion, and Continuing Professional Development)

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Challenges

- Political tensions in the province slow down prioritisation process
- Getting academics on board
- Very little institutional penetration of CHEC processes
- Building commitment amongst busy senior managers
- Showing results/benefits
- Multiple demands on academics and lack of recognition for social responsiveness
- Promoting awareness of assets of HE within the province
- Lack of resources (add on to jobs)
- Tensions arising from being a national competency



Impact

- Too soon to measure
- Laying foundations for collaboration
- Better understanding of opportunities, problems and priorities (both parties)
- New networks are emerging e.g. Schools Recovery Plan
- Will be organising a follow up seminar to evaluate progress in November
- www.cput.ac.za
- www.sun.ac.za
- www.uct.ac.za
- www.uwc.ac.za