

THIRD IMPACT STUDY

Human Sciences Research Council

**Monitoring and Evaluation of
DANIDA Support to Education and Skills Development
(SESD) Programme**

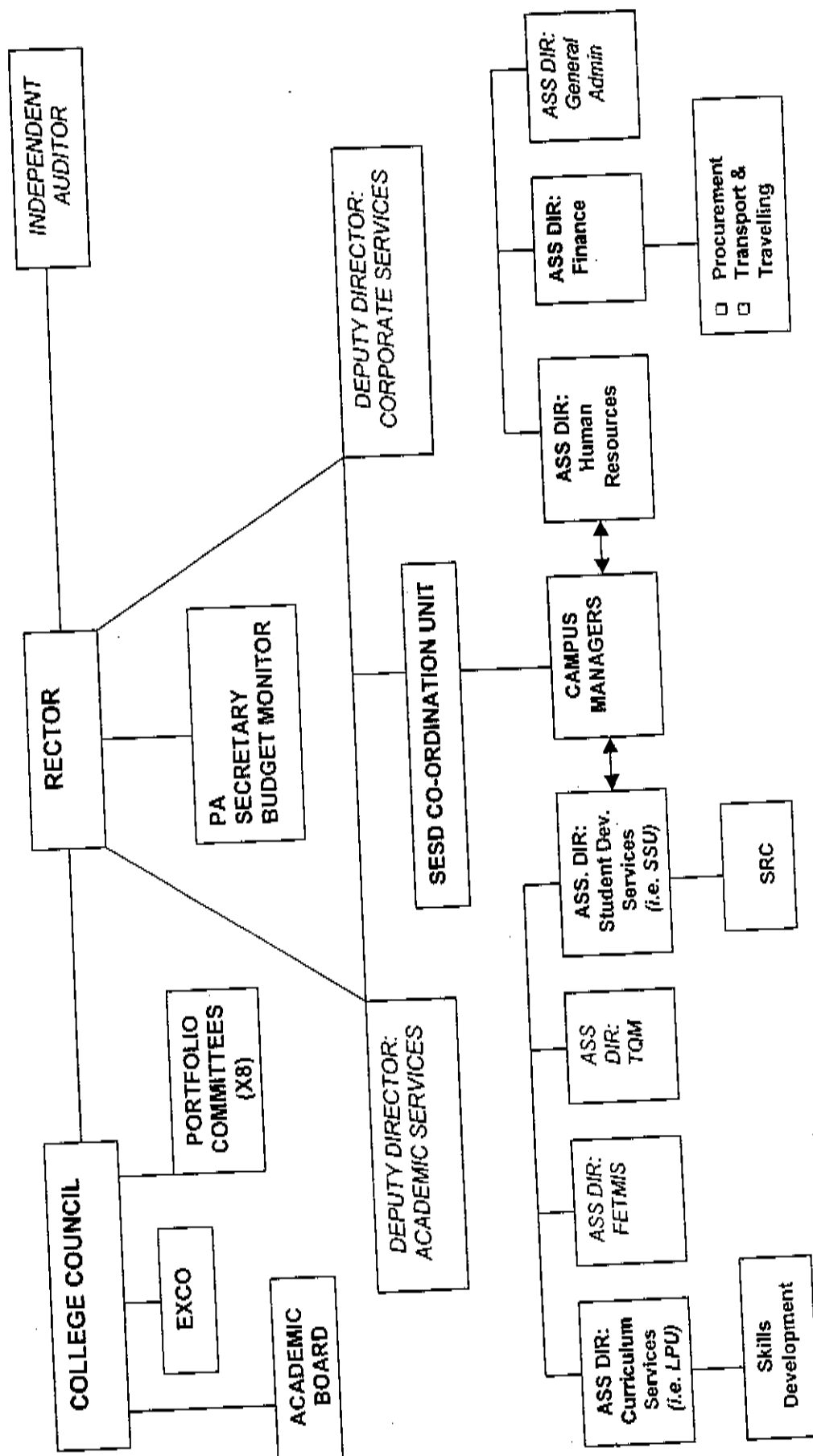
**MTHASHANA COLLEGE
KWAZULU NATAL**

September 2004

3281

1. ORGANISATIONAL PROFILE

ORGANOGRAM / COMMUNICATION CHANNELS



Comments:

1. The moratorium on posts is still in place. The second tier management (the two deputy-rector posts of Academic and Corporate Services) is therefore still lacking and to date appointments have been made only in four of the eight assistant-director posts, of which two are (internal staff) in acting capacities (HR and Finance) and the other two comprise the managers for the DANIDA-funded Linkages & Programmes Unit (LPU) and Student Support Unit (SSU). As an (ongoing!) interim arrangement all management and administration duties/functions are split among the current five management staff at central office (i.e. the above four managers and the rector).
2. The (SESD-funded) Marketing and Communications Unit (MCU) has not yet been established but this will reportedly occur before the end of the year.
3. The Finance Department will eventually be subsumed under 'General Administration', which will also include the competencies of procurement and transport.
4. With the above organisational representation focussing essentially on relations and formal lines of communications, it does not therefore capture all the structural dimensions of the evolving institutional landscape, with particular reference to delivery sites and different parts of their internal make-up and functioning. For example, the sub-unit focussing on learners with special needs (LSEN), now resorts under the SSU (previously the LSEN co-ordinator reported to the LPU manager and this sub-unit had a 70:30 operational split between the LPU and SSU).
5. A very significant development from a structural-functional and programming point of view concerns the Business Unit, which is in the process of being established at Vryheid campus (ongoing infrastructural and administrative development occur side-by-side with programme development and implementation, a classic example of 'hitting the road running'). It is conceptually based on the Tshwane North model (which is focused on provisioning for internship students) but is envisaged to also be 'much more' since additional angles will be covered, for example, learnerships in small business-related areas. Space¹ for accommodating these developments, which also includes the 'Wellness Centre' (already operational) and office space for the acting-campus manager and departmental and unit heads, has been freed up by refurbishing the wing which till now has been occupied by the campus manager (who is overseas on long leave) household. It is quite phenomenal, to say the least, what has been achieved in such a short space of time and it bears witness to the very high levels of visioning, commitment, determination and drive of this campus' management and staff to operationalising Mthashana's vision of becoming/being the 'preferred learning centre of excellence' – in the face of significant constraints. The goals and programming with regard the Business Unit will be considered under the next sub-section.

2. CURRICULUM PROFILE: Programme and qualification provisioning status as on September 30.

(Note: Changes have been indicated in *bold Italic*.)

2.1 Art – Music

N/A

2.2 Business Studies

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS / DELIVERY SITE
2.2.1 Formal DoE Programmes (NATED)	Marketing Management N4-N6 Management Assistant N4-N6	6 months "	Vryheid Vryheid KwaGqikazi

¹ The critical space/venue constraints at Vryheid campus have been a focus since the baseline study.

	Human Resource Management N4-N6	6 months	KwaGqikazi
	Public Relations N4-N5	"	KwaGqikazi
	Business Management N4-N6	"	KwaGqikazi
	Computer N4-N6 (evening classes)	6 months	Vryheid
	NSC (N3)	1 year	Vryheid & KwaGqikazi
	NIC (N2)	1 year	Vryheid
	<i>Finishing School</i>	6 months	Vryheid
2.2.2	Programmes offered in partnership with higher education institutions	N/A	
2.2.3	SETA-accredited qualifications and skills programmes (not I'ships)	N/A	
2.2.4	Learnerships	N/A	
2.2.5	Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)	Pastel <i>Clothing Production</i>	6 weeks 60 days Vryheid KwaGqikazi
2.2.6	Subjects offered in schools	Biology English Geography	1 year 1 year 1 year Vryheid Vryheid Vryheid
2.2.7	Other	N/A	

2.3 Educare-Social Services

N/A

2.4 Engineering Studies

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS / DELIVERY SITE
2.4.1 Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	Mechanical Engineering N1 – N3 Motor Mechanics N1- N3 Electrical Engineering N1 – N3 Electrical Engineering N1 – N5 Plumbing N1 – N3	Trimester " " "	Vryheid Nongoma Vryheid Nongoma Nongoma
2.4.2 Programmes offered in partnership with higher education institutions	N/A		
2.4.3 SETA-accredited qualifications and	Building:		

skills programmes (not l'ships)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> brick-laying block-laying block-making 	6 months " "	Emandleni " "
2.4.4 Learnerships	N/A		
2.4.5 Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)	Motor Vehicle Maintenance Workshops: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> welding motor mechanics electrical Motor Mechanics Welding Electrical Growing of Vegetables Building: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> bricklaying 	1 year " " 1 year " " 13 weeks " " 13 weeks 13 weeks	Emandleni " " Emandleni " " Nongoma " " Obonjeni Obonjeni
2.4.7 Other	N/A		

2.5 General Education

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS / DELIVERY SITE
2.5.1 Formal DoE programmes (NATED)	N/A		
2.5.2 Programmes offered in partnership with higher education institutions	N/A		
2.5.3 SETA-accredited qualifications and skills programmes (not l'ships)	ABET	1 year	KwaGqikazi
2.5.4 Learnerships	N/A		
2.5.5 Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)	Personal Development Life Skills	1 year 1 year 60 days	Emandleni Emandleni KwaGqikazi
2.5.6 Subjects offered in schools	N/A		
2.5.7 Other	N/A		

2.6 Utility Studies (catering and hospitality, cosmetology, haircare, interior decorating, tourism)

TYPE	TITLE AND LEVEL	DURATION	CAMPUS / DELIVERY SITE
2.6.1 Formal DoE programmes (nated)	N/A		
2.6.2 Programmes offered in partnership with higher education institutions	N/A		
2.6.3 Seta-accredited qualifications and skills programmes (not l'ships)	N/A		
2.6.4 Learnerships	N/A		
2.6.5 Short courses (not accredited; not assessed)	Sewing	20 Days	Skills Centres Vryheid Skills Centre Mountain View <i>(Hlobane has fallen away)</i>
	"	3 Months	Babanango
	"	"	Masicebisane
	"	"	Isiphosethu
	"	"	Sishwili
	"	"	Inkanyiso
	"	1 Year	Phinda
	Cooking / Baking	1 Year	Emandleni
	Horticulture	"	Emandleni
	Agronomy	"	Emandleni
	Live Stock Production	"	Emandleni
	Poultry Production	"	Emandleni
	Piggery	"	Emandleni
	Farm Development	"	Emandleni
	Beadwork	2 Months	Obonjeni Vryheid Skills Centre
	"	1 month	Babanango
	"	"	Nkonjeni
	"	"	Ulundi
	<i>Catering for an INCOME</i>	2 weeks	Nyathi
2.6.6 Subjects offered in schools	N/A		
2.6.7 Other	N/A		

7. Other short courses (not related to any of the above fields)

N/A

Responses to key curriculum-related questions:

1. Which of the above programmes or courses have an established reputation in the community or the geographical area served by the college; therefore attracting students on the basis of a perception of quality educational provision?

Marketing Management – Vryheid
 Management Assistant – Vryheid
 Business Management – KwaGqikasizi
 Human Resource Management – KwaGqikasizi
 Mechanical Engineering – Nongoma & Vryheid
 Electrical Engineering – Nongoma & Vryheid

2. Which of the above programmes or courses are new or relatively new and still working towards establishing a strong reputation?

N/A

3. Which of the above programmes/courses attract the largest number of students?

Marketing Management – Vryheid
 Management Assistant – Vryheid
 Business Management – KwaGqikasizi
 Human Resource Management – KwaGqikasizi
 Electrical Engineering – Vryheid & Nongoma
 Mechanical Engineering – Vryheid & Nongoma

4. Which of the above programmes/courses attract the smallest number of students?

Public Relations – KwaGqikasizi
 Management Assistant – KwaGqikasizi
 (Previously also Civil Engineering)

5. Which programmes/courses offer the greatest potential for growth?

Sewing
 Agriculture
Construction

6. Which of the above programmes/courses generate the most income for the college?

Management Assistant
 Marketing Management
 Business Management
 Mechanical Engineering
 Electrical Engineering

7. Which of the above programmes/courses generate the least income for the college (can be offered only through cross-subsidisation)?

Public Relations
 (Previously also Civil Engineering)

8. Which of the above programmes/courses were introduced at the request of employers, or other groups in the community?

Pastel
 Computer Classes (in evenings)
Building
Beadwork

Vegetable growing

9. Which of the above programmes/courses were introduced at the request of local government, provincial government or national government departments?

N/A

10. Which of the above programmes/courses were introduced at the request of or with the support of local or international funders?

P.L.A.T.O.

11. Any other comment?

The following engineering workshops at Nongoma campus have been granted provisional accreditation status (for six months) by the MERSETA:

- * **Welding**
- * **Motor Mechanics**
- * **Motor Body Repairs**
- * **Electrical**

Comment:

1. At this time the formal NATED programmes comprise 80% of programme delivery at Mthashana, the exceptions being ABET and computer literacy training.
2. In the past, short course provisioning at campuses consisted almost exclusively in computer training, whilst the few operational skills centres focused mainly on sewing. As described under sub-section 3.3, however, a dramatic expansion in skills training provision through skills centres and other community partnership projects has occurred in the period under review, as more skills centres came 'on-stream' and projects are being implemented as a result of intensive and sustained effort by the two LPU personnel and, on a smaller scale, activities of the LSEN coordinator. Sewing/garment making, beadwork and agriculture (mainly poultry farming and organic vegetable growing) constitute the programming focus at this time. Such delivery has also become more coordinated and integrated to a much higher degree as the 'three-fold-approach' to such delivery is being implemented to an increasing extent, i.e. –
 - i. literacy training (ABET at level 1 literacy)
 - ii. skills component (e.g. sewing)
 - iii. entrepreneurial/business skills training

(The sequencing of components (i) and (ii) is not cast in stone in that some developmental NGOs reportedly claim better results are achieved by starting with the skill component. Some experimentation is therefore still taking place).

In the period January to July 405 learners received training (short courses) through the skills centres: 41 in beadwork, 116 in garment making, and 248 in sewing.

3. The LPU manager and the KwaGqikazi campus manager have embarked on streamlining this campus' programmes, which previously comprised Management Assistant, Marketing Management, Business Management, Public Relations and Human Resources. The LPU manager suggested that the campus continues to focus on the latter three areas ('traditionally strong areas') whilst Vryheid campus will be the 'specialist' provider for Management Assistant and Marketing Management. This rationalisation exercise has reportedly contributed greatly to the simplifying of timetables, consolidation of human resources, etc., with particular reference to KwaGqikazi campus. It has also been suggested to the campus manager to incorporate more of a flexible (flexitime) approach to programme scheduling so as to accommodate after-hours provisioning (which is not currently occurring at this site) to a greater extent.
4. The establishment of a Business Unit at Vryheid campus, was referred to in sub-section 1.1 above. The Business Unit will focus on the following areas of college/campus provisioning –
 - i. *Internship* for exit-level students (who successfully completed N6 Marketing Management or N6 Marketing Assistant), which involves practical preparation for work placement and the acquisition of skills and experience in working with the public.

- ii. Enhancing the *marketing function* of the college (assistance to central office) – preparation and printing of brochures, designing and typing of forms for enrolment/registration of students, college business cards, preparation and printing of prospectus and related documents, adverts and posters, etc. It also includes the idea of establishing an internal 'employment agency' and 'girl Friday' service for the marketing and placing of students. Since no such agency exists in Vryheid this facility could be expanded in future to cater for the public at large and thereby generate funds for the campus.
- iii. Enhancing the *administrative functions* of the campus. Management Assistant students, in conjunction with Marketing Management students, are to assist the Student Affairs Office at Vryheid campus with regard to the preparation of files and information packs for new students, the photocopying for students' private needs (to be charged at a competitive price).
- iv. A *simulation centre* for practical assessment/evaluation of all Business Studies students involving the testing of practical application of theoretical curriculum aspects like filing, faxing, invoicing, and the development of innovative business plans (operational within the BU).
- v. Providing *business services* to the community at reasonable and competitive rates.
- vi. *Training and re-training* students who qualified several years ago ('bring them back in'), for example, completing the practical components, including new technology, which the courses (in-service training) lacked at the time, on an after-hours basis.
- vii. *Awareness-raising* campaigns within the community, for example, anti-littering awareness among students through establishing a 'recycling station', which can lead to related (money-generating) projects in areas where students live.
- viii. (Practical) *entrepreneurship training* for establishing businesses (co-operatives) within own areas/communities, and thereby promoting sustainable self-employment and employment opportunities for others. Assistance will be provided for acquiring start-up funding (more on central office basis), as well as continuous monitoring and advice.

Only Management Assistant students will be involved during the remainder of this year – Marketing Management students will become involved from 2005 when this course is offered. Although this facility is essentially focussed on Business Studies Students, Engineering Studies students will also become involved in areas such as business plan development, communication, etc. (With regard to the latter students, the campus manager pointed to the new arrangement coming into effect from January 2005 whereby student enrolment for engineering studies will occur through the HET-FET 'filtering-down' route. Over and above the four N-courses, students are also required to do a bridging course in communication and computers over a six-month period. This will be offered through the Business Unit. However, because the N-courses only last for 10-11 weeks students will be freed up to pursue other life skills training (through the Business Unit). The Business Unit's up-skilling interventions are also being extended to the Emandleni staff (please see reference under sub-section 1.3 below), who will receive 'internal' qualifications until such a time accredited assessors are in place.

In the context of all these proposed programme offerings and other activities, staffing is viewed as a potential constraint to the unit's functioning: now that all management functions, like HR, have been centralised quick decision-making with regard to staffing and related matters cannot occur anymore, which could compromise the unit's capacity for (flexible) responsiveness.

3. CURRENT STATUS OF AREAS IN WHICH ACTIVITIES ARE PLANNED UNDER THE SESD PROGRAMME

3.1 The merger process and knowledge sharing

3.1.1 Post-merger developments (structural-functional integration and development)

The previous report reflected on major organisational, structural and programmatic developments that were occurring at the time in relation to ongoing *institutional integration/consolidation and development*, either by strategic design or by 'default'. The following developments have subsequently occurred.

Delivery sites

It will be remembered that the previous Nongoma 'combined' campus for engineering and business studies split into two independent sites at the beginning of the year. The incumbent campus manager, Mr David Marrengane, assumed the position of manager of the Nongoma campus (Engineering Studies and Workshops), whilst the LPU manager, Ms Theresa Venter was appointed manager at neighbouring KwaGqikazi (Business and Utility/General Studies) on an acting basis till the end of March, when the LPU and SSU staff would be withdrawn to central office². Upon the LPU manager's departure the acting deputy-campus manager, senior lecturer Mr Wilson Gazu, took over this post and has occupied this position in an acting capacity since.

The initiatives instituted by the personnel of these units by and large came to nought following their withdrawal and a significant drop in overall campus performance also reportedly occurred. Relations between this site and central office would appear to have become strained in months to follow, culminating, in June, in an incisive 'soul-searching' meeting between KwaGqikazi management and staff and the rector – to review the situation at this site and for campus management and staff to air their problems and grievances. It appears that there was acknowledgement from 'both sides' that the modus operandi for the piloting initiative was strategically flawed in that no buy-in from campus personnel was secured before commencement of implementation. Consequently, it was perceived as a central office affair, to which campus management and staff became 'detached observers' and never got involved in LPU and SSU activities. Inevitably, these activities around community outreach (relationship-building, needs analysis, programme planning and delivery (early stages) were not sustained. Other issues which came to the fore, include –

- A high level of resistance to 'changing of ways', with particular reference to NQF-related programme implementation. Insufficient information and consequent lack of systemic understanding about the nuts and bolts of the learnership/skills programme system at the level of staff were fingered as contributing factors.
- Inadequate level of staff monitoring.
- Inadequate level of (meaningful) communication between central office and campuses.
- Relations between KwaGqikazi management and staff were not healthy and the campus manager's leadership style was fingered as a contributing factor in that regard.

By all accounts it would appear that this 'stand-off' was very constructively handled (no significant residue remaining, so to speak) and various declarations of intent were undertaken with regard to remedial action. For example, central office 'road shows' were initiated to enhance the level of informed-ness about central office make-up and functioning ('visibility'), and campus management involvement with structural development has visibly improved, for example, maintenance of the campus' buildings and grounds and the development of sports grounds (netball and soccer).

The Second Impact Study report also noted significant activity occurring, at the time, towards a comprehensive audit of the college's skills centres in relation to management, administrative, infrastructure and programme delivery status in order to formally bring them into the institution's management fold and to

² Both the LPU and SSU staff were moved to KwaGqikazi for the period January-March to kick start processes towards the development and piloting of partnership-based skills development programme initiatives (accredited, unit standard-based) to the broader community (NGOs, government departments, business and industry, etc.) of Nongoma-Ulundi, preceded by an extensive community needs survey and liaising/marketing drive (LPU), as well as programmes/services in the various dimensions of student support (SSU). Concurrently, associated campus development would occur with regard to (programme) support structures and facilities, including the administration and classroom blocks would be developed or revived (as occurred) in support of such programmes (and meet SETA accreditation criteria where relevant). The piloted programmes would then form the basis for programme development and implementation at the other college sites, with guidance and support from the relevant portfolio units.

facilitate systematic and coordinated planning and monitoring of programmes and associated staffing arrangements. It will be remembered that, due to historical neglect many of these sites either existed in name only (no structures on the ground) or were not in any way operational, except for a few established ones like Babanango, Mountain View and the Vryheid skills centres. At this time all the skills centres are managed from central office and the tutors/trainers paid by the college since (decentralised) management and administrative structures and systems are not yet in place. As structural upgrading and programme development and delivery are increasingly gaining momentum other policy issues are now coming to the fore, for example, 'when/at what point does a site or facility 'qualify' as constituting a skills centre? or 'what policy guidelines are required to deal with requests from community groupings wanting 'incorporation' with the college?' (Requests from community groupings are reportedly being received by central office on an increasing basis). A policy document is presently being drafted towards this end.

The previous report made reference to the imminent incorporation (unsolicited) of *Emandleni* skills campus, and that redeployment of excess staff (in view of the disproportionate number as measured against duties/responsibilities) had already started occurring, primarily to central office (finance unit) and the need for comprehensive up-skilling of *Emandleni* staff was appreciated. This happened in May, with major impact on virtually all of central office's units, systems and management staff, for example –

- Financial implications - this site does not generate any income, only expenditure. It will be remembered that previously this site was funded by the Premier's Office/Department of Traditional Affairs. A campus head has been appointed (council appointee)
- The L&P, SS and Finance units have been visiting the site on an ongoing basis to conduct assessment surveys around the planning of programmes and systems development for the future – the present status quo with regard to operational functioning will remain in force till the end of 2004. A need for a complete overhaul of systems and procedures was identified and has been initiated and assessment of *Emandleni* staff is also being conducted in respect of a significant degree of re/up-skilling interventions envisaged in areas such as literacy, acceptable (PFMA) administrative systems and procedures. Based on the outcome of the above interventions and processes and in view of this site's future delivery role (and programmatic implications), a staff complement (ideal) of between 16 and 18 is envisaged (as opposed to around 73 prior to incorporation!).
- Because of *Emandleni*'s political history and ongoing political sensitivities around current restructuring processes, central office management staff, including the rector, have been investing vast amounts of time and energy in guiding these processes, to the detriment in, some ways, of overall institutional development and functioning. For example, an auditing firm has been tasked to assess/investigate certain aspects arising from previous administrative practices and arrangements, like staff who stayed on campus during holidays (full board and lodging) but amassing leave credits in the process.

Central Office

Developments in relation to the various *central office*-strengthening initiatives noted previously have occurred in the following areas –

- The 'migratory' status that characterised central office's physical location history in months preceding the previous visit still persists. At that time central office has just moved into the building it presently occupies in central Vryheid and the possibility of acquiring (with the option of buying) the adjacent car parking lot as well as the property next door (a house) were going to be explored, with the assistance of some councillors. No progress has been made in this regard and it would appear that some 'dissenting voices' within council are holding things back. The present set-up is very cramped, and the space constraints have been aggravated with the redeployment of some of the *Emandleni* staff to central office (Finance section).
- On a more positive note, the 'structural-unsettledness' of the (tele-) communications infrastructure at central office has been resolved with the installation of a dedicated internet connection, allowing all staff continuous access to the internet (Vryheid campus has acquired the same status). It will be remembered that previously, communiqués still went to Vryheid campus, from where they had to be collected by a 'runner' (which reportedly still happens on occasion) – a set-up that was highly unsatisfactory (if not damaging) in many respects. Communication at college management level has thus been greatly enhanced and central office's administrative and coordinating functioning strengthened as a result.
- With regard the establishment and development of portfolio or management units at central office in support of the increasing centralization and coordination of core college functions (in support of structural and operational integration of the merged institution), a significant start had already been made at the time of the previous visit. Structural, systems and staff capacity building needs and requirements were being assessed, as a basis for planning, design, implementation and follow-up (monitoring and mentoring) strategies and interventions to ensure system integrity and operational efficacy. The following developments can be reported –

- The finance section was previously fingered for priority intervention and at the time of the last visit the first (customised) training programme was already being conducted by the contracted provider, following on a detailed audit and analysis of systems and staff capacity and needs and input from management and finance personnel. The envisaged follow-up interventions and visits by the consultant have occurred in the meantime with regard to providing assistance and mentorship to the finance staff tasked with policy development, systems implementation and administration.
- Similar developmental and staff capacity-building interventions have also occurred in respect of the HR unit. It can also be reported that this unit has been very actively involved with regard the effects of ongoing institutional (structural) development, with particular reference to the incorporation of Emandleni and the proposed linking with (eventual incorporation of) James Nxumalo Agricultural high school (please see below). For example, a detailed staff assessment was conducted at the latter site, in close association with the LPU's programme planning for 2005 (learnerships in agriculture). The same close working together of these two units also applies to ongoing developments at Emandleni with regard the redeployment and capacity development of excess staff and the need for up-skilling of remaining staff in view of programme planning. In addition, the unit has also conducted a full skills audit of all college staff (at all levels), which will inform (priority) training interventions for next year. Ongoing liaison occurs with the SESD PTA in this regard.
- The functioning of the Portfolio Committee system, established to enhance feedback and informed decision-making towards more effective management and governance seems to have been compromised in the period under review as a result of staff constraints (resignations from committees) and councillor unavailability.

Finally, the rector raised the issue of the most likely scenario to occur when DANIDA funding ends. It is envisaged by college management that in two-to-three-years' time some units will be registered as businesses (Section 21 enterprises) in order to generate income and to double up as employers to facilitate workplace training and placement, for example, a 'agricultural unit' (to be established under the LPU) to drive programme delivery in relation to the agriculture niche area. The Business Unit, which is currently in the process of being established and piloted by Vryheid campus, may well serve as a 'role model' in this regard. It is hoped that by such a time the departmental posts would have been instituted³.

3.1.2 Communication and knowledge sharing

Attendance of the SESD workshops has, by all accounts, resulted in a significant increase in the degree of interaction and information sharing between Vryheid and KwaGqikazi Business Studies lecturers, with particular reference to Post Level 1 staff. In addition, information sharing/ networking with colleagues from other colleges, over and above 'fact-finding-missions' to these institutions, has been boosted significantly as a result of Mthashana joining the Best Practices Forum in August (for the first time).

Information sharing between council and the college would appear to have been compromised to some extent because of non-attendance of meetings by certain councillors and the fact that the portfolio committees, to which council is party through nominated representatives, have not been functioning optimally in all instances (as noted above).

Formal communication and information sharing between central office and campus managements would appear to have improved in general. Through a confluence of various factors, for example the 'road shows', improved electronic communication systems, etc., central office (staff and workings) has become more visible to campus personnel and therefore more accessible. In addition, bi-weekly management meetings at central office and the operation of campus-manager-lead 'task teams' instituted by the rector have also significantly enhanced the level and currency of information sharing and associated decision-making. On the whole though, geographical realities (the 'distance factor') continue to play some role, as do attitudes. A significant (dramatic?!) improvement in relations and communication between Vryheid campus and central office illustrate the influence of these latter two factors. In the words of the campus manager –

³ It could be pointed out that at all the public FET colleges, known to the researcher, with established learnerships in place, the learnership operational staff comprise (exclusively) of 'contract workers' (only the programme managers are departmentally employed). Such a set-up, of course, have various fiscal and budgetary implications, for example, costing of individual programmes, authority issues around budgetary control, etc.

A mind-shift has occurred among management and staff with regard to relations and engagement with central office, a merger of sorts. The close proximity and ease of access ('open door') obviously contribute to this development – staff members are very well received at central office and the staff members have got to know the staff of the different portfolios.⁴

The personal assistant to the rector, who was newly appointed at the time of the previous visit, has indeed settled into his role to a far greater extent, as understanding with the college's workings and staff relations and dynamics increased. The personal assistant also adds value to his support service provided to the rector by virtue of his academic background in finance/economics, for example, the rector is kept up-to-date with regard to budgetary expenditure and the latest poverty indicators.

On balance, intra-campus information exchange and communication has improved but differ widely from campus to campus. A dramatic turn-around occurred at Vryheid campus. On previous occasions this campus was singled out (more so than the other two, though similar comments would apply to them in some respects) for strained relations between campus manager and his management team, whilst staff members (with time) started questioning the 'truthfulness' of information brokered to them and decried the lack of mediated information sharing (beyond rhetoric or being 'superficially informed, for the record'). It was pointed out in sub-section 3.1 above that the deputy campus manager took over as campus head (as she has done on previous occasions) with the incumbent campus manager going on long leave. By all accounts, information sharing is immediate and fully participative whilst staff members are afforded opportunity to give inputs in support of decision-making – in stark contrast to the unilateral nature which previously characterised such processes. At Nongoma campus the information flow and exchange appears to be very limited whilst improvement is evident at KwaGqikazi. An example of the blockages in information flow between the manager and staff at Nongoma campus is illustrated by the fact that the previous impact study report was not circulated among staff (for a reason that is not viewed as legitimate) – as was the case previously at Vryheid campus, for that matter.

Information sharing between the DoE, pDoE and the college by means of various established mechanisms and structures reported on previously, continues to be experienced as informative and supportive but some of the previously articulated shortcomings pertaining to coordination and timely communication concerning training dates, etc. persist. (As reported last time, the impact of such systemic shortcomings is exacerbated because of the ongoing staff shortage problem and implications for timetabling and organising relief staff at short notice, etc.). A further issue raised concerns the duplication (reportedly, to quite a high degree) policy and programme coordination within the government departments (DoE-pDoE-College), for example, inter-departmental policy around HIV/Aids – with the activities of external agencies also reportedly contributing to this state of affairs. Similar sentiments were expressed with regard to FET legislation – since different Acts govern FET schools and colleges, a great deal of confusion is being experienced within the FET band regarding the 'status and position' of the one as opposed to the other. A case in point which affects Mthashana, with particular reference to Vryheid campus, is not having access to empty-standing school facilities, like workshops, which are desperately needed by the college. Non-access to an agricultural school outside Vryheid constitutes another example.

Communication and knowledge sharing with external stakeholders, partners, etc. has been occurring on a sustained basis, largely as a result of the activities of the LPU, with particular reference to relationship/partnership building with communities/NGOs and government departments and structures (to be reported on in more depth in sub-section 3.3 below).

3.2 SAQA / NQF

Increasing awareness around the nature of NQF programming and implementation related issues have reportedly been occurring through workshop attendance. It must be noted that the Nongoma staff, on the whole, is more 'conversant' about 'learnership speak' than staff of other campuses which can be attributed to the fact that this site has had more engagement with the practical aspects of (proposed) learnership implementation due to ongoing processes around workshop accreditation, assisted by the LPU. At this time virtually all contact and communication with the Setas and SAQA occur through the LPU but campuses are beginning to get more involved.

⁴ It should be added that the campus manager makes a point of introducing central office staff to campus staff whenever they visit.

As far as progress of NQF-readiness of staff is concerned, virtually all the Vryheid Business Studies staff have reportedly now been assessor-trained (a dramatic improvement) but about half have not completed their Portfolios of Evidence, due to time constraints and extra responsibilities shouldered as a result of the ongoing staffing issues. KwaGqikazi staff assessor training is still lagging behind and the completion of portfolios also represents a major. Little or no progress has occurred as regards assessor training of Engineering lecturers at both Nongoma and Vryheid – both groups missed out on the previous round of training. Nongoma, for example, currently only has one accredited assessor (out of an original three, of which one was a part-time lecturer). The LPU manager is highly concerned about this state of affairs in view of the implementation new/proposed programmes in 2005.

A critical issue that has arisen concerns Nongoma campus' application to the MERSETA for accreditation for four of its workshops – it was granted provisional accreditation for six months to get the workshops in order, with the proviso that if it is not successful this time round it could not again apply for accreditation (!). The focus till now has been on getting the workshops, which on the whole, are lagging behind the standards required for SETA accreditation, with particular reference to the redundancy of equipment – some tools date back to the 60s. However, the buildings housing the workshops are themselves in a bad state of repair (crumbly damp/mouldy walls, etc.) and require major structural upgrading (for instance, the floors need to be raised to counter sprawling damp). In fact, the campus manager feels it would be far more cost effective to rather demolish and rebuild most of them from scratch. (A proposal to DANIDA-SESD for assistance with the upgrading of three workshops was submitted to the campus manager in November 2003, to be motivated. This reportedly did not happen and the initiative therefore came to naught.⁵) The campus has reportedly been approached by the DoL about the provisioning of learnerships, but the ongoing unresolved state of the workshops does not allow for this at this time.

The LPU manager feels that the campus' approach is perhaps too ambitious, given the existing circumstances and conditions, and the self-imposed time frames and resultant pressure – a one or two-workshop-at-a-time approach would therefore have been much more realistic under the circumstances. Additional factors pointed concern the shortcomings in staff capacity in relation to driving and managing the proposed learnership/skills programmes to be implemented, in view of the fact that assessor training (and subsequent registration) of campus personnel has not occurred to any significant extent.

Comment and discussion:

Two dimensions to the 'accreditation stalemate' will be commented on below, the first in response to the situation that has developed Nongoma and the second relating to the 'rural predicament' Mthashana finds itself in.

- i. It would seem that, over a period of time, a required degree of focus, fervour and urgency was not displayed to ensure initiatives towards the accreditation of the facilities and relevant personnel occur in a planned, coordinated, sustained and, therefore, realistic manner. It is felt that the campus manager should shoulder some of the responsibility for this current situation (crisis?) that has developed as the staff member, who has been allocated responsibility for driving the accreditation processes, has delivered on his part (organised visits by the MERSETA's ETQA staff for 'audits' and guidance, ongoing liaising, etc.).
- ii. In a more general sense, but which also is of critical import to the situation at Nongoma, Mthashana finds itself in a 'rural predicament' or 'rural paradox' in relation to the national policy and criteria which govern the implementation of the new system of NQF-aligned qualifications and programmes, the funding model associated with it and the implications for public FET institutions: the accreditation criteria governing programme development, facility 'readiness' and staffing requirements, do not adequately accommodate or 'speak to' (deep) rural variables – primary among them, as previously recorded, are the alarmingly high levels of unemployment and associated poverty, rampant Aids-related mortality rates (and corresponding increase in the numbers of Aids-orphans) – neither do the available (unit) standards, for that matter. As a result, the institution's capacity to honour its mandate⁶ is being compromised. At issue here is not a call for 'lowering of standards' but rather about introducing a more realistic and nuanced framework of criteria and standards which would ensure that

⁶ The rector's strategic vision, objectives and priorities and the college's associated mandate framing the institution's engagement with the socio-economic realities of the region (aligned to national and provincial and regional HRD and skills development policy and legislative frameworks, as well as legislation governing FET institutions and provisioning) were reported on previously. The overall theme and guiding imperative, it will be remembered, is the reduction of the alarmingly high unemployment and poverty levels through HRD and socio-economic empowerment of communities within the framework of the college's identified niche areas of agriculture, forestry, and tourism and hospitality. The ongoing slump in the regional economy and decline in industry and business were also highlighted.

all geographical, cultural, educational, socio-economic, etc. realities be considered in order to make the system more accessible and equitable. This is an issue the rector (and management) has very strong feelings about. The reasoning goes as follows:

Mechanisms to be put in place for learnership/skills programme implementation in geographically spread out deep rural areas and the dynamics of the associated partnerships, as Mthashana is servicing, are numerous and complicated and influenced by complex regional realities which make vastly different sorts of demands on the staff, structures and systems.

The programme-based funding model associated with learnership programme implementation effectively implies strong partnerships with business and industry, which are negligible in the region served by Mthashana (as emphasised in all previous reports). The only industries of note are the taxi industry (which is at war with itself), farming (not really accessible because of historical racial baggage and associated negative relations), and parastatals like TELKOM & ESKOM – which leaves government departments, like hospitals (which are being pursued but are essentially confined to the Nongoma area, as outlined in sub-section 3.3 below). But the main focus of provisioning, in terms of the college's re-focussed strategic vision and mandate, is to deep-rural communities and NGOs scattered through the vast region served by the institution. Till recently, such provisioning occurred essentially by means of short courses offered through the skills centres serviced by the college and, to a lesser extent, projects with rural hospitals or clinics, schools (like the proposed PAETA learnership to be piloted at the James Nxumalo Agricultural High School outside Ulundi), and private enterprises. Significant growth has been occurring in this area of provisioning with the main focus being on beadwork, sewing/garment making and farming (poultry and organic vegetables), as reflected in Section 2 and Sub-section 3.3. At this time the college carries the operational costs (tutors and materials) and funds some degree infrastructural development. The short courses are being NQF-aligned and will comprise mostly unit standard-based short courses/skills programmes and some learnerships and in terms of the college's approach to skills training provisioning to the informal sector, literacy and entrepreneurship components are also incorporated, as required, in support of self-employment.

With these programmes becoming formalised through alignment to the NQF system and associated conditions and requirements, so do problems start occurring and emerging. They relate primarily to the following aspects –

- The programme-based partnerships clearly differ from the 'norm', with particular reference to the employer-link and associated placement arrangements. It would in effect mean establishing small Section 21 enterprises.
- The implications for programme development and registration and accreditation of facilities in relation to the particular (programme) needs of learners and the context in which provisioning occurs – poor local communities, rudimentary structures serving as training venues/facilities, cultural factors, etc., as illustrated by the following examples –
 - In the case of beadwork projects (with particular reference to the involvement of learners with physical barriers) the actual facilities/venues in most cases comprise very basic, typically deep-rural structures. Funding is not available to upgrade these facilities according to the rigid 'high level' SETA criteria. At best these facilities can be customised in fairly basic (but acceptable) ways to accommodate the special needs of learners, for instance, access for wheelchairs.
 - Catering (for weddings, etc.) in traditional deep-rural style involves the slaughtering of livestock, outside-cooking using the three-legged-pot, etc. But such customary ways and methodologies clash with existing 'industrial' standards/criteria issued by the FoodBev SETA. The focus of such standards, it is felt, should rather be on basic aspects, like hygiene factors pertaining to the slaughtering of animals, meat keeping, maintenance and preparations of the pots and other cooking utensils, personal hygiene of personnel, etc., and safety.

The main reason for this stalemate is attributed to the fact that unit standard generating personnel do not actually visit areas like Northern KZN to experience its multi-layered texture for themselves, conduct structured interviews with all stake-holders, etc. as a basis from which to approach their tasks – a case of 'sitting in offices in Pretoria and prescribing to the rest of the country how things should be done, which echoes the bureaucratic ways of the previous government's approach to education and training? Because of the current staffing situation/constraints at public FET colleges, with particular reference to rural colleges, Mthashana does not have the capacity to embark on such unit standard generating and associated learning programme material development projects (in fact, no colleges do that, not even the established urban/metropolitan ones – most of their material is sourced from the Setas or such activity is outsourced to private concerns). In addition,

- ❑ Many of the tutors used at the skills centres are highly skilled in their particular areas ranging from beadwork, cooking (as mentioned above), welding, even cattle or goat shepherding, etc. But they are mostly illiterate and have no formal education – their knowledge and skill have essentially been acquired through tacit means. For them to conform to the criteria governing registration as assessor is clearly not feasible, it would involve being ABET-trained, RPL'd (systems for which are still a long way off), etc.
- ❑ The implementation and sustaining of learnerships/skills programmes involve high costs. Because strong partnerships with industry in relation to identified niche areas is not a feature of Mthashana college (as a result of regional economic landscape), it does not qualify/not have access to SETA levy-based funding and cannot therefore meet the programmatic and infrastructure demands large scale provisioning would involve, as required by its mandate.

So, whilst the learnership model appears 'all very well' at conceptual level (for example, promotes access to learning etc.), its translation into practice is viewed as essentially flawed since one generic formula governs the implementation of the model – completely divorced from regional/local geographical, historical, socio-economic, cultural and other realities. As a result, the formal policy framework and standards and criteria prescribed by the SETAs and associated programme-based funding model (including incentives/resources like Umsobomvo Youth Fund and the Rural Development Programme) are experienced as undermining education and training delivery to deep-rural constituencies, which goes against the policy/legislative imperatives governing FET institutions with regard to responsiveness (to community needs) and associated relevance of programme delivery, as well as making education and training more accessible, with particular reference to the marginalised and unemployed.

The rector summed it up as follows: "There is a missing link somewhere – colleges like Mthashana receive the least because rural development programmes in education and training have (been relegated to) bottom-of-the-ladder status."

It could be added, that these sentiments ring especially true when comparing rural colleges like Mthashana, the only FET provider in a vast region, with its large urban/metropolitan counterparts which have expanded academic and staffing structures, like programme managers and learnership co-ordinators in each academic department, expanded LPUs comprising learnership and RPL sub-units, etc. Not to mention the huge scope for programme-based income generation through strong partnerships with industry and business. Large scale niche-area aligned learnership/skills programme provisioning in this rural region is not financially sustainable at this time and the ideal solution to this 'rural paradox' would require the injection of vast sums of cash (millions in the case of Nongoma campus) to make programme and facility development feasible as well as financial aid to prospective learners.

In all, it would seem that an increasing 'body of evidence' is emerging in support of a distinct 'rural FET college model', which holds critical implications for policy development/amendment with regard to criteria and formulae regarding accreditation, funding, resource allocation, etc. The structural dynamics and functioning, staffing and resource needs of deep rural public FET colleges, as well as the regional realities and demands they have to respond to, are *categorically* different to the 'generic' institution on which existing policy frameworks and departmental formulations are based.

3.3 Linkages and relationship building

Creating partnerships/establishing links with the community/NGOs, business and to a very limited extent, industry – with the specific intent of establishing the training needs of these various constituencies is the prerogative of the LPU (in cooperation with the campus managers). Till now the *modus operandi* has been to 'talk to as many people as possible and doing essentially hands-on research and then try and respond to such needs or particular requests as soon as possible' (whilst being mindful about the institutional limitations governing provisioning). Because the capacity of the LPU is still limited at this time considering the vast area served by the college, the two LPU staff members, Ms Theresa Venter (manager) and assistant manager Mr Thokazani Phakathi, spend the major proportion of their time on the road. In addition, the LPU manager carries the bulk of the workload of the Marketing and Communication portfolio, the unit for which has not been established.



LPU manager, second from the right, at agricultural show
(at which beadwork products from Banango Skills Centre won first prize)



'All packed and ready to go!'
(LPU staff about to depart for a skills centre from central office)



Example of beadwork at a skills centre



Example of garment making at a skills centre

3.3.1 Previous linkages/partnership initiatives revisited

The Second Impact Study report (March 2004) highlighted various outreach initiatives aimed at relationship building and associated programme provisioning. It will be remembered that the flurry of activity at the time was related to the Linkages and Programmes Unit (LPU) being based at KwaGqikazi campus to kick-start such initiatives and associated infrastructural development in support of proposed programming. The current status of these initiatives and developments, as contrasted with their operational status of six months ago, are as follows –

□ ABET and sewing courses (pilot)

Previous status.

"Work has already progressed quite far towards customizing some of the vacant rooms/office space towards the establishment of an Adult Centre, as the facility where community extension programmes will be offered. The different venues have all been painted out, power points for sewing machines are in place, and a lecture room has been fully kitted out. The initial programme offerings will focus on literacy, sewing and business skills training on an after hours basis to people from the surrounding community. In consultation with the literacy training provider (ACAT), an integrated approach has been decided on in terms of which all learners will be exposed to all three components in a sequential way, i.e. – literacy training (ABET at level 1 literacy); skills component (e.g. sewing); and entrepreneurial/business skills training".

Current status.

The ABET project (a learnership pilot) using ACAT facilitators and material is currently underway at the KwaGqikazi facility involving ground staff at this site. This initiative follows on a competency assessment of the workers during which a critical need for literacy training was established. A basic and advance group are running concurrently.

The proposed sewing project did not materialize as originally planned (at the time of the previous visit the facility was in the process of being established) did start in August but fizzled because of staffing issues at the time. However, a fully-fledged sewing/garment-making learnership is currently running at this KwaGqikazi facility.

□ Poultry farming partnership project

Previous status

"The linkages and curriculum unit head was recently approached to provide such literacy, communications and business skills training to small-scale farmers in partnership with an 'entrepreneurship promotor'. This person has an established Section 21 company through which produce is marketed, the current focus being on live chicken production (for which he will provide training and oversee production). A memorandum of understanding is currently awaited towards this end".

Current status.

The proposed poultry farming partnership project also did not materialise due to the fact that the person who originally approached the college 'disappeared', so the memorandum of understanding and ensuing agreement were never finalised.

□ HIV/Aids research

Previous status.

"Contact has been established with the retired hospital superintendent, Dr Amy Glover, (originally from the United Kingdom) who is extensively involved with HIV/Aids work in the area. She is currently busy collecting data from households in surrounding communities through the use of a network of 'foot soldiers' going from household-to-household. It has been agreed to make one of the residence units on the campus available as an office to this project for collation and analysis of data. Mthashana will provide training to project staff as required (interview techniques, data collection skills, computer and communication skills, etc.)".

Current status.

Residential unit 6 is in the final stages of being prepared to accommodate this project whilst the questionnaires were developed by the University of KwaZulu-Natal. Joint decision-making will then occur around the nature of community extension programmes (learnerships) in HIV/Aids. A meeting between the

KwaGqikazi campus manager and Dr Glover is imminent (she only recently returned from her annual visit to the United Kingdom).

❑ *Learnership in Tourism and Hospitality*

Previous status:

"Another of the residential units is going to be converted into a bed-&-breakfast establishment and will be run by (successive groups of) students on a learnership to be offered in hospitality and tourism. Towards this end relevant unit standards have been accessed (through electronic searching of the THETA website) and 'unpacked' in support of programme planning and development. Revenue raised will be ploughed back into the college for further developmental initiatives. In a related development, the huge kitchen, which is in a terrible state of disrepair, is being refurbished with the assistance of a very cooperative public works department official (who originally installed all the equipment). Together with the adjoining cafeteria, currently used as a venue for examinations, these facilities will be staffed by students on a planned learnership in catering".

(The Bed & Breakfast facility in relation to the THETA learnership in hospitality is envisaged to be run as a business so as to double-up as employer and thereby accommodate the work experience placement aspect of the learnership requirements).

Current status:

The unit standards have been acquired and the programme material is ready but some upgrading and development must still occur in order for the facility to be accredited. In the meantime, however, the initiative has come to a halt because of a (perennial) problem of municipal water supply to this campus. At times there is, in fact, no water available (because of water 'disappearing' along the way) and supply by water truck has to be arranged (the usage of water tanks as supplementary measure is reportedly not allowed). This situation not only effects the B&B initiative but also the associated catering project, which will also be learnership-linked. The implementation of this learnership will now be relocated to the newly acquired 'tourism' facility outside Vryheid, as part of a very recent development involving Vryheid campus – to be discussed below. However, the KwaGqikazi facility will become (a second) delivery site for this learnership once the infrastructural problems around this facility have been resolved.

❑ *Indonza Craft Centre*

Previous status:

"Initial links towards partnership building have been established with art teachers at the Indonza Craft Centre in neighbouring Ulundi (about a 45-minute drive), in terms of which their learners will come to KwaGqikazi for training in communication and business skills".

Current status:

No real progress can be reported but a meeting between the KwaGqikazi campus manager and the Indonza Craft Centre manager is imminent, at which issues pertaining to delivery modes and practical arrangements will be discussed.

❑ *Nongoma hospital*

Previous status

"Hospitals are also being targeted for outreach programmes and is viewed as a huge 'market' for future expansion. For example, the local Nongoma hospital has around one thousand employees. Computer training, communication skills, labour relations and conflict resolution comprise the priority areas identified for programme delivery, which will be aimed at nursing, administrative and security staff. The nursing training facility will also be similarly targeted".

Current status:

As part of the linking and needs establishment initiatives launched during the period of the LPU's residency at KwaGqikazi campus, the unit manager and the campus manager approached the Benedictine Hospital in Nongoma about education and training provision the institution could offer to hospital staff in possible areas such as communication skills (including computer literacy, report writing), ABET, performance attitude change, time management and ethics. Programme requirements include training in both 'generic' fundamentals as well as customised learning programmes to cater for institutional and departmental characteristics. However, no follow-up on the side of the campus appears to have occurred subsequent to the initial contact made.

3.3.2 New initiatives towards linkage/partnership development

❑ *Skills development and entrepreneurship partnership project with the Nongoma municipality (KwaGqikazi and Nongoma campuses)*

Following on various local economic development (LED) studies that have focussed on the shortage of skill in the Nongoma area, the provincial department of Local Government allocated a R1m-grant over three years (2004-2006) to the Nongoma municipality towards SME development among the unemployed in the (critically) economically depressed Nongoma region. A Section 21 project was established to provide the management structure. Phase One of the project involves formally registered (unit standard-based) skills development in sewing/clothing production and carpentry for locally unemployed youth (96 were selected by the municipality through ward representative system) and Mthashana college was approached (following on initial contact made by the LPU manager and Nongoma campus manager early in the year) to be the provider for learnerships in clothing production (at Kwa Gqikazi campus) and carpentry (at Nongoma campus). Once they've completed their training the students will do their practical part through the project facility established by the municipality (including the equipment required for production in the two above-mentioned skills areas). Phase Two will consist of assisting the students to start their own businesses, towards which end they will receive entrepreneurial skills training and will be monitored on an ongoing basis. A 'social contract agreement' or declaration of intent is in place but no formal partnership agreement has been signed. Overall, five SETAs are involved.

Whilst waiting for the clothing production programme to be registered (unit standard-based) learning material has been sourced, which will be facilitated by a highly acclaimed registered facilitator who is on the KwaGqikazi staff, 55 learners are (currently) undergoing a basic computer and communication enhancement programme (PLATO) aimed at assisting them with their prospective studies.

❑ *Linkage with James Nxumalo Agricultural High School*

A PAETA learnership, 'Certificate in farming as an own business', is going to be introduced in 2005, starting with a group of Grade 9 students as a pilot. The school's infrastructure is already accredited by this Seta but no teachers have yet received assessor training – which will be organised through the Mthashana HR Unit to occur before the end of 2004. A major potential problem concerns the fact that the majority of students are not from the area (drawn from urban areas) but the PAETA reportedly insists that the learnership will only be registered on condition that students have access to land.

❑ *'Organic Green Beans Project': A tri-partite partnership project involving Mthashana College, Jozini Skills Centre and BioSwiss (Pty) Ltd.*

The college has decided to initiate a community agricultural project in the Jozini municipal area in one of the most far-flung 'deep rural' corners of the vast area served by the college (bordering on Mozambique). It is aimed at equipping the community with agricultural skills that will help them 'to become job creators and not seekers' and in the long run reduce the very high levels of poverty in the area.

Towards these ends the college teamed up with the Jozini municipality to form a partnership with BioSwiss Industries (Pty) Ltd., a company which specializes in the processing of organically-produced green beans for the export market, under highly prescribed conditions. It has already set up a factory in the Hlobane area (ex-coal mine village) outside Vryheid). The municipality provided the land for the project, which has now been flattened and fenced at the college's expense, with labour provided by the prospective learners. A (drip) water supply system still has to be installed and the planting of beans (seeds are to be imported from the Netherlands) will only occur in the beginning of 2005 when the climatic conditions will be optimal, as judged by Bioswiss. BioSwiss will conduct the training themselves.

After being trained in organic farming and entrepreneurship learners will be encouraged to form co-operatives and start their own organic farming concerns. In view of this long-term goal the municipality has been approached by the college to make suitable land available. Once this is in place the college will approach PAETA for registration of the learnership which is aimed at the unemployed (a similar model is also envisaged for implementation at Emandleni). A significant 'bonus' with regard to these projects is that a 'ready-made' market is available through BioSwiss. (It was pointed out by the LPU manager that finding suitable and accessible markets for projects of this nature invariably proves to be the hardest part but is critical for sustainability.)

❑ *Tourism-hospitality learnership (multi-partnership) project.*

The Vryheid municipality developed a brand new Rmulti-million 'tourist facility' outside Vryheid overlooking a large dam with the view of leasing it. It consists of six thatched rondavels, a huge reception area, a conference facility, a restaurant and adjoining kitchen, an amphitheatre, and two out-buildings. All buildings have thatched roofs and (light) ochre exteriors. However, it was fast turning into a white elephant and when the LPU manager heard about it and viewed it she immediately conceived of the variety of possibilities it could offer the college with regard to the piloting of learnerships in tourism and hospitality – seeing that the KwaGqikazi pilot, for which the learning material has already been acquired, has been put on hold. The infrastructure lends itself to B&B, on-site craft production, conference hosting, etc. It is located on the main tourist route, for example, a German mission facility is close-by which invests significantly in promoting local/indigenous cultural activities like music, art, dance, poetry and receives a constant flow of visitors/(German) tourists.

It is envisaged to run as business whilst doubling up as a training facility for learnerships in tourism, hospitality, marketing, reception-admin, and event management (at a later stage). A business plan will be presented to the municipality shortly.

□ *Business Unit-based linkages and programmes (Vryheid campus)*

In view of its programmatic goals, the establishment of the Business Unit, as described under Section 2, presents Mthashana with various possibilities for initiating community-extension partnership programmes/projects (SME and otherwise), with the co-operation and support of the LPU.

□ *'Bake-for-Profit' (SME) project in partnership with Vryheid Child and Welfare Society.*

This programme was originally scheduled to be initiated at Vryheid campus in 2003 but this did not occur due to infrastructural shortcomings at the time (the venue was instead used at a lecture room?). It will now occur through the LPU and R15 000 start-up capital has been made available by the CFWS. An ABET component will be attached to the skill training and it will be offered to two communities, each characterised by extremely high poverty levels and unemployment. It is a self-sustaining programme and will enable learners to cater for weddings and funerals (at profit!).

- The SPAR supermarket chain is one of few such franchises which utilises external providers to satisfy their training needs. The local SPAR in Nongoma will be approached in connection with the establishing a learnership in wholesale and retail.

3.3.3 Initiatives of the LSEN Sub-unit

In the previous report it was noted that the sub-unit responsible for 'learners-with-special educational needs' (LSEN) splits its activities in support of the LPU (70%) and the SSU (30%). Whereas it previously constituted a sub-unit of the LPU, it now resorts under the SSU. With regard to linkage or partnership-building initiatives noted previously, the following developments can be reported –

- Three-month beadwork course for the physically challenged (all ages) have been introduced at two skills centres – the one in the Umbobo district (near Kosi Bay) and the other in the Cezwana area. Sewing and ABET courses will be the next to be introduced planned.
- Beadwork for Aids orphans at ...hospital.
- Beadwork and ABET for patients at Mountain View
- (Beadwork and agricultural projects planned for mentally recovering people at St Augustine hospital have not started yet due to certain problems encountered).

NOTE:

Additional skill centre activity is reflected in Section 2, above.

3.4 Strategic planning processes

Previous status.

"The need for a realistic review towards operationalizing and 'quantifying' the strategic objectives was appreciated at the time. (A review of the strategic plan is scheduled for the end of March when all the central office staff members would have returned from the sites where pilot programmes were being initiated)."

Current status

The proposed formal review of the strategic plan has not yet occurred, only a budget review for 2004-2006, which still has to be approved by Council (It has been 'tweaked' to some extent by the rector, with inputs from managers). However, it was noted in the previous report that the rector was pushing towards operationalisation of the strategic objectives and issued a directive to campus managers whereby planning and progress reporting have to be aligned to the 'fundamentals' and objectives of the strategic plan, a measure introduced "to ensure that awareness of the institution's refocused strategic vision and remain fore-grounded and guide operational functioning". That these strategic objectives have been fore-grounded is indeed evident in the many examples of their operationalising at all levels and areas of management functioning. For example, at all three campuses programme planning and development occur within the frameworks of strategically derived and aligned (including alignment to niche areas) campus operational plans. The programme goals formulated for the newly established Business Unit serves as a highly relevant indicator in this regard. The rector paid tribute to the major influence of SEDS Programme interventions and support in the 'better operationalisation of the strategic plan' (including management's guiding role with regard to strategy and objectives) and made reference to the fact that whereas previously the emphasis was more on 'intentions' the focus has now shifted to 'detail'.

The LPU, as per 'terms of reference', is the key college organ for ensuring such strategic-alignment in the operationalising of programmes at campuses and skills centres. The assistant LPU manager is very passionate about the strategic plan (which he 'eats and breathes!'), with particular reference to its overall alignment to national frameworks and, in this regard, he has undertaken to continuously cross-reference it with announcements in the media regarding new focus areas and imperatives, for example, President Mbeki's latest 'state of the nation' address.

Furthermore, it was also previously reported that 'the next phase at this level of institutional processes (implementation/operationalization of strategic planning) will comprise the development of policy and procedures by management and portfolio committee members'. Formal policy implementation has not occurred to the extent as probably envisaged – policy development initiatives in most systemic areas would appear to still be in the 'draft stage', with the notable exception of finance section where a fully-fledged system and associated policy and procedures are in place with regard to procurement, payment of accounts, etc. Policy and procedures development with regard to Quality Assurance probably represents the most critical institutional shortcoming with regard to institutional integration of systems and procedures, with obvious impact at an operational level. Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) represents another priority area which needs to be addressed in view of proposed activity planned for 2005 in respect of learnerships, skills programmes and unit-standard-based short courses.

It was also noted in sub-section 3.1 that the rector is currently engaged with the drafting of policy towards formalising all the various aspects (like roles and responsibilities) pertaining to the management, administration and operational functioning of skills centres incorporated under the college, as well as to accommodate applications for the establishment of new ones.

Finally, staying with the operationalising of strategic planning towards enhancing organisational development and functioning/delivery, in this case in the area of human resource development, it was also previously reported that ... "on the cards are the development of realistic formal job descriptions and a skills audit to ensure selective, highly specific and streamlined training interventions for targeted personnel (e.g. finance) in future, as opposed to earlier training interventions which are perceived as being more 'exposure-orientated' in nature and intent". A comprehensive skills audit has been conducted throughout the institution by the HR section and the results forwarded to the SEDS PTA to inform the planning of training interventions.

A major shortcoming/constraint with regard to policy implementation throughout institutional structures reportedly concerns the fact that the approval of submitted drafts is not forthcoming (contracted facilitator's responsibility?). This blockage in the operationalising of policy development initiatives constitutes a major source of frustration, particularly for management at Vryheid campus where draft policy has been developed for all functional areas. Similar policy development is also occurring at the two other campuses.

3.5 Capacity building of college council and academic board

By some accounts in internal strife and divisions along racial and cultural lines have become an entrenched feature of Council dynamics and functioning. Some individuals have reportedly also become quite obstructive, indeed destructive, for example, one councillor wrote a letter to the local Vryheid newspaper (behind council's back, so to speak) expressing outrage at the money wasted on the college launch in April. In addition, attendance levels of council meetings are reportedly a cause of concern (some

voices are calling for the enforcement of the Code of Conduct in this regard) and result in some councillors being ill-informed about college matters. Cumulatively, these issues and dynamics impact significantly on the college's (operational) functioning and some interviewees expressed the opinion that 'council needs to be reviewed' with regard to carrying out its mandate and feel, furthermore, that the SEDS and CCF council capacity-building interventions have largely been wasted because of such negative attitudes.

In view of the complex political landscape in KwaZulu-Natal in general and the Nongoma area in the college's catchment area/surrounds in particular, both the rector and the Council chairperson, Mr David Nkosi, have received accolades for their integrity in maintaining inscrutable political neutrality.

As far as the functioning of the Academic Board is concerned, its status was previously reported as 'still not a properly constituted and functioning structure...and previous campus academic committees largely continue as before with greater or lesser degrees of effectiveness. Getting this structure up and running constitutes a priority for the council chair'. A workshop was held some time before this visit towards the (re-) establishment of this structure, at which nominations were made and the election of board members have subsequently occurred. No further activities or developments have reportedly taken place. However, concerns have been expressed about the competency levels of some board members and, consequently, the capacity of this structure to deliver in terms of the critical role and function it has to perform.

3.6 Capacity building of management

SESD capacity-building interventions continue to be valued with regard to relevance but one campus manager expressed a sense of relief that fewer management workshops occurred during the period under review, which has allowed more 'home-time' for addressing implementation issues. The last workshop attended was on the management of multi-campus institutions, with the focus on teamwork and it would appear that the operationalisation of this 'ethic' is already occurring in that the three campus managers have been assigned the responsibility by the rector (college senior management meets every second week at central office) of forming task teams towards addressing operational matters, for example, facilitating the sharing of information, planning and development in relation to QA and 'best practices'. This is in line with the following declaration of intent previously reported:

'...the centralization of administrative college functions like transport, payments, skills centres coordination, HR, etc. has relieved campus management personnel of significant 'house keeping chores'. They are now being required to focus on the hands-on management of their campuses in support of their primary function, i.e. managing teaching and learning. The alignment of operational plans with the strategic plan and quality control (the supervision of quality management system development) would constitute two such focus areas.'

However, it was also noted previously that over and above SEDS interventions around management capacity development, a critical area in need of priority attention concerns attitudinal change-inducing interventions at management level. It was noted under sub-section 3.2 that power relations and dynamics among campus managers are compromising cooperation and attitudes/mindsets (like lack of commitment, autocratic management style) of individual managers are also undermining infrastructural development and programme initiatives and implementation at those particular sites (for an example of such dynamics please see sub-section 3.7 below – about a proposed peer-mentoring initiative). The basic argument is that all the capacity or competency at the level of skill is essentially to no avail if attitudes and personality traits are inherently obstructionist ... (With reference to college and council personnel in general the rector has an oft-quoted mantra: 'Rather give me someone to work with who may be unable but willing than someone who is able but unwilling.')

3.7 Professional development of staff

Lecturing staff members remain happy with the nature and relevance of the SEDS staff development interventions that are occurring on an ongoing basis. Whereas workshop attendance by Vryheid staff in the past was markedly lower than that of the other two sites because the campus manager was loath to release staff because of the practical implications for re-organising the timetable so that students are not abandoned, lecturers now have more freedom to attend workshops than before since the deputy campus manager has taken over – provided relief arrangements are in place. It was noted under sub-section 3.1 that the attendance of the SEDS workshops has resulted in a significant increase in degree of interaction, liaising and information sharing between Vryheid and KwaGqikazi Business Studies staff, at Post Level 1

in particular. As a case in point, the need has been expressed by some KwaGqikazi lecturers to spend periods of time at Vryheid campus observing and co-presenting lectures, and at the same time being mentored. The Vryheid acting campus head took up the proposal with the relevant parties at management level but it was not endorsed, which to a certain extent reflects on the complexity and difficulty of inter-campus management level relations, with particular reference to the extent such relations are influenced by perceptions and interpretations of and consequent responses to each other's behaviour.

The recent SESD-facilitated OBE training workshops seem to have had a major impact on staff across the college. For example, the three staff members from Vryheid did a presentation to the other staff members (train-the-trainer) soon after their return, which was observed by two mentors from Swinton Road. By all accounts it was brilliant and induced a high level of enthusiasm among attending staff. As a proactive measure to ensure the momentum of this initiative and ensuing implementation is sustained (involving all staff), the acting campus manager has proposed ongoing peer supervision and sharing of best practice.

But continuous professional development is also pursued by lecturers on an individual basis. For example, two staff members have made arrangements for website training during the holidays⁷.

Finally, the need for subject knowledge-enhancing interventions was expressed previously. To this end, very positive feedback was received on the mathematics and science workshops that occurred.

3.8 Academic competence in maths, science and technology

Maths and science offerings only pertain to Nongoma and Vryheid campuses. The Vryheid campus manager is satisfied with the competency levels of staff in these disciplines and noted that the campus in fact has a couple of very good lecturers. As mentioned in the previous report, perennial problem experienced by Nongoma campus concerns the fact the this site finds it hard to draw expertise because of its geographic location (isolated/deep rural) and the fact that no job security can be offered (temporary posts) due to the moratorium on posts.

3.9 Learner support services

Previous status.

'At this early stage in this unit's development and functioning the focus is (still) essentially on HIV/Aids programmes, including referral, and policy development. Guidance and counselling still needs to be addressed and towards these ends a (multi-disciplined) 'Wellness Centre' is to be established at the campus (KwaGqikazi campus, where the SSU was based at the time), signifying a major development in this area of support and service delivery.'

Current status.

Various developments have occurred during this period under review, for example –

- ❑ The SSU conducted 'meet-and-greet' and 'road show' visits to campuses as a means of introducing the unit's workings and personnel to staff and students as well as orientating new SRC members (the SRC's term of office has been changed to start in July).
- ❑ A HIV/Aids display was done by the unit at a Best Practices Forum meeting at the end of August (with assistance from the LPU manager, who also doubles-up as Marketing Manager), which reportedly was highly successful in terms interest generated (and in the process enhanced Mthashana's visibility among peer institutions!).
- ❑ 60 'ambassadors' were inducted (nominated by lecturers) as part of the Leadership Programme. Planned programme activities in this regard include community service, campus security, and municipality-linked activities like clean-ups.
- ❑ All SSU-linked personnel (i.e. SSU staff and campus co-ordinators) and SRC representatives attended the SRC Summit in Durban.
- ❑ A donation of R200 000 was received from the National Alliance of Black School Teachers of America, which came about when a delegation visited KwaGqikazi campus (at the time of the PLATO launch).

⁷ This development is particularly significant in view of the fact that formal internal examination system building towards the year mark is being phased out (though not completely) and OBE assessment being introduced, with particular relevance for assessment of Business Unit programmes. (The unit-standard based learning material is in final stages of development in preparation for the learnership programme implementation but the practical component of Business Studies courses has already been introduced.)

⁸ Departmental bursaries have been made available to permanent staff wanting to pursue staff development opportunities in 2005. The paradox, is of course that there are so few staff members in permanent posts!

These funds are earmarked for HIV/Aids-related activities, including a teacher and student educational exchange programme.

- SSU staff and the three campus SS co-ordinators attended a three-day counselling and HIV/Aids workshop.
- The 'Wellness Centre' concept, which was originally to be piloted at KwaGqikazi campus has now been instituted at Vryheid campus where such a facility has just been completed as part of the structural developments which are occurring, including the Business Unit – as referred to in earlier sections. The centre consists of a counselling room and a sick bay. Counselling sessions have just been initiated at the time of the visit and will be conducted by the Vryheid campus SS co-ordinator and the SSU manager and assistant-manager, who will take turns in conducting the scheduled sessions⁹.

As far as projected activities and interventions are concerned, the following areas have been prioritised for attention –

- Academic support to students (an area of student support which has been significantly neglected in the past) is to focus on an all-inclusive 'total package' approach – career guidance, articulation with HE (career-pathing); job opportunities to be publicised; language development in view of the low levels of proficiency in English among students (the SSU manager feels very strongly about getting the PLATO facilities running optimally); tutoring and other support like study skills to be provided by lecturers; resources, like textbooks and basic reference books and access to the Internet, and study facilities;
- Support to the SRC through ongoing capacity-building workshops and to enhance SRC visibility on campuses through increased portfolio initiatives, with particular reference to sport and culture; discussion forums;
- Placement and tracking of students to be conducted in a systematic and co-ordinated way;
- First aid training for three representatives from each campus; and
- Accommodating and supporting learners with special needs or 'learners with barriers', both in terms of services and facilities

Various of the shortcomings (previously recorded and newly emerged) are still in evidence, based on inputs from management, staff and students at all three campuses, as well as observations by the researcher. Chief among them are –

- Policy with regard to guidance and counselling is still not in place. However, the SSU manager reported that this matter is being addressed by the BPF – a generic policy is being developed which, upon completion, will be customised at institutional level.
- PLATO is only functional to a very limited extent, the reasons being that the volunteer who managed the facility at KwaGqikazi has left whilst students from Nongoma students, who are meant to share this facility, are not yet engaging with it at all. The PLATO facility at Vryheid campus is not yet functioning due to software incompatibility issues. A rental option with regard to PLATO software is currently being investigated. (An ICDL was recently installed at Vryheid campus to make long overdue Internet access available. This facility is only available to all staff at present, including the Business Unit, but will be extended to students at the beginning of 2005 by switching the ICDL to the computers used in Business Studies for two hours every day.)
- The SSU is reportedly meeting with negative attitudes and *resistance* from campus management, at one campus in particular, which also undermines the activities of the co-ordinator at that campus. Such resistance is reportedly also manifested in information and data requested not being forthcoming

⁹ Whilst the SSU management is obviously very keen to get this support service offering going, the researcher has some reservation, if not concern, about this initiated *modus operandi*. In previous reports it was noted that only at Vryheid campus has a counselling service ever been provided – by a senior lecturer who until now provided a counselling on a part-time basis as she also had teaching commitments. She now engages with student and SRC affairs on a full-time basis as SS co-ordinator. It will also be remembered previous reports that over the years she has been attending counselling courses and workshops as part of her ongoing development and grounding. Consequently, she also appears to be highly aware of the complexities and implications of dealing with psychological and emotional issues and is mindful of her limitations in this regard, i.e. in what instances to refer a particular case *before* venturing into unfamiliar territory or aspects she's not confident in dealing with. The other two designated counsellors who, with respect, cannot lay claim to such expertise, grounding and experience since and it could be deemed irresponsible to allow them to engage with counselling under these circumstances. By implication, it also calls into question the overall approach whereby staff members can become engaged with counselling after only having a three-day workshop – serious damage can be done to students emotionally, albeit with the best of intentions. Over and above expertise issues, what about issues like supervision?

(withheld). This situation is experienced as significantly compromising the outputs and impact of the SSU in various areas of its functioning.¹⁰

As far as support services are experienced and viewed by the students, the general consensus appears to be that the HIV/Aids programmes have had a significant impact as far as awareness raising is concerned. However, support, service provision and facilities which are either lacking or deemed highly inadequate include –

At KwaGqikazi campus:

- ❑ Lack of bursaries remains a 'burning' ongoing issue. The idea of granting bursaries to 'best achieving' students was mooted, as an incentive to enhance student performance.
- ❑ Access to buildings or venues and facilities for disabled students.
- ❑ public transport in the case of Vryheid students (the campus is situated in a residential area where taxis do not operate)
- ❑ Libraries/resource centres, including access to after-hours study facilities, for example usage of classrooms (particularly during exam times). This shortcoming applies to all the sites. However, at KwaGqikazi the campus manager has made arrangements for the proposed Wellness Centre venue to be used as a study facility under supervision of an ex-N6 student volunteer (till such time as preparations are in place for it to function as per original objective, the piloting of which is now occurring at Vryheid campus, as noted above). It has limited seating and a limited number of (donated) textbooks are available to students¹¹.
- ❑ Fully-fledged cafeterias (as opposed to tuck shops) and seating facilities for break-time recreation and relaxation.
- ❑ No access to the Internet.
- ❑ Lecturer competency in English, with particular reference to KwaGqikazi campus where some lecturers reportedly conduct Business Studies classes in Zulu and also do not understand students' questions when posed in English. In addition, some lecturers at this site only read from the textbooks, resulting in students losing interest and staying away from classes (on the grounds that they gain more through forming their own study groups).
- ❑ No follow-up has occurred since the HIV/Aids workshops were attended.
- ❑ Ignorance about the learnership system and, by implication, NQF qualifications, etc.
- ❑ No prospectus and differential fees charged in some instances
- ❑ No tutorials 'to compensate for poor quality teaching'
- ❑ Campus bookshops required in view of textbooks not being supplied.
- ❑ No facilities for the disabled.
- ❑ Student-staff relations are good but relations between the SRC and management are not good, for example, management does not respond to their requests and the SRC office 'consists only of one chair'.
- ❑ Students at this campus feel they have no identity because no student cards are issued nor any distinguishable attire is available, like T shirts.
- ❑ The student representatives expressed the wish for the student body to be more racially mixed.
- ❑ Netball and soccer facilities and grounds have been made available.
- ❑ No inter-college events or interaction takes place. The SSU has reportedly been approached in this regard.
- ❑ Students are not allowed to fundraise for functions and events.
- ❑ The only positive aspect noted about the campus is that it "looks attractive".

Vryheid Campus:

- ❑ SRCs are still essentially campus-bound because they have very little contact with their peers on the Nongoma side (about 120kms away). The establishment of a college SRC executive committee has been proposed.
- ❑ No feedback on College Council meetings is received. In addition, the students decried the red tape involved by having to put their requests to Council through the SSU and not directly to Council and

¹⁰ It has also emerged, however, that an additional contributing factor to such negative relations and responses appears to be linked to the SSU manager's attitude/approach and conduct. It would appear that, whilst the manager's enthusiasm is appreciated, she is experienced as 'brash' and high-handed in her dealings with management and staff in some instances – lacking in interpersonal sensitivities required for positive and co-operative relations.

¹¹ The resource centre standing idle (unused) at KwaGqikazi campus – belongs to the DoE and is stocked and staffed for providing support to teachers at surrounding schools – and the possibility of it doubling-up as a student resource (with obvious implications for acquiring the relevant resources) was noted previously.

communication with the SSU at central office is in obstacle in that proposals forwarded to the SSU are reportedly not responded to. Communication with the other campuses as well as with other colleges remains a problem.

- Little knowledge about learnerships.
- Very excited about the establishment of the Business Unit (practical training for N6 students)
- Lack of sports grounds constitutes a priority problem (renewed attempts being made to use some of the neighbouring Vryheid High School's facilities – previous approaches in this regard have not been successful). Netball and soccer (for which kit is available) are the two sports codes offered (cricket and tennis were reportedly also once offered). A need was expressed for the college to offer coaching and refereeing as a 'career alternative'.
- Drama and other cultural activities are being pursued.
- A proposal is about to be submitted to campus management to institute a 'Mr and Ms College' competition.
- A raffle is planned to fundraise for student functions.
- Short courses in engineering have reportedly been promised but no follow-up has occurred subsequently.
- The Wellness Centre is viewed as holding a lot of promise but it is too early still for it to have an impact at this time. Career guidance remains inadequate and placement of students is regarded as an acute problem.
- *Facilities.* Frustration was expressed with the fact that PLATO is not yet operational. Study space remains insufficient and recreational facilities, like pool, remain lacking (a proposal for a recreational centre has reportedly been submitted to management). Engineering students do not have access to computers, at this time, to use as a resource. Internet access not available yet but in the pipeline for 2005.
- No access to the Internet (please refer to the ICDL-related developments concerning provisioning to students at Vryheid campus mentioned above).
- Too few toilets for students, at Vryheid in particular. (This situation is being addressed as part of building extensions and refurbishing as noted above).
- Bursaries still lacking.
- Information about college matters and developments not available.
- Proposed: a campus radio station to enhance information sharing.
- Racial groupings have by and large remained separated. It was pointed out, however, that the main reasons for this is because of language barriers and, very importantly, the absence of cultural and sporting activities on campus which could serve as a bonding power.
- Very positive relations exist between students and staff as well as management. A notable increase in access to and support from staff members has reportedly been occurring, for example, in supporting entrepreneurial activity through assisting students with the development of business plans.

3.10 Budgeting

Overall satisfaction was expressed with implemented budgeting template and its workings. (Aspects of this function area will be taken up under 'characteristic' 9 in Section 4, below.)

4. THIRD FORMATIVE IMPACT RATING

Vision and Mission

1. Practices guided by a clear institutional vision

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING							3			
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING							4			
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING							5			
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No Vision or Mission statement	Mission and Vision developed, but have no strong influence on practice			Some shared vision, with some influence on practice, but not shared by all staff			Staff and management share a common vision. This informs their practice.			
0	1	2	3	4	5		7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 6; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 6.

Comment on Rating

More filtering down of the 'big picture' has occurred with regard to where the college is going and everyone's place in it – less confusion around how the 'bits' fit together and therefore a 'greater reality'.

Whilst such a shift in awareness would imply a possible shift to 'strong' status, in contrast to six months ago, the reason for not doing so is that it is felt that there is still a sense of a gap (although fast closing) between management and staff at campus level with regard to actual buy-in. At the same time there is no doubt that an internalised/grounded sense of the 'big picture' will be manifest at all levels of staff by the time of the next visit.

2. Inculcation of a value system throughout the institution

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No cohesive value system in operation	Value system exists but not shared by everyone so that value conflict occurs			Increasing cohesion around a common set of values, although conflict sometimes occurs			Staff, management and learners share common values and act in accordance with these values			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.

Comment on Rating

Declared values as opposed to values actually 'practiced'. Increased sensitization towards and willingness to deal with conflict when it arises. By all accounts workshop attendance has contributed significantly to attitudinal change, increased cooperation/engagement and improvement in relations among staff across campuses has become evident through workshop – an increased sense of 'commonality'. A 'culture of excellence' and commitment to delivery at some sites not yet an entrenched institutional culture. At inter-campus management level trust relationships and an ensuing sense of (comfortable) collegiality would appear to be lacking.

Leadership and Management

3. Well-functioning systems of governance, including college councils and academic boards

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No functioning system of governance	Some representative structures in place, but mostly in name only. Weak or uneven participation and minimal effectiveness as decision-making bodies. No clear demarcation between governance and operational management roles and responsibilities			Representative structures in place and starting to operate effectively, but participation still uneven. Demarcation between governance and operational management roles and responsibilities require further clarification			All representatives fully integrated and involved in governance. Effective decision-making, with clear demarcation between governance and operational management roles and responsibilities			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

CO-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: no rating.

Comment on Rating

Mixed feelings were expressed as to the degree of clarity with regard to Council's understanding of its role and the extent of its involvement with operational matters. Tensions among Council constituencies would appear to compromise its functioning to some degree and the level of councillor participation in the portfolios appears not to be optimal yet. Campus managers are reportedly 'coming more into themselves' with regard to participation. It continues to remain 'invisible' from a campus level perspective (staff and students), which is the reason why the Vryheid lecturers did not feel they are sufficiently informed to rate council's level of functioning.

As described under sub-section 3.5, the Academic Board has (at last) been 'resurrected' but has not yet started functioning. However, concern has been expressed about the level of expertise among board members in view of the specialised and critical functions this structure has to perform. Only time will tell how effective it will be or become in executing its role on a sustained basis.

The SRC, still effectively operates in terms of campus structures only since the distance factor undermines the establishment and functioning of college executive committee. Although the campus SRCs have been exposed to capacity-building interventions the effectiveness and impact of their initiatives and activities differ significantly across campuses in relation to the degree of support they receive from and the nature of the relations with their respective campus managements – as noted in sub-section 3.9.

4. *Effective institutional leadership*

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING							6			
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING							6			
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING							7			
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No leadership system in operation	Weak institutional leadership, with general lack of understanding of national and provincial policies. Little or no democratic participation and shared decision-making			Institutional leadership growing in strength and clarity of purpose. Continual building of culture of democratic participation and shared decision-making			Strong institutional leadership, with clear understanding of national and provincial policies. Culture of democratic participation and shared decision-making			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers 7; Vryheid Mgt: 7; Vryheid Lecturers: 7.

Comment on Rating

Campus and unit managers expressed all round approval of the quality of leadership provided by the rector and the nature of his ways. Appreciation was also expressed for the excessive load and responsibilities he is carrying in the absence of a second tier management corps and having to constantly deal with 'side-issues' which demand a lot of time and energy (over and above the demands with regard to college development and functioning), for example, all the 'fall-out' around the incorporation of Emandleni, as noted in sub-section 3.1. Satisfaction was also expressed with the level of guidance and support being received from central office (portfolio) units, which are performing at (increasingly) higher levels and which have also become more accessible as a result of increasingly reaching out and interacting with campus managements and structures. However, central office was 'castigated' for not always following up on requests from campuses in some instances. The portfolio committees, on the other hand, are not functioning at sufficiently high levels – though there are notable exceptions, like the finance committee – in order to provide the required outputs in support of guidance and decision-making.

At the campus level relations among the campus heads are problematical as noted in sub-section 3.6, a state of affairs which compromises interaction and cooperation (such issues around resistance and lack of cooperation also extends to relations between central office units, the SSU in particular, and certain campus managers, as described in sub-section 3.9). Consequently, campuses essentially still operate as separate units. The only mechanism through which campus managers interact around management and decision-making issues appear to be at the bi-weekly meetings of senior college management. The nature and extent to which participative leadership and management practices occur at campus level differ widely across the sites. The only site where significant change has occurred in this regard is at Vryheid where, as noted, the deputy campus manager has taken over in an acting capacity. In fact, the change is dramatic – it will be remembered that the previous report made reference to the highly strained (oppressive) relations between the campus manager and staff (both management and lecturing staff). The staff morale and commitment levels have turned around completely – these same staff members now revel in having been 'freed up' and being able to express their creativity and expertise, which is manifested in all kinds of innovative developments. As one lecturer put it: "It is now a pleasure to come to work."

It has been noted earlier that SRC leadership and initiatives are still being compromised as a result of the degree of support these structures receive from campus managements and other infrastructural constraints, which differ significantly from campus to campus. The lack of an integrated SRC structure and the reasons for this were also referred to.

Although significant changes have occurred and other aspects pertaining to leadership and management have been consolidated it is felt that, on balance, the rating should remain the same at this time.

5. Effective management systems

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No management information system	Management information systems (MIS) exist or are being developed, but are not operational. Decisions are often taken without adequate access to information			Some planning and decision-making informed by up-to-date management information, but not yet fully operational at all levels			Up-to-date management information systems inform planning and decision making at all levels			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 6.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>All sites, except the recently incorporated Emandleni, are now running on Coltech and various programmes have been installed and introduced to generate the required information to make analysis and decision-making possible in support of management functions. However, most of these systems are not fully operational at this time since various shortcomings still compromise their development and/or efficacy or responsiveness, for example –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ❑ most systems are still too slow and cannot (yet) respond to the needs of management(s), for example, reportedly no response has yet followed on the skills audit conducted; ❑ the quality of information is not yet of a required level to make them effective – notable exceptions are the LPU and the Finance Unit; ❑ systems are not yet sufficiently integrated and access to centralised systems is also still limited in the case of campuses – a major contributing factor to the latter in this regard stems from the lack of a wide-area-network, which will bridge the distance factor in respect of the Nongoma campuses; ❑ systems, particularly the effective ones like finance, are still too 'person/individual-based' because the required level of expertise (and associated confidence?) levels of all unit/administrative staff have not been sufficiently developed; ❑ no feedback provided with regard to draft policies submitted in support of new system development – Vryheid campus (which has always prided itself with regard to the range and integrity of its management systems), in particular, is significantly effected in this regard. <p>It would appear that a lot of effort and energy have been going into systems development in the period under review. Because of the above constraints and shortcomings at this time, the benefits of these management information systems, at an operational level, are not yet manifest.</p>										

Knowledge Sharing

6. Effective vertical knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										7
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No sharing and learning between national DoE, provincial DoE, college and campus	Limited flow of information between levels of the FET system. Miscommunication occurs or information arrives too late for effective action			Reasonable communication flows between levels of the FET system, but room for further improvement			Effective upward and downward flow of communication, which enhances performance at all levels of the FET system.			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 6; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 6.

Comment on Rating

Sub-section 3.1.2 focussed extensively on the current status of information sharing and communication up and down the chain of FET constituents, for example improvement between the pDoE and the college, across campuses and colleges in the province (thanks largely to the Best Practices Forum), between central office and the campuses ('road shows; etc.) and, in the case of Vryheid campus, dramatically improved engagement and information sharing (two-way) between management and staff (and between the SSU co-ordinator and the SRC).

In addition, interviewees also reported that communication between SESD and pDoE has improved, as measured in terms of improved coordination in the scheduling etc. of workshops, which constituted a significant problem in the past (as recorded in all previous reports).

Despite some blockages which prevail, more so at the level of campus management, an overall improvement in status is evident.

7. Effective horizontal knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces	Minimal sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces - mostly a case of 'each to their own'			Emerging culture of sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces. Co-operation rather than competition becoming more evident.			Optimal sharing and learning between campuses and colleges, in and across provinces - to the mutual benefit of all			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.

Comment on Rating

A considerable increase in engagement and information sharing across the three campus sites and other colleges in the province primarily through SESD workshop attendance (with particular reference to post level 1 lecturers) and, since August, through the Best Practices Forum committees – as well as visits to and from other colleges (for example, Tshwane North was referred to in earlier sections in connection with the establishment of the Business Unit at Vryheid campus). In some instances such interaction/networking and exposure take on the form of 'positive competition': "How do you do it?" or "How do you get it right?" (Zulu-English speaking KwaGqikazi and Nongoma lecturers raised the point of information sharing at workshops being compromised due to the fact that sometimes inputs are made in Afrikaans in group discussions) the rector also mentioned that non-SESD colleges have been approaching Mthashana with requests for information, about the LPU and SSU in particular.

However, the distance factor between Vryheid and Nongoma and the attitudes/relations between campus managers (as noted under sub-section 3.6) to some measure prevent such interaction and associated cooperation from being sustained. In addition, resignations from the BPF committees also occur as a result of existing ('historical') demands and pressures not allowing staff additional time (and energy) to sustain such involvement.

8. Effective external knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			

No effort made to keep business and community stakeholders up-to-date about developments in FET, to market services, or obtain feedback	Flow of information between FET college/campus sporadic and <i>ad hoc</i> . Business and community stakeholders derive little benefit from having a college/campus in the vicinity – although some exceptions. Limited marketing.			Increasing emphasis on knowledge and information sharing between college/campus and wider community. Results not yet optimal but dissemination and feedback loops improving			Ongoing communication with and feedback from external stakeholders. College/campus perceived to actively seek suggestions, value stakeholder contributions and, in their turn disseminate knowledge and information on a regular basis, including active marketing of services			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 7; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.

Comment on Rating

Since a Marketing and Communication Unit is not yet established, most of the liaising and information dissemination and gathering initiatives and activities are conducted by the LPU (and to a limited extent the SSU) – in some cases in conjunction with campus managers (as outlined in sub-section 3.3). Linkages not followed-up and sustained to a sufficient degree by some campus managers. It was noted that, from a campus perspective, such linking and information sharing processes are slowed down because of the centralisation of the communication function – proposed publicity or outreach activities first have to be vetted by central office.

Institutional Health

9. The establishment and maintenance of financial health

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
College/Campus in weak financial situation, with no strategy in place to improve the situation	College/campus in weak financial situation, but starting to remedy the situation. Budgeting, monitoring and credit control still ineffective			Financial situation not yet stable, but improving steadily. Budgeting, monitoring and credit control systems in place - not yet fully effective			Healthy financial scenario established and maintained			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 6; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 7.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>In sub-sections 3.1 and 3.10 capacity-building and systemic developments were outlined with regard to the Finance Unit and Budget Committee. By all accounts the instituted systems, procedures and control mechanisms have improved significantly and are on the whole working well, for example, claims are speedily processed, feedback is provided about budget allocation and prioritized expenditure (and passed on to all levels of staff – unlike in the past where none such information was forthcoming, an issue raised time and again by Vryheid staff). Some problems associated with the implementation of systems, for example non-payments, are reportedly occur from time to time. The Finance Unit is essentially driven by one highly competent, dynamic and dedicated person (seconded from Vryheid campus) and burn-out has become a very real occupational hazard because of relentless pressure stemming from an excessive workload and responsibilities.</p> <p>It was noted in sub-section 3.1 that the complete lack of finance and related administrative systems, policy and procedures with regard to the newly 'inherited' Emandleni and associated practices (currently being investigated by the auditors) which stemmed from it are at this time placing enormous additional load and strain on Mthashana's personnel and resources.</p> <p>Considering what has been achieved during the period under review – what has actually been put in place and the significant improvement in delivery that has been sustained for some time already – it is felt that 'strong status' rating is justified, even though it might appear that some degree of system fragility can be attached to the present set-up and the impact of Emandleni's incorporation on existing systems and personnel. (In retrospect, the previous 6-rating was probably unrealistically high.)</p>										

10. Adequate Infrastructure

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Inadequate capacity in terms of physical and administrative infrastructure	Physical and administrative infrastructure not geared for innovation and expansion. Drastic improvement required.			Physical and administrative infrastructure allows some scope for innovation and expansion - further improvement required			Well-developed physical and administrative infrastructure - in line with current and anticipated expansion			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 4.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>It is felt that, overall, the constraints and limitations imposed by the college's physical infrastructure on programme and administrative functioning essentially remain unchanged, despite the structural developments at Vryheid campus and associated scope it opens up for (proposed) programme delivery described in earlier sections. The conditions and constraints pertaining to staffing also remain largely unchanged (understaffed, overstretched, job insecurity in relation to the many temporary staff, etc.).</p>										

11. Enhanced human resource capacity

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Human resource capacity totally inadequate	Some expertise, but not adequate. Intensive effort required to build capacity			College/Campus staff mostly have the expertise required, but further enhancement required. Capacity still uneven			All college/campus staff have the necessary expertise to perform their roles. Ongoing capacity enhancement.			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 6; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>All Vryheid staff have now received assessor training and about half have completed their Portfolios of Evidence but KwaGqikazi staff are still lagging behind (no mentor training nor verifier training have yet occurred). The initial impact of staff exposure to the OBE approach and methodology was referred to in sub-section 3.7. A skills audit of all college staff has been conducted, as noted in an earlier section, including Emandleni staff. In view of the large scale capacity-building interventions envisaged for Emandleni staff it is felt that, on balance, the previous rating should remain unchanged.</p>										

12. Quality Assurance System

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No QA system in place	QA system in process of being developed, but benefits still poorly understood			QA system developed, but not fully implemented. Still some reservations about benefits			QA system fully operational. Understood and accepted by all. Impacts positively on performance			

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 4; Vryheid Lecturers: 4.										
<i>Comment on Rating</i>										
Mthashana still does not have a functioning QA system in place and this state of affairs is viewed as a critical shortcoming in its ongoing impact on college delivery (a draft policy was submitted but no comeback has yet occurred and no Departmental policy is available). The college only joined the Best Practices Forum in August for the first time. (The Mthashana representative to the QA committee is a senior lecturer from Vryheid with a keen interest in QA. She is highly impressed with the Best Practices Forum and the QA portfolio committee in particular. However, she lectures 19 periods a week so there are implications and suitable arrangements would therefore have to be made. It was pointed out that most other colleges have dedicated QA personnel or task teams in place. It was further suggested in one focus group that the bi-weekly senior management meetings could provide an effective mechanism for sharing of best practice across the college). A long road therefore still lies ahead.										

Responsiveness

13. Good relationships with business

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No relationships with business	Minimal/ad hoc partnerships. Stronger focus on relationship building required			Increasing focus on relationship building to establish partnerships which are mutually beneficial			Formal and informal partnerships, with mutual use of resources and benefits to all partners			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 4.										
<i>Comment on Rating</i>										
The declining business and industry sectors in the Mthashana region and the limited opportunities for the college with regard to partnership building have been referred to in all previous reports. However, some developments are beginning to occur albeit in limited ways, for example the 'green beans partnership project started with BioSwiss (Pty) Ltd. in the Jozini area. (Please also refer to comments in Section 3 and under characteristic 14, below, in relation to Mthashana as 'rural model').										

14. Good relationships with local communities

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										5
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										6
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No relationships with local communities	Minimal/ad hoc community contact. Little attempt to build relations with poor or disadvantaged sectors of the community			Expansion of community contact to include both advantaged and disadvantaged sectors. Increase in efforts to build relationships			Wide-ranging community support with college/campus an integral part of community activities			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 7; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 6; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 6.

Comment on Rating

Relationship and partnership building with communities and NGOs occur almost exclusively through the very dynamic LPU, often in the face of major constraints and sacrifice. The extensive range of such initiatives has been recorded under sub-section 3.3 above. However, as mentioned earlier, initial links are not always sufficiently followed up at campus level. In addition, it will also be remembered that a Marketing and Communication Unit is not yet in place.

This characteristic will mostly definitely acquire 'strong' rating status by the time the next visit occurs in six months time.

15. Good relationships with other state bodies

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No relationships with other state bodies	Some informal contact/discussions but strong partnerships still to be developed			Increase in partnership building, but not yet well-established at all levels			Active partnership building and collaboration at local, provincial and national level			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 4.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>Most such type linkages have till now been occurring in the Nongoma area, for instance the Benedictine Hospital, SAPS and Nongoma municipality, as mentioned under sub-section 3.3. However, follow-up and implementation has of associated programmes have not yet occurred on a significant scale.</p>										

16. The development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										2
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No involvement in learnerships	Some informal contact/discussions on possible learnerships			Some implementation of learnerships, but still in the early stages			Significant implementation of learnerships. A major focus area with ongoing evaluation as part of the process			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 4; Vryheid Lecturers: 4.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>From earlier sub-sections it is evident that a significant level of activity and developments in the last six months have occurred in relation to learnerships, for example, the acquisition of unit standards, the acquisition and/or development (on limited scale) of learning material, provisional accreditation of four engineering workshops, and assessor training. However no new learnerships have been registered or implemented and the above initiatives and activities are viewed as constituting the final stages in the preparation for roll-out of proposed learnership programmes scheduled for the beginning of 2005.</p>										

17. The development, provision and evaluation of programmes for the development of small and micro enterprises (SME)

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										3
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										3
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No SME provision	Learners have some exposure to principles of entrepreneurship and SME development, but limited links between theory and practice. Staff members have limited expertise in this area.			Entrepreneurship and preparation for self-employment receiving increasing attention. Staff expertise being developed and entrepreneurship included in a range of programmes			Wide range of opportunities in place to prepare learners and community members for self-employment. Entrepreneurship an integral part of all programmes, with strong links between theory and practice			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Mgt-Council: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 4; Vryheid Lecturers: 4.										
<p><i>Comment on Rating</i></p> <p>Previously very little, if any, formal entrepreneurship and self-employment training occurred (outside the theoretical aspects covered as part of the Business Studies 'NATED' curriculum). This is set to change once the Business Unit comes on-stream in a few months time (please refer to its proposed programming under Section 2.).</p> <p>It will also be remembered from the previous report that an entrepreneurship training component is accommodated in the approach adopted to all skills training offerings (short courses/skills programmes) which is increasingly being implemented (please see under 18 below).</p>										

18. The development, provision and evaluation of short courses/ skills programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										5
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No short courses	Some informal discussions on possibility of running short courses. Range of needs and possible take-up still to be established			Some short courses introduced but further enhancement required to establish reputation as a provider			Wide range of short courses available. Strategy in place to respond to needs as they arise. Good provider reputation established			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 5; Vryheid Lecturers: 3.

Comment on Rating

The increasing extent of short course /skills programme provisioning through the skills centres as well as through partnership projects was focussed on at length under sub-section 3.3. On this basis it might seem that a higher rating is warranted. However, the researcher's decision to allocate a rating of (5) is influenced by the following factors –

- i. the previous ratings are, in retrospect, viewed as being unrealistically high, for example, the baseline and first impact study ratings should probably both have been (3) whilst a (4) rating in the case of the second impact study would have been more realistic. This type of 'readjustment-in-hindsight' is not uncommon in long term studies of this nature as perspective deepens.
- ii. The range of programmes offered is fairly limited.
- iii. Apart from computer training and ABET offerings (limited in extent) no other short courses are being offered at campuses. This present reality is contrary to the vision of campuses being 'hives of activity' with a range of short courses being offered throughout the day and after-hours, as per 'community college' concept, and reflects an ongoing shortcoming in campus-based programme initiatives. (Programme development is not the sole prerogative of the LPU and, in any event, this shortcoming has historical roots pre-dating the establishment of the LPU)

In the case of Vryheid campus the situation is 'circumstantially' different. With the Vryheid skills centre quite nearby, Vryheid campus does not offer the skills-centre-type short courses (as decided by the LPU manager) and will re-focus on slightly higher level skills, for example, the envisaged Business Unit programme offerings. Other factors included the infrastructural constraints (lack of venues) as well as the fact that public transport to the campus is not available since the campus is situated in a residential area.

Teaching and Learning

19. Functioning curriculum development processes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Curriculum static – same as always	Ad hoc revision of curriculum. Little innovation and limited staff expertise			Increasing focus on curriculum development, but expertise still being developed. NQF requirements still a challenge			Ongoing curriculum improvement and adaptation, linked to regular evaluation. NQF requirements actively addressed			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 5; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.

Comment on Rating
It is evident from the earlier sections that a significant degree of activity has been occurring as a build-up to learnership implementation in 2005, as well as the introduction of OBE methodology in respect of NATED programming. Whilst initially most unit standard-based learning material will initially be sourced, actual learning programme material development/customisation has also started to a limited extent, for example, the proposed Business Unit programmes. Increased expertise development in this regard has also occurred. At this time, however, ongoing staffing constraints are limiting the extent of such activities.

20. Quality curricular delivery

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING	5
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING	6
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING	4

No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
Poor quality learning and teaching. No links between theory and practice and no attempt to produce well-rounded learners	Weak reputation as a provider. Emphasis on improving examination results, with little attention paid to quality of teaching and learning. Holistic learner development not regarded as important.			Quality of teaching and learning receiving increased attention - focus not only on examination results. Holistic learner development encouraged. Relation between theory and practice receiving attention			Quality of teaching and learning a major focus. Strong links between theory and practice and holistic approach to learner development. Enrichment activities in place. Good reputation as a provider			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.

Comment on Rating
Current teaching and learning practices are still essentially results-orientated/driven and the quality of delivery within this frame differs across campuses, as a result of historical reasons reported on previously. SEDS Programme interventions till now have had some impact (more at the level of awareness raising about alternative approaches and methodology since implementation is hampered by the various infrastructural constraints reported on previously). However, internal initiatives towards capacity building interventions, for example, mentoring offered to KwaGqikazi Business Studies lecturers by Vryheid campus (KwaGqikazi lecturers to spend short periods of time at Vryheid observing and co-presenting lessons) did not get off the ground because of complex/difficult relations between campus managers, as reported earlier. A high degree of enthusiasm is developing around the implementation of OBE modules. At Vryheid campus, the theory-practice balance is set to be dramatically improved through the workplace simulation facilities (already operational), brought about by the establishment of the Business Unit, with particular reference to N6 Business Studies students (as reported under Section 2).

21. Well-functioning staff development processes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING							3			
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING							4			
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING							5			
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No staff development process in place	Weak staff development and appraisal processes. Staff trained on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis, with limited opportunity to express their needs. Staff often inadequately prepared for new implementation			Increased focus on staff development and appraisal. System for on systematic review of needs still being put in place. Staff mostly prepared for new implementation.			Ongoing staff development and appraisal an integral part of Institutional activity. Staff confident that they will be trained on new processes before they are implemented			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers : 6.

Comment on Rating

Please refer to sub-section 3.7 for a description of developments in this regard. In addition, it should be noted that the LPU manager is concerned about the status of assessor training - the Engineering staff are lagging far behind whilst many of the Business Studies lecturers have not completed their Portfolios - which holds potentially critical implications for imminent implementation of learnerships. Finally, whilst the skills audit that was conducted represents a significant development as far as reviewing of skills is concerned, the continued lack of an established performance appraisal system and associated practices constitute a major source of concern for managers.

Learner Support

22. The development, implementation and evaluation of academic support programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING	6
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING	4

SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No academic support programme in place	Learners obtain academic support on an <i>ad hoc</i> basis			Educators provide support to individuals. Bridging courses introduced			Dedicated person and a functioning academic support policy in place			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 3.

Comment on Rating
Programmes, resources, facilities, etc. (or the limited nature and/or lack thereof) in support of students' academic development and functioning were focussed on in depth in sub-section 3.9. The overall sense is that at implementation and operational levels nothing has really changed, for example, PLATO is not operational, resource centres and study facilities are still lacking, study skills training not offered, tutoring not yet instituted – support from lecturers on an individual basis therefore appears to remain the only real support available to students at this time.

23. The development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS support programmes

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										4
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No HIV/ Aids policy	Some input given to learners by campus or outside people on <i>ad hoc</i> basis			Educators provide information and support to individuals on request			Dedicated person and a functioning HIV/Aids policy in place			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 5; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 5.

Comment on Rating
Based on developments as recorded under sub-section 3.9 (like peer counselling), the overall status, once again, remains fairly static at the level of delivery. Initiatives and activities (occurring predominantly at Vryheid campus) still appear to be essentially focussed on advocacy and the raising of awareness. Only one case has reportedly been dealt with till now, which could indicate that students do not yet feel free to approach counsellors or staff with problems and concerns (not necessarily related to themselves). An integrated policy is still not in place – however, progress in this regard is occurring through the Best Practices Forum.

The reason why the rating remains the same as last time despite evidence of some increased activity is that the previous rating really have been a (4) – it was too much tied to the establishment of the SSU and proposed initiatives and not sufficiently tied to the reality on the ground.

24. The development, implementation and evaluation of guidance and counselling systems

COLLEGE BASELINE RATING										5
FIRST IMPACT STUDY RATING										5
SECOND IMPACT STUDY RATING										4
No evidence	Weak Characteristic			Emerging Characteristic			Strong Characteristic			
No guidance or counselling	Some input given to learners by campus or outside people on <i>ad hoc</i> basis			Educators provide some individual guidance and counselling on request			Dedicated person and functioning guidance and counselling system in place			
0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10

Mgt-Council: 6; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Mgt: 4; KwaGqikazi-Nongoma Lecturers: 4; Vryheid Mgt: 6; Vryheid Lecturers: 6.

Comment on Rating

The major developments over the last six months in support of guidance and counselling provisioning, for example, the three-day workshop attended by SSU personnel and campus SSU coordinators, the instituting of the Wellness Centre pilot at Vryheid campus and the commencement of counselling sessions, etc. were described in sub-section 3.9. Whilst these developments are very significant, at this time they could be viewed as still constituting 'preparation processes' in support of programme/service roll-out across all delivery sites since no real overall impact has been effected by them.

5. OVERALL ASSESSMENT

5.1 Comparative ratings (baseline, first and second impact studies)

The following symbols or keys appearing in the 'dimensions and characteristics' column denote change in status of characteristics over the last six months (3rd vs 2nd impact studies):

* No change in status

> Improvement in status

< Decline in status.

	DIMENSIONS AND CHARACTERISTICS	BASELINE RATING	1 ST IMPACT RATING	2 ND IMPACT RATING	3 RD IMPACT RATING
	Vision and mission				
1.	Practices guided by a clear institutional vision	3	4	5	6>
2.	Inculcation of a value system throughout the institution	3	3	4	5>
	Leadership and management				
3.	Well-functioning systems of governance, including college councils and academic boards	4	4	5	5*
4.	Effective institutional leadership	6	6	7	7*
5.	Effective management systems	4	4	5	5*
	Knowledge sharing				
6.	Effective vertical knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system	7	5	5	6>
7.	Effective horizontal knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system	3	4	5	6>
8.	Effective external knowledge sharing and learning in the FET system	4	5	6	6*
	Institutional health				
9.	The establishment and maintenance of financial health	4	5	6	7>
10.	Adequate infrastructure	3	3	4	4*
11.	Enhanced human resource capacity	4	5	6	5<
12.	Quality assurance system	4	4	4	4*
	Responsiveness				
13.	Good relationships with business	3	4	4	5>
14.	Good relationships with local communities	5	6	6	6*
15.	Good relationships with other state bodies	4	5	5	5*
16.	The development, provision and evaluation of learnership programmes	2	3	3	5>
17.	The development, provision and evaluation of programmes for the development of small and micro enterprises (SME)	3	3	3	4>
18.	The development, provision and evaluation of short courses/ skills programmes	5	5	5	5*

Teaching and learning					
19.	Functioning curriculum development processes	4	5	5	6>
20.	Quality curricular delivery	5	6	4	5>
21.	Well-functioning staff development processes	3	4	5	6>
Learner support					
22.	The development, implementation and evaluation of academic support programmes	6	4	4	4*
23.	The development, implementation and evaluation of HIV/AIDS support programmes	4	4	5	5*
24.	The development, implementation and evaluation of guidance and counselling systems	5	5	4	5>

The ratings on 12 characteristics remained **unchanged** (as opposed to 10 at the *second impact study*); the ratings on nine (9) characteristics have **increased** (as opposed to 12 at the *second impact study*), and the rating on one (1) characteristic **decreased** (as opposed to two (2) at the *second impact study*). One could therefore interpret the overall picture as reflecting a nett gain of three.

At a strictly statistical or quantitative level, the above table would indicate that the college's performance in the last six months (March to September) across the seven dimensions and associated 24 characteristics or indicators of institutional structural dynamics and functioning reflects an overall improvement by three points. But a statistical perspective is limited in what it tells about the complete picture since is focused on indicating overall patterns and trends, at the cost of a layered and textured perspective – to some extent provided by the descriptions and comments in Sections 1-3 pertaining to developments, issues and problems – some historical and others newly emerged. As noted in the previous report, it is important to keep the following points in mind when reflecting on the ratings:

- The final judgement call in rating allocation rests with the researcher, based on overall evidence gathered through interviews conducted (individuals and groups) with all college/campus stakeholders, observations and perceptions, etc.
- A more institutional-critical ('honest') perspective tends to develop progressively with time and ratings tend to 'drop', not because the status of a particular college aspect *actually* declined, but because ratings become more realistic and balanced.
- It should also be remembered that the ratings do not reflect 'in-process' developments (leading up to the implementation of programmes, systems, policy, etc.) because they are not tangible and therefore not 'measurable' in terms of the instrument (rating scale) used (and, as such, do not convey the complete and nuanced picture of Mthashana's overall growth and development at this time).

5.2 Key findings

Key challenges

Starting with the merger and restructuring processes, it is evident that previously unresolved core issues as well as new developments continue to frustrate and undermine overall college functioning in various areas and at different levels. Most obvious would be:

- The continued moratorium on permanent appointments adds additional burdens on college and campus managements as well staff further down. The persisting lack of a second tier management corps is particularly undermining in this regard. Lack of capacity of critical management units like the LPU – in view of the huge geographical area to be serviced – places disproportionate workloads on current staff in that they have to perform multiple roles at any given time, which distracts them from their core business.
- The huge impact the (unsolicited) incorporation of Emandleni skills campus continues to have on Mthashana – on management, staff, system
- Critical institutional shortcomings with regard to infrastructure and facilities which impact on absolutely all areas of college development and functioning remains the single most critical constraint at this time.

At the level of institutional development and functioning, many of the areas in which lack of progress or development was recorded previously continue to remain a challenge (the reasons were discussed in Section 4 and will not be repeated here), for example –

- Systems development and implementation (policy and procedures), with particular reference to quality assurance and staff appraisal (as part of staff ongoing development processes in general).
- Programme and curriculum development and implementation/delivery and related accreditation of workshops and other facilities – due to constraints in relation to staffing and funding/resources.
- Negative relations among campus managers, which compromise cooperation in various areas, for example, staff development initiatives which do not get off the ground – as well as lack of communication and engagement between certain campus managers and their staff.
- Student support, with particular reference to academic support.

Key achievements

It is clear that, in spite of the constraints and circumstances which continue to frustrate and limit Mthashana's overall development and functioning, progress has occurred in various areas of structural development and functioning. For example:

- Leadership.
- Refocusing and operationalising of strategic vision and objectives and increasingly refining and operationalising its 'mandate', with particular reference to enhanced levels of skills centre functioning and partnership projects in support of poverty alleviation through community empowerment.
- Systems and policy development, e.g. Finance Unit.
- The dynamic and committed functioning and achievements of the LPU – forging linkages and partnerships, dealing with Setas, programme planning and development and associated infrastructure development, support to campuses with regard to programming, etc.
- Communication and interaction between central office and campuses.
- Knowledge sharing and cooperation across campuses and with other colleges.
- Joining and participation in the Best Practices Forum.
- Preparedness for learnership implementation – progress with regard to assessor training (Business Studies staff), programme planning and development/customisation, structural development (e.g. Business Unit).

-oOo-

