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**The role of Linkages and
Programme Units in building better
relationships between FET
Colleges and the world of work**

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Introduction

This research report discusses the establishment of specialized units within FET Colleges that focus on innovation and development issues, and that assist colleges to be more responsive to their external environments (which include local communities, other educational institutions, local industries and business, and municipality and government bodies). Such units are meant to do research, capture and analyse data, and feed this data back into programme development processes within colleges with the hope that this will increase the number of students securing employment upon course completion. For the purposes of this report, such units are referred to as Linkages and Programme Units (LPUs).

The report provides a framework by which to understand the emergence of specialized structures like LPUs in FET college settings. Given the national policy focus on making FET Colleges more 'responsive' to the needs of employers, students and communities, the report explores the kinds of roles that such units generally play in facilitating more effective interaction between college role players and their main stakeholders.

Chapter One provides a context by which to understand the emergence and roles of LPUs, focusing on the UK experience to underline some characteristics that such units should perhaps embrace. Chapter Two comprises of four case studies that individually decode the particular institutional practices that emerge from the interaction between four college LPUs in the Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal and their external environments. Chapter Three synthesizes the findings of the first two chapters and highlights some implications that the sector as a whole needs to be cognizant of when emphasising the need for closer links between colleges and the world of work.

Chapter One: Establishing specialized units to build bridges between colleges and external environments

1.1 Background to study

The focus on specialized units (like Linkages and Programme Units - LPUs) within FET Colleges has its genesis within the development of the DANIDA - Department of Education Support to Education and Skills Development (SESD) Programme in 2002. It was determined in 2002 that Denmark would support South Africa in the FET college sector in the period 2002 and 2006 through the SESD Programme, with the main development objective being the increasing of male and female employability in the sector. In this regard, the predetermined focus on employability was meant to shape and initiate the improved abilities of colleges to prepare students more effectively for the world of work, primarily through the strengthening the FET College system at a variety of levels.

The SESD Programme provides funding and support to seven of the 50 FET Colleges in South Africa. These seven colleges were selected after negotiations and discussions between the national Department of Education, the Provincial Departments of Education and Danida, and are located in the Western Cape (2), Kwazulu Natal (2) and the North West (3).

Since initiated in 2002, the SESD Programme has contributed to the piloting of a number of 'models of practice' in areas that it is hoped will inform subsequent institutional development in the sector as a whole. The study on which this report is based investigated one such area of 'practice', namely the role that Linkages and Programme Units (LPUs) play within four FET Colleges in creating new business and initiating and maintaining relationships with their external environments, particularly the world of work.

Notably, the original intention of the study (on Linkages and Programme Units- LPUs) was to capture the beginning stages of LPU development in four FET colleges and to analyse the different implementation strategies that were followed. In that regard, the reason for targeting just four of the seven SESD-funded colleges was that LPUs had not yet been formally (in terms of their being operational) established in the three FET Colleges in the North West by the time the project proposal and budget was submitted in early 2004.

The project plan had a very particular developmental dimension, whereby researchers initially gathered information from four colleges (through site visits) about the establishment of LPUs, workshopped this gathered information with LPU staff from the four colleges, and then prepared LPU staff to (themselves) present these findings at the FET Annual Conference in November 2004. The objective was to get LPU staff to critically reflect on and better understand their own practices and to then share these ideas with fellow colleagues. It was hoped that this would benefit the rest of the FET Colleges as they grappled with how to build relationships with their external environments. The purpose was also to assist and inform processes within other FET colleges that had not yet established specialized units like LPUs.

The Department of Education however did not give the Danida project a slot in the November 2004 conference programme and the strategy to have the LPU staff present their findings to their contemporaries came to nought. It was subsequently decided to write a report that showed how the structures and functions of Linkages and Programme Units (LPUs) within SESD-funded FET colleges in the Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal were framed by the kinds of challenges experienced by the four colleges in initially interacting with their very different external environments. The idea was to also explore how infrastructural and contextual issues inform the kinds of provision and services that colleges individually provide.

Notably, the report was constrained from the outset by the too-early commencement of fieldwork within the four FET Colleges (given the need to prepare for the November 2004 conference) and by the fact that the study primarily captured the early stages of LPU development within the selected colleges. Nonetheless, it is possible to draw some important lessons from the data and information collected.

1.2 The main functions of established units of innovation and development in South Africa

Linkages and Programme Units (LPUs) are one of three specialised structures (the others being Student Support Units and Marketing and Communication Units) that the SESD Programme has funded since late 2003. LPUs were established to provide the SESD-funded colleges with a formal mechanism to engage with the needs of their external (especially work) partners, both for in-service training of the currently employed and in terms of the kinds of preparation given to those who are yet to enter the labour market.

SESD funding entails the bankrolling of Linkages and Programme Unit staff salaries (2-3 staff members) on a sliding scale over three years, as well as paying for the establishment of the initial working infrastructures in each of the seven college LPUs (buying of computers, desks, stationery and other support requirements).

Drawn from Powerpoint presentations by LPU staff from late 2003 and internal college documents about the establishment of LPUs¹ within the relevant four FET Colleges, the key functions of LPUs are meant to be:

- Linking up with businesses, communities and industries around identifying what are core skill needs of students and key requirements of external partners;
- Conducting research on the kinds of programmes and partnerships needed, and on subsequent programme development;
- Providing the key link between bodies like SETAs, SGBs and ETQAs;
- Supporting departments within colleges in the development of learning programmes and learning materials;
- Identifying and devising a staff developmental programme for identified staff members who are involved in developing the above programmes;
- Completing and maintaining a database about programmes, staff development needs, student take-up, and student and staff placement in industry; and
- Interacting with student support services within colleges to track students and confirm placement (LPU 'establishment' documents: 2004).

The key substance of LPU activity is managing the external environments of colleges, forging partnerships with external partners, and then initiating processes within colleges around programme development and the securing of relevant staff inputs and involvement to sustain resultant programmes. LPUs are thus the main interface between colleges, their external stakeholders and college role-players, and are expected to be pivotal to the growth and success of individual colleges.

LPU staff members of the four FET Colleges give significant attention to forming links with local businesses and industries, liaising with communities, government and

¹ It remains unclear how colleges drew up frameworks for the establishment of their respective LPUs. It is assumed that the Danida Chief Technical Advisor, Bent Holtzmann, and his Provincial Technical Advisors played a very pro-active role in assisting colleges think through what LPUs should entail and then to document this. This seems likely given that the respective college sildeshows and documents are very similar

municipal bodies about the kinds of skills deemed necessary in particular local environments, and drawing up formal arrangements to service these different partnerships.

A further purpose in overseeing the effective establishment and management of partnerships with external partners is to generate new business for colleges, especially around the learnership system. It is expected that not only will the availability of learnership programmes burgeon over the next few years [informed by the skills and training needs of particular sectors as highlighted by employers, training providers, and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs)], but that it will also displace a number of programmes within current college offerings.

In this regard, LPUs have the added responsibility, alongside securing employer buy-in and formalizing links between employers and students through learnership agreements, to commit employers to programmes that have broader ambitions for the student than just providing them with the specific competences for their immediate job.

Indeed, the main purpose of LPUs is to form dedicated groupings within FET College management structures, whose core duties are to co-ordinate and manage the demands of the various external groups and to link these to the kinds of programmes that individual FET Colleges provide. This expected awareness of the different needs of external role-players is linked to understandings of how FET Colleges are funded and the kinds of programmes that need to be offered at the various sites to ensure funding.

It is important to note however that the scripting of institutional visions and functions (like the above) require significant logistical work and input to be realized in practice. Also, templates for the various functions of a specialized structure like a LPU (as noted above) need to be adapted to the particular conditions of individual colleges.

As the report will show, many LPU functions are quite difficult to implement in contexts of underfunding and rampant external poverty, colleges invariably struggle to align their college visions and processes with the kinds of conditions that their particular external environments allow in such contexts, and conditions vary across colleges to the extent that it is difficult to point out common concerns. Indeed, from the four case studies provided in Chapter Two it is evident that not only are there clear comparative differences between the ways college LPUs operate in the provinces of the Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal but there are also quite stark operational differences between

college LPUs in the same province. These differences in operation are informed by divergent contextual environments, different college management structures, the existence of previous relationships with industries, the availability of internal college staff expertise to effectively engage with businesses and industries, and whether colleges have centralized or decentralized systems of programme delivery. The influence of the above contingent factors shape the ways in which individual college LPUs engage with their external environments in rather crucial ways.

The four case studies also illustrate the different kinds of contextual difficulties and obstacles that individual FET Colleges have to overcome in engaging with their external environments and in assisting students get better access to the world of work.

Before the four case studies are presented in the report below, it is important to explore in more detail how specialised units of innovation can assist FET Colleges to be 'responsive' to their external environments and to understand the kinds of processes that colleges need to engage with to successfully build bridges between colleges and the world of work. Using literature on the UK experience the sections below unpack some approaches (to the interaction of colleges with their external environments) that specialized units within the four case studies would be advised to try and follow, and some operational aspects that each of them ought to be embracing. The UK literature offers particular approaches to external environments that permit colleges in the UK to service the needs of a range of different stakeholders (of individual students, employers, local communities, and provincial and national economies), and ensure that the kinds of programmes that they offer lead directly to greater student employability.

This is particularly pertinent to the South African context given that a common lament everpresent in the literature on South African FET Colleges is that there is not enough communication and interaction between FET institutions and the world of work, and that colleges have to be learn how to be more responsive to the needs of national and local environments (McGrath et al 2003; Cosser et al 2003). Minister of Education, Kader Asmal, noted in 2002 that FET Colleges urgently need to develop the capacity to 'offer greater support to learners, innovative partnerships with business, industry and communities, and an even more responsive and flexible curriculum'. He warned that the failure to address these imperatives 'will result in colleges remaining mere aggregations of what existed before (particularly under apartheid)' (Asmal 2002: 7).

1.3 FET College responsiveness and institutional development- learning from the UK experience

Harwood (2001) notes that FET College sectors internationally are expected to be flexible and responsive, to work effectively with employers, to be sharply focused on meeting their skill needs, to be fast moving, and to be first to respond to changes in the economy; thereby giving both adults and young people access to the kind of enhanced vocational learning that will help them succeed in a modern economy (Unwin 2003: 1). This universal focus on the contribution of FET College sectors to employability issues within the economy is informed by the fact that the sector bridges the worlds of both education and work, and is generally able to support and influence both in quite dynamic ways.

Being an 'adaptive layer' within the education system (Gravatt & Silver 2000: 115) in which shifts in the worlds of work, politics and the family regularly intersect, FET Colleges have the potential to service a wide community of learners and to offer a broad range, type and level of programme. In so doing, FET Colleges service those who struggle at school, those who later in life decide to improve their qualifications, those who need retraining due to a loss of job or a downturn in the local economy that necessitates a change in job specification, and the pre-employed that need training and access to workplace experience before entering the labour market (Unwin 2003: 3).

FET Colleges generally service three key external groups, namely:

- Young people who require preparation for entry to employment or higher education
- Adults who require vocational training or updating, or who wish to pursue education as a leisure interest
- Employers who require education and training to maintain or improve the skills of their workforce

In practice, of course, colleges invariably break down each of these broad groups into more precise subsets, depending on their particular circumstances. What is notable however is that colleges are rarely able to cater to all the needs of the above constituencies, mainly because the interests of the three constituencies (and what they seek to achieve) are seldom the same (Davies 1999: 131). Thus, the first step in the process of being responsive is often to identify the main target grouping, or the specific

and limited needs of each of the target groups, and then to justify the choice in educational terms (Lumby 1999: 196).

In the main, colleges (internationally) are well aware that their different settings of education and training provision, the various formulations of institutions in urban, peri-urban and rural environments, and the diverse programmes that they provide in such contexts, shape the ways in which they can be 'responsive'. Invariably, colleges that normally do not have established links with industry and work, or colleges that traditionally produce graduates in trades or occupational areas that no longer have any local market (McGrath 2003: 15), rarely have the ability to appropriately adapt their provision according to changing economic and labour conditions.

Indeed, a key prerequisite for colleges to be 'responsive' in the contemporary period is understanding the individual settings of colleges and developing institutional capacity and flexibility to adapt to changes in local circumstances; thus providing 'clienteles' with educational programmes that focus on the kinds of skills that lead to continued employment, upward mobility and individual growth in their different economic environments. This is something that colleges have historically not had much competency to do (Lumby 1999: 197).

Waring (1999) notes with regard to the United Kingdom that every FET college in the contemporary period needs an armoury (of methods) whereby to gather reliable intelligence about external environments that include knowing the kinds of economic markets they serve and those they might potentially serve, as well as the social, economic and political contexts in which they operate. He notes that FET Colleges further need "management systems that ensure that the knowledge that is gained is effectively disseminated within the institution, so that the services colleges provide grow out of a sound understanding of local student and business needs" (Waring 1999: 181).

According to Waring (1999), the ways in which FET Colleges in the UK go about 'responding' to their external environments, and the operational mechanisms they use to manage this, are determined by:

- The extent and ability of colleges to 'sense' and serve the changing needs of relevant external environments (Michael, Holdaway and Young 1994), AND
- The kinds of formal internal college processes (especially around the development of college programmes) available within colleges that determine the

ways in which institutions meet the needs and demands of the various college stakeholders.

From the UK literature it is evident that for FET colleges to successfully 'respond' to external environments, they require either specialized units or some form of formal management structure that bring together the above two functions. In that respect, colleges that successfully 'respond' to their external environments have been found to embrace four basic principles/procedures, namely:

1. They work out the particularities of their external environment
2. They provide good strategic institutional planning
3. They manage to get college management and staff actively involved in understanding and interacting with their (college) external environments
4. They develop flexible and collaborative internal college processes and structures (Lumby & Foskett 1999)

The four procedures or principles are explored in more detail below. Importantly, the procedures inevitably intersect and overlap and thus should not be treated as wholly or separate processes.

1.3.1 Finding out what individual external environments allow

Bush (1999) asserts that the most important stage in college interaction with external environments in the UK is developing a sound understanding of what colleges seek to achieve via relationships with external groups. He observes that colleges interpret the needs of their external environments based on the many individual contingent factors and then determine what they can provide. In that regard, the three strategies identified below generally describe the ways in which colleges interact with external groups in the UK. Importantly, the three strategies are not mutually exclusive, and colleges often adopt one or a mix of the strategies at any one time.

1. *Trying to reduce the need to satisfy constantly changing external demands:* Colleges more often than not engage with their external environments in ways that allow them to decide which demands (in external environments) should be met. In so doing, some colleges compete for and secure additional or alternative sources of funding that allow them to concentrate on particular segments of the student market that it wishes to operate in (Kotler 1991). This might involve

specialization in specific programmes (e.g engineering studies), specific markets (e.g 16-19 year olds) or specialist niches (e.g jewelery design). Importantly, through adopting a 'specialization' or niche market via outside funding, colleges are able to reduce the impact that rapid changes in their external environments have on college operations;

2. *Adapting to the demands of the external environment:* Less successful or financially-strapped colleges often simply orient themselves to serving the needs of their external markets. They do so by co-opting external groups into the institution and forming formal coalitions with them. Their approach is to identify the various goods and services that the external environment desires and to provide programmes that satisfy these demands. The result is that almost every aspect of the institution's operation (from strategic planning to 'front-of-house activities') has to be geared towards developing programmes that serve the demands of the external environment (Foskett 1999: 35);
3. *Working to college strengths:* Some colleges are less predisposed to meeting the constantly changing demands of external environments and are confident about the kinds of programmes that they do, can or want to provide. In this strategy colleges focus on reminding external groups about their key strengths and socializing these groups to accept and embrace the already established norms, values and foci of their institutions. Foskett (1999: 34) notes that such institutions often call attention to the particular 'goods' or 'services' that they have the unique expertise to produce by highlighting their (traditionally) good practice and successful student completion of programmes. A key characteristic (required) of this strategy is the ability of colleges to effectively market themselves and to successfully brand the kinds of programmes that they best provide. Colleges thus have to both know what its core values and strategies are, and then be able to 'sell' it effectively (Bush 1999:11).

Foskett (1992: 6) asserts that based on their respective micro conditions individual colleges often adopt one or more of the above strategies and then adapt their institutional planning accordingly. He notes that an important prerequisite, alongside the effective monitoring of the differing demands of external environments, is dependable internal college processes. These include good strategic institutional planning and flexible college management structures.

1.3.2 Providing good strategic institutional planning

Strategic (institutional) planning is essential for the linking of the institution's vision with its day-to-day activities. Foskett and Hemsley-Brown (1999: 209) outline seven key steps in this process:

- Identify the strategic position of the institution
- Identify the principal target audiences
- For each, identify the aims of the relationships in the context of the institution's mission
- Plan the institutional systems to 'manage' the specific relationships and communications in the context of the institution's strategic position, and identify the resources (human and financial) that can be applied to this component of external relations management.
- Plan the specific communication tactics to achieve the aims
- Implement the tactics
- Monitor, evaluate and review the implementation of the plan.

Strategic management is essentially about an institution taking responsibility for its future and long term development and direction. In that respect, Foskett (1999: 39) notes that strategic thinking is long term, reflective, conceptual and creative. It emphasises the identification of opportunities in response to a continuous scanning of external environments, and then initiates thinking into how to achieve an institution's vision.

This involves collecting sufficient 'intelligence' and data to be able to make reasoned judgements about future trends, scenarios and patterns. Foskett (1999: 39) asserts that "sensing this component of the external environment is often highly subjective and requires astute political judgement". He notes that this 'subjectivity' can be moderated however by involving a large number of participants from inside the college in the strategic planning consultative process.

More importantly, the involvement of college staff simultaneously assists in the turning of institutional strategies into practice. This includes the establishing of appropriate institutional systems, acquiring and applying the relevant resources, operating the systems, and measuring their effect.

1.3.3 Getting college management and staff to interact with changing external environments

From the above, it is clear that the interplay between internal institutional processes and external environments cannot be dominated by a small management group inside the college. It is neither something that only senior managers do nor can it be delegated to junior colleagues. The whole process requires co-ordination from senior management and the participation of each and every member of the institution (Foskett 1999: 37).

Furthermore, effective external relation management requires significant 'internal marketing' to ensure that all staff members always know what is expected of them. Good internal marketing achieves two objectives; namely it shares the institutional vision with those that are meant to actualize it at the various sites, and it draws staff members into the consultative interactions that lead to them practically engaging with (and thinking about) the required internal processes, and thinking about how to introduce them.

Indeed, ordinary members of staff are the chief role players within the process of engaging with external environments (particularly with industries and business), since their activities and continuous participation ultimately define both the 'quality' of what their institutions provide and the effectiveness of partnerships between individual colleges and external stakeholders (Foskett 1999: 37).

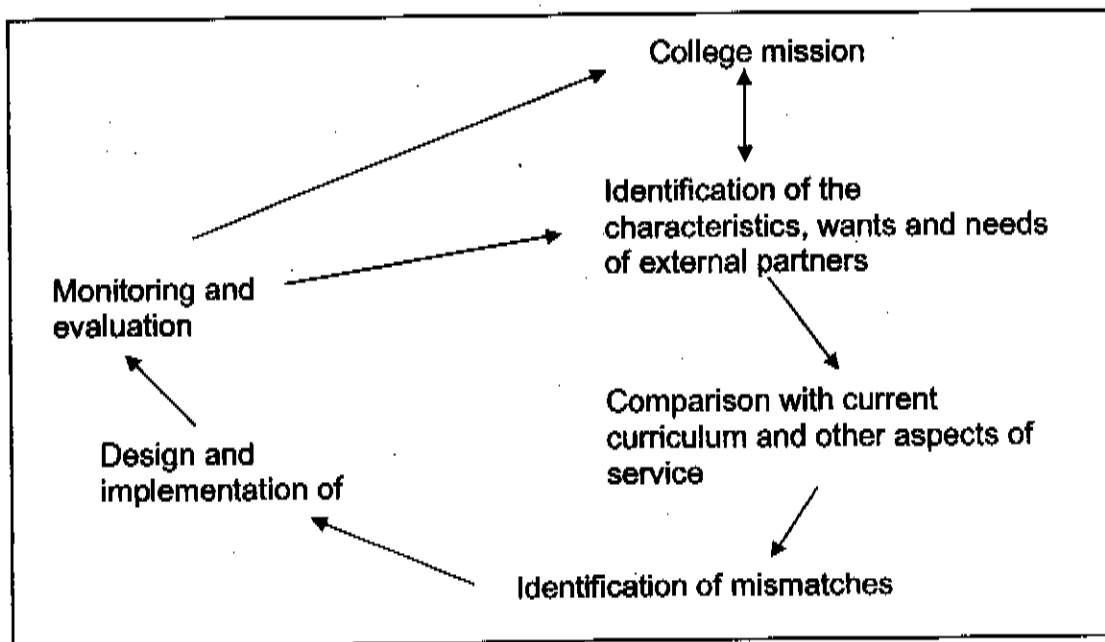
1.3.4 Developing flexible and collaborative internal college processes and structures

For effective relationships with external partners colleges require formal institutional mechanisms that bring together college principals, staff at different levels, and relevant curricula regulatory bodies who then collectively discuss the development of college programmes (and the introduction of new ones where necessary) that suit the requirements of their respective economic and social environments. The main purpose of establishing these formal institutional mechanisms within colleges is to initiate processes that maintain sustainable linkages with all external partners, such as industries, businesses, government departments, community groups, NGOs and CBOs, and the development of materials and programmes within individual colleges that are relevant to the particular needs of the various external partners.

Specialised units that focus on innovation and development issues within FET Colleges (in this case, in the UK) are further expected to monitor and engage with the recent trend

within the FET sector to provide vocational programmes preoccupied with updating skills. Skilbeck (1994) notes that enrolments at colleges are increasingly for vocational courses and that many of such courses are part-time and often directly related to students' current employment. This trend is linked to a resurgence of interest in the vocational dimension of education among the world's industrialized countries (Skilbeck et al 1994), and has 'significantly blurred' the boundaries between education and workplace training. In such an environment, specialized units within colleges (in the UK) are increasingly expected to introduce skills programmes as part of their programme offerings and to ensure that such programmes are effectively inserted into respective college curricula registers/indexes.

The diagram (Davies 1999: 142) below, aptly captures by way of illustration the processes whereby specialized units within colleges in the UK engage with the curricula needs of their external partners:



1.4 Summary

From the above it is evident that specialized units of innovation and development have an important and particular function to play within colleges. Notwithstanding differences in individual college operations (based on divergent contextual environments, different college management structures, varying relationships with industry, differing levels of

staff expertise in interacting with external partners, centralized or decentralized programme delivery), there is little doubt that the success of specialized units (like LPUs) hinge on the ways that colleges 'make sense' of their external environments and adapt their internal processes to accommodate external demands. The four case studies in chapter two below provide insights into the workings of four SESD-funded FET College LPUs in South Africa and unpack the ways in which various contingent factors shape the ways in which they (the four LPUs) interact with their external environments and thereby frame their respective college programmes.

Chapter Two: Four case studies of specialized units of innovation and development

2.1 Methodology and details of case studies

The intention of the study on the establishment of Linkages and Programme Units (LPUs) within four SESD-funded FET Colleges in South Africa was not only to document how the four colleges set up their LPUs, but also get a better idea of the different organizational forms of each of the colleges and how they have gone about creating new 'business' and maintaining successful relationships with their external environments, particularly the world of work.

In that respect, the study focused on interviewing a wide range of college participants to evaluate the extent to which the conceptualization of LPUs had filtered down to the various role-players and stakeholders. The purpose of interviewing the respective participants was also to document for college role-players the ways in which different processes informed, and was informed, by the workings of LPUs.

It was determined at the initialization of the project proposal in early 2004 that the study should include only four of the seven SESD-funded FET Colleges and that the three colleges in the North West should not be included in the study. This was based on the fact that the three LPUs in the North West had either not been formally established or did not have the appropriate staff by early 2004, and thus it would have been difficult to adequately prepare North West LPU staff to present at the November 2004 FET Convention in such circumstances. It was agreed however that the study would include a one-day workshop in the North West later in the project, where the report writer would identify key concerns and issues emerging in the North West and integrate some of these insights in the overall synthesis report.

This one-day workshop took place in February 2005 and included the Provincial Technical Advisor for the North West and two LPU representatives from each of its three colleges. It was found that although at least two of the LPUs were still in their formative stages, there existed a significant degree of similarity (with those in the Western Cape and Kwazulu Natal) in the ways in which LPUs were started in the North West and the kinds of contextual issues and dilemmas that they faced, and that many of these concerns and dilemmas had been captured within the four case studies. It was evident

however that there was also significant variation in many of the contextual conditions and dilemmas in the North West. This deserves further and fuller enquiry.

The four FET Colleges that comprise the study were Mthashana College and Sivananda College in Kwazulu Natal, and South Cape College and the College of Cape Town in the Western Cape. Mthashana College is located in deep rural northern Kwazulu Natal (based around the small town of Vryheid), South Cape College is located in George in the Western Cape in an established town but also with campuses in semi-rural settings, Sivananda College is based in Pinetown on the outskirts of Durban in Kwazulu Natal and is characterized by a mixture of peri-urban, township, and rural environments, while the College of Cape Town is located in Pinelands in the heart of the urban city of Cape Town.

Four researchers spent one week at each of the colleges interviewing the various role-players that informed the working of college LPUs. These included:

- Leadership figures
 - The Directors of FET in the Department of Education within each of the provinces
 - The CEOs of each of the four colleges
 - The chairpersons of College Councils
 - The SESD Provincial Technical Advisor in each of the provinces
- Senior college staff
 - The Deputy-CEOs in charge of Academic Affairs
 - The Academic Heads in each of the colleges
 - Two campus managers at each of the colleges
 - The college programme managers based at the campuses
- The LPU staff
 - Managers and assistant managers
 - Other associated staff members (if and where they were in place)
- The managers of the Student Support Services Unit (SSU) **

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- The managers of college Business Centres, where they existed
 - Representatives of various external partners such as municipalities, businesses, industries and community groups

It is notable with regard to the chosen interviewees above that the key link between LPUs and SSUs in the tracking of students and checking on their placement in industry once they leave colleges made it necessary to understand how SSUs assist LPUs in finding student placements in the world of work, tracking them in their workplace, dealing with their continuing needs in getting settled in their jobs, and ensuring continued college access and links to employers/workplaces.

A list of detailed questions was formulated for the fieldwork participants. These detailed questions explored different issues with each group of participants. The full list of questions is not provided here. However, some of the main issues that were explored include:

- *The functioning of LPUs:* What is the main purpose of LPUs? Why LPUs? What is expected to be achieved through the establishment of LPUs? What mechanisms (if any) existed within colleges to fulfill such functions before LPUs? What are the core functions of the LPU and how is this operationalised within given colleges? Where is LPUs predominantly based? What are the ways in which LPUs interact with the various role-players? What role do management structures play in ensuring that LPUs have the appropriate support to fulfill these functions? What mechanisms would help make LPUs effective and replicable?
- *The external environment:* How do the various climates of change impact on the establishment of LPUs and their functioning? How is the establishment of LPUs linked to the need to be responsive to the needs of external partners? How will LPUs facilitate issues of responsiveness? What do partners want when they form linkages with colleges? Why do they embark on partnerships? What kind of research do they do before they embark on such partnerships? How do employers ascertain their own needs? Do colleges adequately service these needs? What can colleges do better to serve diverse external groups?
- *Strategic planning issues:* How are partnerships developed / linkages formed? What college mechanisms/structures assist in linking college participants to industries/communities etc? Who within colleges determine the key partners to

be pursued? How are the needs of partners linked to the development of college programmes/learnerships? What kind of market *research* is conducted to ascertain external partner, student and college needs? How do colleges identify student and other external needs? What processes are used to ascertain whether the various needs are valid? How are needs analyses arrived at? Who within colleges link this to college objectives? What is level of capacity at college level to conduct this kind of research?

- *Institutional capacity issues:* To what extent do college organizational structures inform the form of individual LPUs? Once programmes and programme materials are finalised, how are key staff members identified and what is done about their knowledge and development/ *training* needs in providing programmes? What is role of LPU in overseeing programme implementation? What do staff members within various fields think about the functioning of LPUs and their own participation in developing materials, linking with key external partners, and in decision-making about programme pathways?
- *Programme development and delivery:* Who develops and funds programme development? To what extent do current curriculum provision and the development of new programmes within colleges inform the kinds of linkages they make with external partners? Once programmes and programme materials are finalised, how are key staff members identified and what is done about their knowledge and development/ *training* needs in providing programmes? What is role of LPU in overseeing programme implementation? How are learnerships developed? What are the processes involved in developing a learnership or skills programme? Who is involved in the development of a learnership or skills programme? How are materials developed?

Researchers subsequently compiled case study reports for each of the four FET Colleges. It is notable that each case study provides unique perspectives on the ways in which colleges interact with external environments and the kinds of processes that prevail in contexts where poverty, underfunding and the lack of employment opportunities and external links predominate. The case study accounts are synthesized below.

2.2 Case Study One: Mthashana College, rural Kwazulu Natal

2.2.1 Background to the college

The area that serves as the key catchment area for Mthashana College in northern Kwazulu Natal has a traditionally rural population and a very low population density of about 1.4 million people. In this area only about between 40-45% of the economically active population is employed, compared to the provincial average of 61% (Stats SA 2001:30). Besides being characterised by quite high levels of unemployment (NBI 2002), a significant proportion of people in the region (about 36%) have also not had any formal schooling, with 7% having Grade 4 as their highest level of education and only 5% with Grade 12 as their highest education level. People with Grade 12 and a diploma as a highest qualification constitute only 0.5% of the population in the area. Given these low educational levels and the fact that the biggest proportion of the population in Kwazulu Natal are very young (especially in the 10-14 age group), Mthashana College is faced with quite significant challenges in attracting students to the institution.

Agricultural occupations tend to predominate in the Mthashana College catchment area (NBI 2001). From interviews in this study (and also research visits in other SESD-funded projects), participants note that the youth seem to be increasingly moving to urban areas to get away from agriculture-dominated employment and because they feel that more opportunities await them in urban centres.

On the whole participants observe though that youth (and their parents) in the area have come to regard vocational education and training as 'the best way forward', as witnessed by the increasing numbers of learners who are leaving school and applying at Mthashana college upon completion of Grade 9.

This has meant that the college has had to, on the one hand, try to keep students from leaving the area (by setting up bursary schemes, structuring their fees to accommodate poor students, marketing existing programmes more effectively and highlighting the high rate of qualification achievement in the area), and on the other hand develop programmes that are more pertinent to the needs of students that are leaving school to enroll at the college. Added to this, campuses like Nongoma and KwaGqikazi are also being pressed to deal with other kinds of 'social needs' of students. It was noted that there are many students enrolling at campuses like Nongoma and KwaGqikazi that are not from the area, but ironically from urban centres. Participants note that many students

from urban centres, especially those that don't have adequate schooling or qualifications to secure jobs, are being 'sent to rural Kwazulu Natal' both to acquire certification that is thought to be more expensive and difficult to attain in urban areas, and because some parents seem to think that they can resolve their children's 'disciplinary and other social problems' (oft associated with urban living) by sending them to an institution in a rural and 'more traditional' area.

Since 2000 there has also been a dramatic economic decline in the region surrounding Mthashana College. Virtually all coalmines have closed down (leaving behind communities that originally came into being to support mining infrastructures and operations), and established chain stores like Woolworths and Pick-'n-Pay have closed their branches in the region. This has severely dented already-low employment levels. While the recent decline of recent years has had the 'positive' spin-off of galvanising local communities to increasingly focus on skills development and entrepreneurship opportunities, the continuing economic decline has provided the college with almost insurmountable obstacles as it focuses on providing different kinds of employment-related programmes.

The Rector of Mthashana College describes the college's situation in the following way:

From 2003 so-called risk colleges – small 'deep rural' colleges operating in severely depressed socio-economic regions with alarmingly high unemployment (70+%) and poverty indices (total qualifications level for region is around 4% and illiteracy levels stand at 40+%) – had to become increasingly cognizant of the government's national and regional intervention strategies and associated funding for developmental initiatives, like the Rural Development and Presidential Initiative strategies. However, the high levels of ignorance generally among stakeholders and the consequent lack of buy-in and commitment represented major constraints for institutional growth and development, as well as the associated capacity to respond to the particular realities of the region. Many of the programmes that Mthashana offered were not relevant anymore with respect to this new FET dispensation and the associated implications for programme development and implementation. In that sense, the college had become somewhat irrelevant in terms of how it needed to respond, as an FET provider, to the needs of the area/region it served.

However, in recent years the college has dramatically refocused and repositioned its programme provisions to respond to the particular deep rural characteristics and realities of the region. The driving principle that now predominantly binds college programme delivery is poverty alleviation, aligned in particular to the niche areas of tourism, agriculture and forestry. The college now mainly focuses on empowering communities through sustainable skills and personal and entrepreneurial development initiatives and interventions (Interview with Rector, August 2004).

Mthashana College was formally constituted in December 2001, merging two ex-technical colleges and an ex-college of education. Given the closeness of the Nongoma campus to the KwaGqikazi ex-college of education, the two campuses operated from 2001 as one campus, with the Nongoma campus called Nongoma A and the KwaGqikazi site called Nongoma B (with one campus manager). The Vryheid campus provides Business Studies and Engineering studies, while the two Nongoma campuses provide Engineering studies, training in workshops, and utility and general studies. The three sites serve as the main sites of delivery of the College. In recent times however the college has sought to incorporate skills centres into the college set-up and it is expected (at the time of the study's fieldwork) that the college will comprise up to 9-11 campuses (by absorbing skills centres in the region) by the end of 2005. Unlike what occurs in many other regions where skills centres are incorporated into the college but are treated mostly as financial (though necessary) burdens, the intention of Mthashana College is to convert (and upgrade) skills centres into skills development campuses and make them the backbone of the college.

One example of this (that has already occurred) is the addition of the Emandleni skills campus (previously a youth training centre). The Emandleni campus offers short and focused programmes in farming/agriculture as well as in engineering areas like motor mechanics. While the campus does not presently generate any income and thus is a significant financial burden on the college, the goal is to streamline the operations of the campus and its staff and then to more-directly link campus programme provision to the immediate skills and social needs of local communities.

2.2.2 Developing an institutional strategy for Mthashana College

As noted in the previous section the main feature of the area surrounding Mthashana College is the lack of any significant industries and therefore big employers. The only industries of any note are the taxi industry (which is not something the college can provide any major programmes for) and farming (which remains largely inaccessible to the poor in the region). Tourism and forestry remain the two most viable sectors of economic and employment activity.

Besides responding to these provincial (economic) dynamics, the college is set to predominantly focus on upgrading its 'skills campuses' and to use them to provide short skills development programmes for communities located in the isolated corners of the

region. The idea is to sequence provisioning, starting with literacy training (ABET level 1), then concentrating on particular skills development (e.g sewing, beadwork, motor mechanics), and to follow that up with business or entrepreneurial skills training. The intended foci are on programmes in areas like sewing, garment making, beadwork, poultry farming, and organic vegetable growing. Other prospective areas of provisioning are welding, motor mechanics, motor body repairs and electrical work.

Indeed, by concentrating on programme provisioning that predominantly serves the skills training needs of the deep-rural communities scattered across the vast region surrounding Mthashana College, the institution is set to completely re-arrange its traditionally offerings and orient itself to a quite different student population. At this time the college is 'carrying/incurred' the operational costs (tutors and materials) of the skills centres and is funding the initial infrastructural development. The short courses (that is starting to become the focus of the college) are being NQF-aligned and will comprise mostly unit standard-based short courses/skills programmes and some learnerships. Also, in terms of the college's expected focus on skills training provisioning for the informal sector, literacy and entrepreneurship components have been incorporated to promote the emphasis on self-employment in the region.

Presently, most partnerships around education and training provisioning occur in relation to meeting the demands of community-based organisations (CBOs) and constituencies/stakeholders, NGOs and government departments. For example, all hospitals in the region were approached as part of the needs research and asked what kinds of programmes they would support. The college also conducted a number of experiments to get a better idea of the kinds of needs emerging in the region. In this regard, at the end of 2003/beginning of 2004 the college embarked on a relationship-building and associated programme provisioning initiative at the KwaGqikazi campus. It kickstarted this process by locating the college's Linkages and Programme Unit at the KwaGqikazi campus to oversee new emerging campus programmes based on the needs of that area. The LPU staff conducted a needs survey in the area and went door-to-door visiting prospective partners and asking them about their main requirements. This 'conscious' pursuing of partners was deemed necessary since the college had previously done no marketing or publicity of college offerings nor had previously included in its planning employers' perspectives on the region's needs.

The above notwithstanding, it is notable that formal NATED programmes continue to comprise 80% of programme delivery at Mthashana College. In this regard campuses like Vryheid and Nongoma remain focused on providing courses in business management, marketing management, public relations and human resources development, and engineering courses like motor mechanics, electrical engineering and plumbing.

Linked to the above, given the absence of potential employers where students can be interned during their studies, the college has begun to look at 'becoming an employer'. It has thus set up and is piloting a Business Unit at the Vryheid campus, where the intention (behind the establishment of the Business Unit) is to:

- Generate income for the campus and to specifically manage present links with employers and other external partners
- To double up as an employer by allowing for the workplace placement of students
- To market the agricultural processes inherent within programme delivery and the kinds of end-products produced like pineapple-based goods, bacon making and livestock feeding.

In so doing, it is hoped that the college (through business units) will be able to focus on:

- *Internship* for exit-level students (students who have successfully completed N6 Marketing Management or N6 Marketing Assistant) – this involves practical preparation for work placement within the workforce and acquiring the skills and experience of working with the public.
- Enhancing the *marketing function* of the college (assist central office), including establishing an 'employment agency' or 'girl Friday' service for the marketing and future placement of students – this involves students preparing and printing brochures, designing and typing forms for enrolment/registration of incoming college students, developing college business cards, preparing and printing prospectus and related documents, making adverts and posters, etc.
- Enhancing *administrative functions* of the campus – Management Assistant students (in conjunction with Marketing Management students) are expected to assist the Student Affairs Office at the Vryheid campus with preparing the files of new enrolments, preparing information packs for new students, and photocopying documents for students' private needs. These services are charged at a competitive price.

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- Using the '*Simulation Centre*' for the practical assessment/evaluation of all Business Studies students – where they are tested according to their practical application of theoretical curriculum aspects like filing, faxing, invoicing, and developing innovative business plans (these processes are all operational within the Business Unit).
 - Providing *business services* to the community at reasonable and competitive rates.
 - *Training and re-training students* who qualified several years ago ('bring them back in') – this involves the students completing new practical components on an after-hours basis, that include using new and updated technologies that some of the courses (in-service training) may also have lacked when provided previously.
 - Initiating awareness-raising campaigns within the community – for example, effecting anti-littering awareness among students by establishing a 'recycling station', which can lead to related money-generating projects in areas where students live.
 - Entrepreneurship – practical training for students in how to establish businesses (co-operatives) within their local areas and communities, in order to promote sustainable self-employment and employment opportunities for others; the idea is also to assist students in learning how to acquire start-up funding and to monitor and continuously advise students in this area.

Though focusing predominantly on the needs of business studies students at present, the idea is also, in the near future, to introduce programmes that include the business plan development and communication skills needs of engineering students (in the workings of Business Units). Notably, the bulk of Vryheid campus provisioning continues to be academically-orientated (NATED), with previous Vryheid skills programmes/learnership offerings provided through a skills centre that falls directly under the Business Unit at the institution. This skills centre, though on the same site, is considered to be completely separate from the Vryheid campus. This suggests a (symbolic and physical) partitioning of skills programmes from NATED courses presently, and linked to specific delivery sites.

2.2.3 Understanding the needs of external partners in the region

The Linkages and Programme Unit is meant to play a critical role within the college infrastructure to introduce and oversee skills programmes that respond to the needs of northern Kwazulu Natal communities. As such it operates as the main interface between the particular needs of internal and external role players and stakeholders in the region and the development of needs-driven or demand-led curriculum development and programme provision. From its start-up the modus operandi of the LPU was to 'talk to as many people as possible, do hands-on (survey) research, and then to try to respond as quickly as possible to their needs or particular requests (keeping in mind constraints such as Institutional capacity).

With the college's strategic plan emphasizing meeting the skill needs (via short courses) of local communities, programme provisioning has become much more dependent on partnerships with community-based organizations, NGOs and government departments and municipalities. Some of these partnerships are described below:

- *HIV/Aids research project (KwaGqikazi Campus)*

The college initiated contact with the retired hospital superintendent, Dr Amy Glover, (originally from the United Kingdom) who is extensively involved with HIV/Aids work in the area. Dr Glover is currently busy collecting data from households in surrounding communities through a network of 'foot soldiers' going from household-to-household. Dr Glover has agreed to employ Mthashana College to train her project staff in interview techniques, data collection skills, and computer and communication skills. In return the college will renovate one of its residence units on KwaGqikazi campus and make it available as an office for the project, where project staff can collate and analyse their data. The campus will then collaborate with Dr Glover on furthering community extension programmes (learnerships) around HIV/Aids.

- *Indonza Craft Centre*

The college has agreed with art teachers at the Indonza Craft Centre in neighbouring Ulundi (about a 45-minute drive) to train students from the craft centre in communication and business skills at the KwaGqikazi campus. Discussions continue on the practical arrangements around programme delivery and attendance.

- *Nongoma hospital*

While the LPU was stationed at the KwaGqikazi campus in early 2004, it was formally agreed that the college would provide Benedictine Hospital staff with programme training in communication (computer literacy, report writing etc), ABET, performance attitude change management, time management, and ethics. The training is expected to include both 'generic' fundamentals as well as customised learning programmes to cater for different institutional and departmental characteristics. This training has not yet started.

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

In recent years, various local economic development (LED) studies have noted that there is a serious shortage of skills in the Nongoma area. In response, the provincial department of Local Government has allocated a one-million rand grant over three years (2004-2006) to the Nongoma municipality, towards SME development among the unemployed in the region. Phase One of the project includes skills programmes, formally registered (unit standard-based), in sewing/clothing production and in carpentry for the locally unemployed youth (96 were selected by the municipality through a ward representative system). Mthashana College will provide learnerships in clothing production at the KwaGqikazi campus and carpentry at the Nongoma campus. Once students have completed their training, they will do the practical part of their learnerships at the local municipality (the project will establish a facility within the municipality, and also provide the equipment that students will need to train appropriately in carpentry and clothing production at the municipal site). Phase Two will consist of students learning how to start their own businesses through entrepreneurial skills training. Students are expected to be closely monitored. Five SETAs are involved in the initiative, though no formal partnership agreement has yet been signed between the college and the local government department. In the interim, 55 students are currently enrolled in the basic computer and communication enhancement programme (PLATO). This is aimed at assisting them and providing them with skills that they can use in their prospective studies.

- *Linkage with James Nxumalo Agricultural High School*

The college has been awarded a PAETA learnership, 'Certificate in farming as an own business'. This learnership will start out as a pilot with a group of Grade 9 students

drawn predominantly from urbanized areas. The idea is to give students access to land in the region and to focus on agricultural training. The school infrastructure has already been accredited by the SETA, and the college will provide the teachers with assessor training.

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

The college has initiated a community agricultural project in the Jozini municipal area in one of the most far-flung 'deep rural' corners of the area served by the college (bordering on Mozambique). The project is aimed at equipping the community with agricultural skills that will help them 'to become job creators' and help reduce the very high levels of poverty in the area. Towards this end the college has teamed up with the Jozini municipality to form a partnership with BioSwiss Industries (Pty) Ltd. The company specializes in the processing of organically-produced green beans for the export market, and has already set up a factory in the Hlobane area (ex-coal mine village) outside Vryheid. The municipality will provide the land for the project (which has already been flattened) while the college will incur the expense of fencing the land. The labour required to work the land will be provided by the students. The seeds are imported from the Netherlands, with BioSwiss staff conducting the training.

After being trained in organic farming and entrepreneurship, students will form co-operatives and start their own organic farms. Once the project is up and running the college intends to approach PAETA to further fund the project (focusing on the unemployed in the region). The significant plus in the project is that BioSwiss provides a 'ready-made market' for the goods produced on the land.

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

The Vryheid municipality has developed a multi-million rand 'tourist facility' outside Vryheid overlooking a large dam, with the view of leasing it. The facility consists of six thatched rondavels, a huge reception area, a conference facility, a restaurant and adjoining kitchen, an amphitheatre, and two outbuildings. The college LPU was initially very keen on using the facility to pilot learnerships in tourism and hospitality. The infrastructure lends itself to training in B&B, on-site craft production, conferencing and hosting. A proposal has been presented to the local municipality for the college to run the facility (located on a busy tourist route) as a business

whilst also doubling up as a training facility for learnerships in tourism, hospitality, marketing, reception-admin, and event management.

The college has also started a similar initiative at the KwaGqikazi campus where it has converted one of its residential units into a bed-&-breakfast establishment. The facility is set to be run by (successive groups of) students enrolled on a learnership in hospitality and tourism and the college expects to plough all revenues earned back into further college developmental initiatives. In a related development, the kitchen and adjoining cafeteria at the residential unit is expected to be renovated for a planned learnership in catering. However, a key problem with the learnerships presently is that the college lacks the funds to adequately upgrade the facility and is being plagued with infrastructural problems at the facility linked to the local municipality (and thus not easily resolved). While the college has done everything required to get the programmes in place, the college needs the local municipality to supply the facility with a constant supply of water. More often than not, the facility has absolutely no water.

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

The establishment of the LPU has helped get this project underway. The CFWS has provided R15000 start-up capital for the college to provide an ABET programme for members of two local communities. Training will be provided to members to 'bake goods' for selling. The project is a self-sustaining one and is expected to enable students to cater for weddings and funerals (at a profit).

- *Training for members of local police station and supermarket franchises*

The college has undertaken to provide ABET and communication skills training to members of staff at the Nongoma police station. It is also in talks with the local SPAR supermarket in Nongoma to establish a learnership in wholesale and retail.

2.2.4 Setting up a LPU as part of the college infrastructure

The key operational functions of the Mthashana College LPU were identified as follows:

- The LPU is expected to introduce NQF-aligned units-standards based programmes at the college and to assist staff members to move away from NATED mindsets and focus on programmes in key niche areas.

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- It needs to develop or acquire 'programme packages' that supported programmes in the key niche areas of agriculture, forestry and tourism
 - It also needs to identify and prepare campuses and skills centres (campuses) for the delivery of the above programmes
 - Lastly, it is expected to link up SETAs about where to source unit standards for programmes, and engage with the various providers that provide such programme development services

The role of the college management structure is to provide guidance with regard to strategy planning, college mandate and objectives in offering its 'own' learnerships (given the lack of industry links). The LPU on the other hand serves as the main vehicle by which the college develops and facilitates programme innovation, with all the important decisions with regard to the ways in which the college links up with external partners being made collectively by the College Rector and the LPU Manager.

The rector and LPU manager are the ones that brainstorm new possibilities and discuss the various requirements needed to put prospective programmes into place. They also meet regularly (at the college central office) with the HR manager, other specialized unit managers, campus managers and senior college staff members. At these meetings they discuss the links that the LPU has set up and how to follow up on contacts made with external partners with regard to programme development and its implementation. The meetings are further meant to assess the validity, viability and sustainability of suggested or envisaged programmes.

2.2.5 Developing the necessary internal college processes and college programmes

All external requests for programme provisioning are channeled through the LPU, after which members of the LPU contact relevant campus managers and staff members to discuss the infrastructural capacity and whether it is practical to provide such programmes. College programmes are thus mostly initiated by the LPU and managed from the central office. Once it is started at central office, programme initiation is passed on and subsequently managed at the respective campuses. In that respect, campus managers play quite significant roles in programme development and delivery at their sites. It was noted that notwithstanding this involvement by campus managers in both the management issues and programme development, the LPU invariably has to check on the progress of projects and key associated problems. It was suggested that this is

often linked to the lack of capacity at the campus level, with staff members not providing, or being able to provide, adequate information on programming matters and problems.

It is notable in that respect that the staff capacity of the LPU is extremely limited. Current LPU staff members are expected to service vast geographical areas. Consequently they spend the bulk of their days 'on the road' sourcing external partners. Yet they are also expected (at the same time) to fulfill other college responsibilities like overseeing the marketing and communication portfolio (there is no MCU manager in place), and the upgrading of college infrastructures (at campuses and skills centres) to ensure proper programme development. The latter task would normally be fulfilled by a General Administration and Infrastructure Portfolio Unit, but the unit has no staff members as yet.

Indeed, the expansion of linkages and partnership-building initiatives is presently being seriously compromised by totally unrealistic departmental funding and resourcing regimes. Units such as LPUs in areas like Mthashana will only really start performing once they get more staff members and once college staff members in general are properly capacitated to fulfill their tasks.

Moreover, given the provincial dynamics that the college is having to deal with (such as the absence of memoranda of understanding and proper title deeds between different partners- particularly with regard to the management and functioning of skills centres currently run directly from central office), Mthashana College management and LPU staff are constantly confronted with issues that they have little power or expertise to resolve.

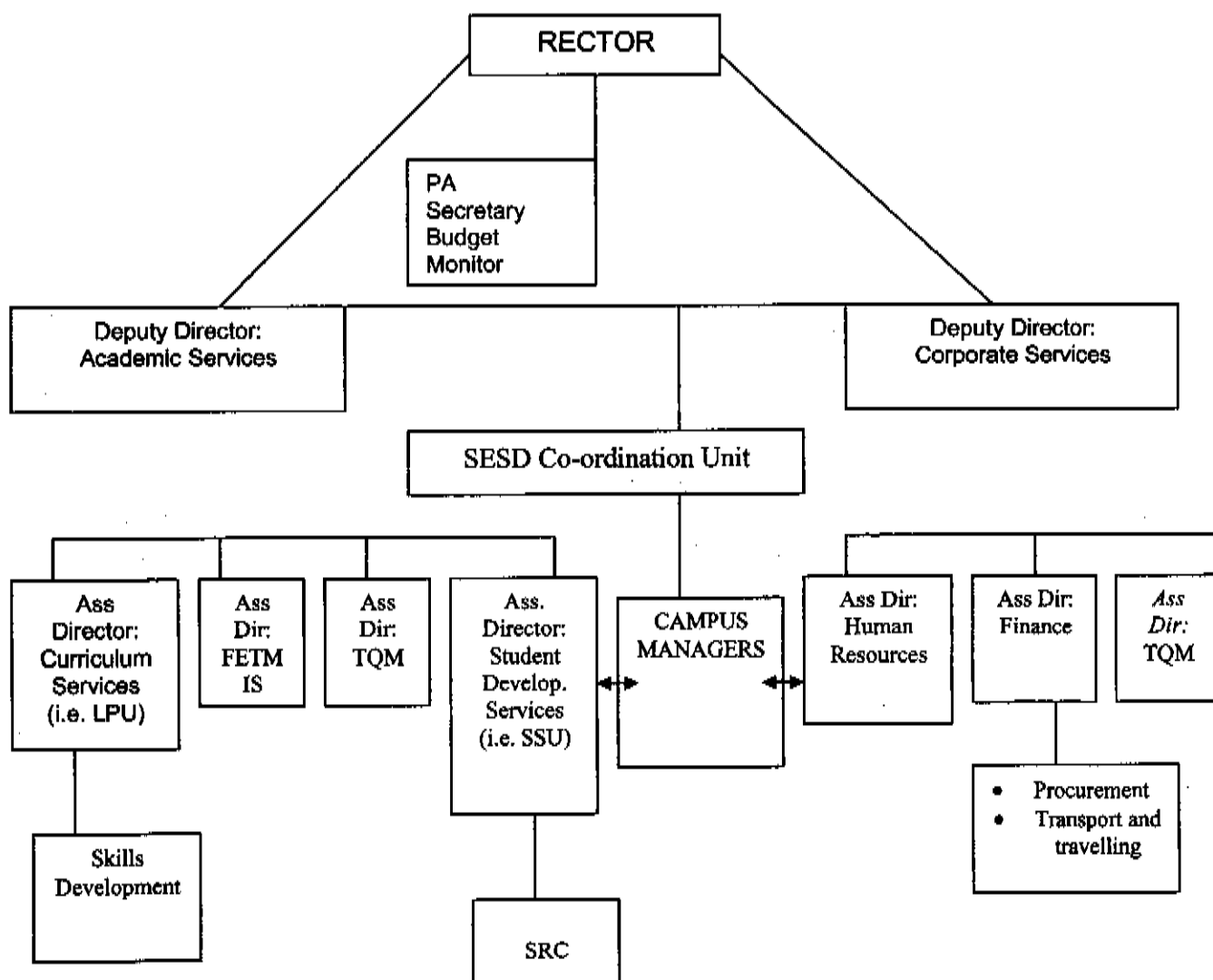
These dilemmas include:

- Who pays for programme development and site preparation?
- Who owns the facilities or unit once it is set up?
- If a programme is run at a school, does a college pay rent even though both are funded by the same department?
- What is the expected lifespan of programmes at a particular site?
- Who owns the project and facility if the land title deeds belong to a variety of stakeholders?

Ironically, amidst all the current planning and programme development discussions, high poverty levels in the region result in students largely being unable to afford the high fees needed to enroll in skills programmes and learnerships. This causes the college to depend quite heavily on the departmental funding associated with NATED programme

provisioning, and discourages the large-scale introduction of 'new demand-led' programmes.

Organisational structure of Mthashana College



2.2.6 The setting up of learnerships as part of LPU functions

The introduction and implementation of learnerships has been very slow at Mthashana College due to a variety of reasons. These include dynamics related to the geographically spread out rural areas that the college serves. While many learnerships

are being planned and discussed, the substantial demands on staff members, college structures and systems, the lack of industry links for the training of students, the low levels of educational qualifications amongst staff and students, alarmingly high rates of unemployment and poverty, and rampant AIDS-related mortality rates make the introduction of learnerships in the region extremely difficult. Simply put, without the staff members, structures and systems (institutional support), and the capacity to introduce and oversee programme development and delivery, learnerships cannot really be operationalised or sustained on an ongoing basis.

Moreover, there is no way of knowing whether programmes would be viable or could be sustained in any systematic way. The college does not have any 'measuring' mechanisms in place to monitor this, nor the adequate administrative and logistical capacity to set them up in the first place. In view of these limitations, the college presently adopts the approach of 'establishing what the essential requirements are that the college has to meet to introduce new qualifications/programmes, or to NQF-align existing offerings'. In practice this literally means that 'learning materials must be completely sourced from SETAs (i.e. materials that are 'publicly available') or bought from providers'. Such materials are then customised or adapted according to the particular requirements and context of the relevant College campus.

The college is aware that it will soon have to start developing its own programmes (including unit standard generation) given that many of the programmes and skills courses (such as beadwork and garment making) that it has introduced at skills centres do not have available unit standards 'packages' developed elsewhere. The problem is of course that the college does not have the staff capacity at present for this to occur at any meaningful level.

Nonetheless, there are a number of designated staff members within the college that focus daily on learnerships. For example, the assistant LPU Manager oversees *learnership implementation* on a full time basis, including liaising with the SETAs. The skills facilitator post (currently vacant within the LPU) will also be specifically aligned to learnerships in agriculture. Furthermore, there are dedicated learnership co-ordinators at campuses that are responsible for organising and coordinating practical on-the-ground aspects pertaining to the preparation, implementation and ongoing management of programmes. Lastly, there are designated staff members that in recent times have been specifically trained to teach on learnership programmes.

All the above individuals concentrate on developing 'fundamentals' programmes however, and generally leave the core or elective training programmes for industry to provide. It is expected though that once learnerships start to get developed on a significant scale in the region that the college will have to grapple more meaningfully with how to develop the specialized programmes (electives) that relate to specific industry needs. This remains unlikely since the present SETA funding model, alongside SETA criteria governing accreditation and the development of unit standards, limits the extent to which a deep rural college like Mthashana can introduce learnerships.

Indeed, the college will require substantial cash injections to kickstart learnerships and skills programmes if this kind of provisioning is to 'take off' within the college. This is especially the case at Mthashana given the critically high poverty and unemployment levels and the lack of any significant industry links in the region.

2.2.7 Summary

Notwithstanding the highlighted obstacles, the establishment of the Mthashana College LPU has had a profound impact on the planning, development and (proposed) implementation of programmes at the institution. Governed and guided by the college's institutional vision, strategic objectives and priorities, mandate, and operational plans, the LPU fulfills perhaps the most critical function within the college, particularly with regard to the expected introduction and take-up of learnerships and the ongoing building of partnerships with key and relevant external partners in the region.

2.3 Case Study Two: South Cape College in George, Western Cape

2.3.1 Overview of South Cape College

South Cape College consists of a central office (in an office complex in the town of George) and five separate campuses, namely Outeniqua, George, Tembalethu Skills Centre, Oudtshoorn, and Mossel Bay. The college's catchment area is the largest of all the FET colleges in the Western Cape and stretches from Plettenberg Bay in the east, to Laingsburg and Heidelberg in the west, and (soon) to Beaufort West in the north. Three of the college campuses (Outeniqua, George, and the Tembalethu Skills Centre) are in or near the town of George. The Oudtshoorn campus is located in the town of Oudtshoorn, which is about 65 kilometres inland from George, and the Mossel Bay

campus is approximately 60 kilometres up the coast from George in the town of Mossel Bay. South Cape College is also establishing a skills centre in the town of Beaufort West, which is approximately 250 kilometres inland from George. Beaufort West is the most impoverished of the college's catchment area, with very little (to nil) viable economic activity.

2.3.2 Developing an Institutional strategy based on external partner demand

Rather than just advertising and offering a determined curriculum, South Cape College is committed to what it refers to as 'responsive delivery', which it essentially understands to be programme provision that matches local employer and community demand, and that leads to the filling of jobs that improve the lives of all in the region. The main focus of the college is on producing students that "fully satisfy the needs of employers in the region" and so enable "communities to be productive" (interview with CEO). Given the high levels of unemployment in some of the areas serviced by South Cape College, this focus is understandable. What is also evident from the many new skills programmes being offered at the various college campuses is the focus on helping students/learners 'put bread on their tables'.

South Cape College is nonetheless well aware that programmes have to be financially viable and sustainable if the college is to survive. In that regard the college regularly tests the marketplace before it embarks on developing new programmes. In interviews with the College Rector he noted that:

Partnerships are crucial to South Cape College's programme development and delivery strategy. Our strategic plan highlights the fact that our task is so enormous that it is impossible to go it alone in the region. We are thus joining forces with all role players (in the local area catchment areas) that can meaningfully contribute to the knowledge and skills needs of the respective businesses, industries and the communities. In forming partnerships we are pooling our knowledge, skills, resources, finances and experience to the benefit of the communities that we serve.

The 50 partnerships listed by the college include a variety of short-term and long-term relationships. Notably, most of these partnerships are informal. Some of the partnerships are concerned with the college providing a service – like training – for which it is paid, while others involve employers taking on college learners for work experience, or the college hiring the infrastructure of another organisation – like a school – to provide

training. There are also partnerships with organisations like SETAs and higher education institutions (HEIs) that provide the college with accreditation. Furthermore, there are also partnerships that are primarily funding relationships. These involve donor organisations providing funding toward, for instance, the development of a service or the establishment of infrastructure. Notable among many of the recent relationships with the above partners is the focus on introducing NQF-aligned programmes and learnerships.

Included amongst the various college partners are local businesses and industries, local government, provincial government departments, the Department of Labour (DoL), higher education institutions (HEIs), local schools and Sector Education and Training Authorities (SETAs). In many of the partnerships the college has sought to:

- *To make use of outside resources and facilities.* For example, the college uses many schools as sites for their training. PetroSA has also provided buildings for training linked to the Mossel Bay campus, while the Beaufort West campus is being established at a community centre in the town in partnership with the state departments that are currently located there.
- *To provide training for business/industry/government employees.* Many government and company employees are registered for courses (NATED and NQF full qualifications) that are offered part-time at college campuses or for skills programmes and learnerships that are offered either at college campuses or at employees' places of work. One example is the 38 employees from PetroSA that are registered for NATED programmes at the Mossel Bay campus.
- *To provide SETA accredited skills programmes and learnerships.* South Cape College is collaborating with a number of SETAs – THETA, PAETA, MERSETA, ESETA, Services SETA, CETA, ETDP SETA, LGWSETA, FIETA, FASSET, Services SETA, FOODBEV SETA, SETASA and ISETT SETA to provide related courses at its various campuses.
- *To provide training for unemployed people and thereby develop skills and assist in job creation.* This is an important focus of the college's various skills centres. Examples include the retrenched SANDF soldiers that have been retrained to use their acquired skills to access jobs, and unemployed local residents that (with the support of the Department of Labour) have been trained to build houses.

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- *To develop curriculum and learning materials.* The college has initiated many partnerships whereby outside providers assist in developing new programmes and learning materials. Oudtshoorn campus for instance has worked closely with a number of SETA's and HEIs to introduce the NQF-aligned programmes and learnerships it now offers. The college's involvement in the WCED's College Curriculum Committee (CCC) has also increased its overall collaboration with provincial and national education departments, as well as with other associated FET colleges, in curriculum and materials development.
 - *To place college students in real work situations for work experience.* The college has focused on placing students that study in (local) economic niche areas in real work situations. For example, early childhood development (ECD) students have been placed in pre-primary schools and crèches, while tourism students have been placed at a local tourism bureau.
 - *To provide college courses as a seventh Grade 12 subject to school students.* South Cape College provides 'computer practice' and 'entrepreneurship' at more than fifteen schools in the George area.
 - *To provide access to HE programmes.* The college has partnerships with a number of technikons and universities to provide life-skills and career preparation programmes as well as bridging programmes. It also offers programmes like Grade R teacher training and degree programmes in the arts, commerce and science disciplines (BA, BCom and BSc degrees).

As is evident from the above, the key focus of South Cape College is developing joint ventures with outside partners. Importantly, the college considers some partnerships to be more strategic to its growth than others. In that respect, partnerships with the Department of Labour, PetroSA, local government and the SETAs are seen as critical to the college's future sustainability. A closer examination of the college's relationship with the above partners reveals that:

- PetroSA is the largest employer in the college's catchment area.
- District and local municipalities play a critical role in regional development and is linked to a vast network of people, organisations and resources.

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- SETAs are central to all learnership initiation and delivery. Better relationships with SETAs are thus deemed vital to the ongoing development of learnerships in the region.
 - The Department of Labour has appointed South Cape College to serve as one of its key ESDLEs. The primary function of the ESDLE is to facilitate the implementation of learnerships in the region. The ESDLE is meant to be a separate entity within the college, is funded by the DoL, and is meant to speed up and increase the delivery of learnerships in the region and get unemployed people into formal employment or self-employment. In the original submission to the DoL, the college listed 16 different learnerships across 10 SETAs for a total of 355 students. It is expected that with funding support from the DoL the ESDLE will come to serve as a lead employer (for learnership students) in the region.

PetroSA

The college currently has a non-formal partnership with PetroSA which began when the company (then called Moss Gas) provided the buildings that currently house the Mossel Bay campus. Over the years some PetroSA employees participated in NATED programmes at the Mossel Bay campus and the company also provided bursaries and practical training to some of the campus' college students. Informed by its regular skills audits, PetroSA has determined that it will look to South Cape College to provide additional training for its staff in the future and that it will seek to formalize many of the previous links between the college and the company.

Importantly, PetroSA has its own on-site training centre or 'Centre of Excellence' (CoE) through which it provides welding, pipefitting, rigging, electrical and instrument training to its permanent staff members. However, having determined that upgrading its CoE is perhaps not the most cost-efficient or effective way of providing future training for its staff, PetroSA has approached South Cape College to provide key training components for the company that the CoE is unable to undertake. Importantly, the content of the required training provision will need to suit the specific needs of PetroSA and its employees.

On the other hand, South Cape College is also keen to use PetroSA's training facilities to establish skills components that it would otherwise not be able to provide at its various campuses. In that regard the Mossel Bay campus is keen to establish a welding

programme (alongside electrical, autotronics, motor mechanic, electronic and hand skills training) at the campus and to use the welding equipment and other training facilities at PetroSA's CoE to offer this course in the future.

A further instance of expected close collaboration between South Cape College and PetroSA is linked to an OG&CM industries project. PetroSA's Centre of Excellence is currently involved in an OG&CM (oil, gas and chemical manufacturing) industries project which is being carried out in collaboration with the CHIETA and the Shutdown Network Forum (SNF). Taking account of shutdown and turnaround, as well as clean fuels projects, it has been determined that there will be a skills shortage of 6000 workers in the OG&CM industries by 2010. To address this problem, project has developed a learnership that has as its goal 1000 learners a year for six years. The SNF (as the ESDLE for the project) will receive funding from the CHIETA to oversee the process of hiring training providers and placing trainees with employers for workplace training. Five regional training providers have been appointed to recruit learners and provide the theoretical training for the learnership in cooperation with other training providers in the region.

The PetroSA Centre of Excellence has been earmarked as one of the five successful training providers, and has indicated that it will explore using South Cape College to provide the training for some or all of the various parts of the learnership. At this stage it has had discussions with the college about using the college's Skills Centre to provide training for shutdown welders. A key problem though is that the skills centre is not yet providing SETA approved programmes (its programmes carry South Cape College certificates and were approved by the old training boards) and is not accredited by the MERSETA or CHIETA. To circumvent this problem, the Centre of Excellence has indicated that it will provide the college with training materials and allow the college to use the CoE's accreditation to provide the required training and assessment.

PetroSA also has links with South Cape College through a company representative that serves on the college's governing council. The Technical Training (and CoE) Manager of PetroSA has also been invited to serve on the college's new advisory committee that oversees the development of engineering and agriculture programmes.

Local government and the Eden District Municipality

South Cape College has fairly strong relationships with the district and local municipalities in its catchment area, through which it has provided training to municipal staff and training on local government supported community projects. Until recently however each campus has worked with its own local municipality and there has been little coordination between the different training initiatives that have been provided. It is expected that the college will bring together partnerships with the various municipalities and develop a more coordinated approach to its work with local government in the future.

It is also intended that the college get a seat on each Integrated Development Planning (IDP) Board in the region and that this enable the college to keep track of regional development initiatives (note that Oudtshoorn campus already has a seat on the local IDP board).

Importantly, the need to introduce learnerships has facilitated more coordinated approaches across the different municipalities. Municipalities have become aware that South Cape College can serve as an important conduit to the outside world of training, through its courses, materials and links to external sources of funding (SETAs and DoL), and a key connection to municipalities and businesses in other areas.

The college has developed a particularly close relationship with the Eden District Municipality which established a project section in 2003 to oversee training and development. Prior to the establishment of the project section, municipality training was not conducted on a regular basis. Via a closer relationship with the college however, the Eden District municipality expects not only to develop its own staff (through training provision) but also drive key community development priorities.

Notably, respondents observe that many of the college's programmes will have to be revised if it is to serve the municipality's core training needs. In that respect, the municipality regards the introduction of learnerships as an important way of reconceptualizing college training provision and aligning training programmes to key skills needs in the region. Examples of learnerships that are currently being implemented are an early childhood development (ECD) learnership that started in August 2004 and a local economic development (LED) learnership that started in September 2004. The ECD learnership targets the staff of private crèches within the areas serviced by the

municipality, while the LED learnership includes municipal employees and unemployed people. Both ECD and LED are key IDP priorities in the region.

SETA partnerships: PAETA

As noted earlier, South Cape College works with a range of SETAs. In particular, its partnership with the PAETA serves as a useful example of college-SETA learnership delivery. South Cape College has a formal provider contract with the PAETA to deliver specified learnerships. In that regard, the college has been working with the PAETA for three years on the implementation of learnerships starting with the NQF Level 1 agriculture learnership in the Oudtshoorn area. One group of students is accommodated at the Oudtshoorn Experimental Farm and another group at five different farms in the Langkloof. The learnership group at the Oudtshoorn Experimental Farm is presently in its third year.

Learnerships in agriculture and horticulture are also provided through the George campus. Notably, South Cape College does not have much experience in developing programmes in agriculture. While the PAETA is thus far satisfied with the level of subject knowledge of the contract trainers provided by the college, there is a belief that college provision does not imbibe a good enough understanding of the culture of the sector nor addresses some of the key needs and concerns of employers. In that respect, many employers in the sector indicate that the college needs to distinguish between the types of materials it uses for quite different fields like horticulture and agriculture (it tends to use similar materials presently). Indeed, based on comments by members of the agricultural sector, the college will need to make a concerted effort to develop greater internal expertise, experience and capacity amongst college trainers if it intends to successfully provide programmes in the agricultural sector.

ESDLE

The ESDLE presently comprises a Manager (a college staff member that was previously the college learnership coordinator), two placement officers (who are responsible for recruiting learners and host employers), and an administration and logistics coordinator (who arranges training venues, transport for learners, and handles SETA invoicing). South Cape College is set to serve as the lead provider for the ESDLE during the pilot phase, for which the ESDLE will pay the college for training provided to students of its 16 learnerships.

Importantly, partnerships are not confined to the above four leading employers. South Cape College also has significant partnerships with, for example, schools and ABET centres. Via these partnerships (with schools and ABET centres) in areas where it does not have its own venues or facilities, South Cape College has been able to expand delivery and provide training across its catchment area according to demand and without having to establish new delivery sites every time a demand is identified. One successful example is the recent delivery of a furniture-making learnership at a local high school (Dysselsdorp High School); a partnership that also generated crucial income for the school.

2.3.3 The college's institutional strategy and the role of the LPU

The college has seven strategic goals, linked to each of its key performance areas (KPA's). One of these KPA's, namely *curriculum, modes of delivery and the world of work*, is chiefly concerned with curriculum development and innovation within the college and is conceptualized in the following way:

A relevant, quality accredited curriculum comprises of qualifications and courses that satisfy the needs of business, industry, community and learners, and is made available to clients through various and multiple modes of delivery to ensure maximum accessibility.

In order to achieve the above, curriculum development and innovation is divided into three broad areas of work, namely *teaching and learning; programmes and new business; and partnership development*. The objectives under *teaching and learning* focus on establishing policies, procedures, systems and structures to support the delivery of the college's curriculum. This is the area of work which falls under the academic vice rector and includes objectives that focus on developing a structure for programme managers; establishing advisory committees; developing assessment, RPL and moderation policies; increasing access through establishing outreach centres; implementing a tutorial system; obtaining feedback from learners through surveys and evaluations; and staff development and placement in the workplace.

The other two areas of work under the above KPA – namely *programmes and new business* and *partnerships* – are the responsibility of the specialized unit within the college called the Linkages and Programme Unit (LPU). In this regard, the LPU is meant to:

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- Develop and implement new programmes and RPL; contribute to college growth through increasing learner numbers in new programmes; keep abreast with market information, changes in legislation, and available funding; and communicate with internal and external stakeholders [Programmes and new business].
 - Increase and improve the college's links with its external partners and ensure that these are functional and well maintained [Building partnerships].

More specifically, the LPU is responsible for generating all new college business (especially in the area of learnerships), doing research, developing new college programmes (including learnerships, NQF full qualifications, and skills programmes), and overseeing the establishment and management of partnerships. The College LPU was described (in 2004) as:

A professional and viable team of leaders based within the college, responding to the FET needs of the community and the business sector through the development and delivery of programmes that are accessible and equitable (Interview with college CEO).

Importantly, the LPU is responsible for all students registered for learnerships and for the delivery of all of the college's learnerships; whether from college campuses, workplaces, or other sites of delivery, which it mainly oversees via external contract trainers and project managers. As such, although based at the central office, the LPU operates as a *completely separate campus* within the college and employs and manages its own staff.

Furthermore, as the college's primary link with its external environment, the LPU not only generates business for the college and determines the viability of new business opportunities, but also frames the ways in which the various campuses interact with their individual local environments. In that respect, when faced with prospective partnerships in their respective local areas, campus managers are expected to inform the LPU of new opportunities, which then follows up on the contact and determines its viability for the college.

2.3.4 What pre-existed and informed the establishment of the LPU

Prior to the establishment of the LPU no similar structure existed within the college. There was no central coordination of partnership development nor were there

programme maintenance processes in place. Each campus simply took responsibility for the partnerships they initiated at their various campus levels. There was also limited capacity and experience in the college to undertake research toward partnership and programme development. Programme development and change that did take place occurred mainly at campus level. In 2002 attempts were made to establish a college curriculum committee to plan the overall college curriculum, but these were generally unsuccessful. However, these processes did usher in a mindset of NQF-aligned programme development and learnership introduction within the college.

In that regard, the Oudtshoorn campus was particularly successful in engaging with and introducing NQF-aligned programmes and learnerships. Alongside the skills development facilitator that focused on bringing in SETA business and to co-ordinate the development and delivery of new programmes, many members of campus staff put in significant effort into transforming the campus's curriculum and materials development. Another campus innovation was to establish an advisory committee which included external role players that assisted the campus in formulating and quality assuring its programmes.

From April 2002 South Cape College established learnership co-ordination as a key college function, in an effort to formulate a unified college approach to learnership development and to harness and spread the existing experience and knowledge about skills development across the campuses. It was also an attempt to better co-ordinate the submission of proposals to SETAs after it was found that (South Cape) college campuses were submitting competing proposals to the same SETAs to do the same work and access the same funding.

The college subsequently established a learnership management committee to centrally oversee (via a learnership co-ordinator) the process of tendering for new learnership projects and to develop policies and procedures within the college to frame such processes. Given that learnerships were regarded as the key way to generate funds for the respective campuses and for their future success and sustainability, these processes later came to shape the ways in which the Linkages and Programme Unit was established within the college.

The LPU started out in 2004 with three staff members – the college learnership coordinator took on the role of acting LPU manager, the Oudtshoorn skills development facilitator was appointed as the LPU developer and accreditation manager, and an

external person was appointed as LPU implementer. In that respect, the LPU team comprised of the experience and expertise of the main campus staff members that previously generated funds and developed new programmes.

2.3.5 Setting up an LPU as part of the college infrastructure

Although not yet fully in place, diagram 1 below represents what is expected to be the management structure of South Cape College. The diagram illustrates the main structural relationships between the college's different function areas. In terms of this, all functions related to programme delivery – i.e. academic affairs, human resources and learner support – fall under the responsibility of the academic vice-rector whose primary responsibility is overseeing the delivery of the college's curriculum. As such, campuses, as the primary sites of programme delivery, fall under the authority of the academic vice rector.

At the same time, each campus has a programme manager that co-ordinates programme development and delivery across campuses and liaises with SETAs about quality assurance and other such matters. The five positions are divided between Business Studies (2), Engineering Studies and Agriculture (1), ECD, ABET and ETDP (1) and Hospitality, Tourism and Hair Care (1). Programme managers work directly under the LPU, but have a direct reporting line to the academic vice rector. They report to the academic vice rector alongside the five campus managers and the LPU manager (which is regarded as the sixth 'learnership' campus head).

The LPU manager however mainly reports directly to the vice rector of business development, given that the business development arm is responsible for marketing the college, bringing in new business, developing new programmes, and increasing the college's student numbers.

The LPU microstructure

The current microstructure for the LPU is illustrated in diagram 2 below. The unit is headed by a Manager who is employed at post-level 4. Below this position are two post-level 3 positions – the developer and accreditation manager, and the implementer. A researcher supports the developer and accreditation manager, while a data capturer and numerous project managers and trainers work under the implementer. In the envisaged management structure for the college (see diagram 1) it is possible that the LPU and new business manager (and the business development vice rector) may be the same

person. Should this occur, the college envisages creating a separate position within the LPU structure for a 'new business' function, that will be located at the same level as the developer and accreditation manager, and the implementer.

Diagram 1: Envisaged management structure of South Cape College

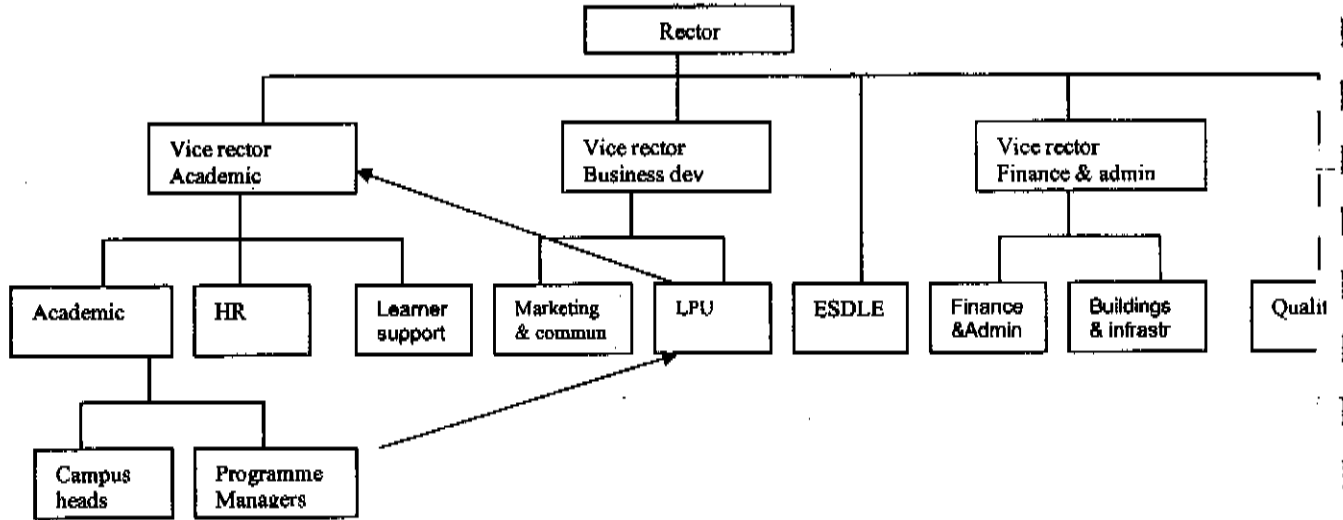
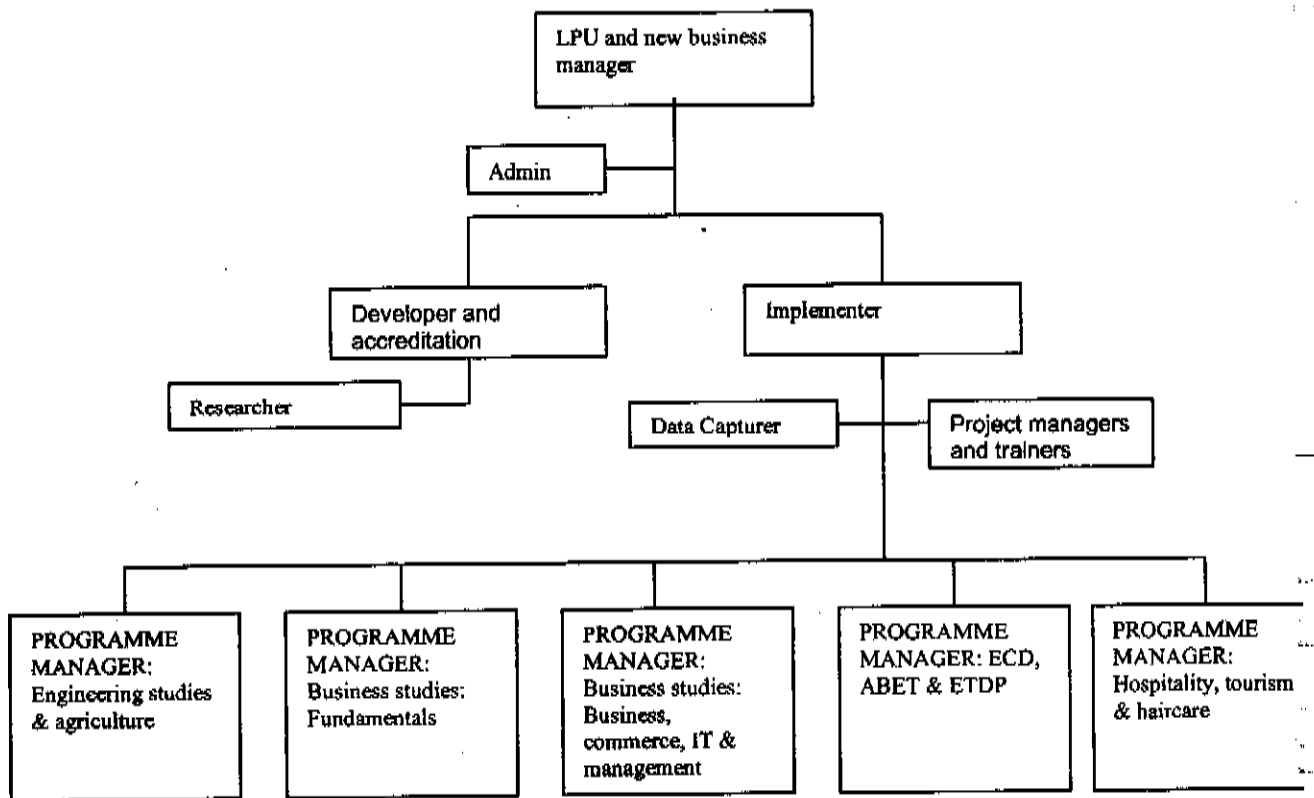


Diagram 2: LPU microstructure



Programme Managers are included in the LPU microstructure (diagram 2) to reflect their relationship with the LPU in terms of the implementation of learnerships rather than their line of reporting. The college's programmes are grouped into five areas, each of which will be headed by a programme manager whose primary responsibility is to ensure that the programmes delivered across campuses in their area meet quality requirements. In order to ensure continuity, programme managers are the main point of contact between the college and SETAs in connection with site, programme and staff accreditation.

Campus Heads oversee the implementation of standard college programmes, short courses and skills programmes at campus level, while the LPU Implementer oversees the implementation of all learnerships at campuses and at other sites. Campus heads and the LPU implementer collaborate with the programme managers in the implementation of college programmes. In the initial conceptualisation of the LPU, the programme managers were part of the LPU and reported to the LPU implementer. Their roles were then extended to include all college programmes which also changed their line function reporting.

As noted above, when the research was conducted for this report in the second half of 2004, there were only three staff members in the LPU – one of whom was initially appointed as the developer and accreditation manager (but was acting as the LPU and new business manager), the implementer and the data capturer. The post of developer and accreditation manager had by that time not yet been advertised. Also, only two of the five programme managers had been appointed – the ECD, ABET and ETDP programme manager, and the business studies: business, commerce, IT and management programme manager. The staff members employed by the LPU were at the time all College Council appointees, as were the programme managers. It is expected that the income generated by the LPU will be used to cover the salaries of the LPU staff and the programme managers.

2.3.6 Developing the necessary internal college and programme development processes

The success of the LPU is expected to depend on the optimal functioning of the various responsibilities of the LPU. These functions are discussed in more detail below and include:

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- How the college ascertains local demand and generates business
 - How it manages partnerships
 - How it develops programmes
 - How it accesses programme materials

Ascertaining local demand through market research to generate business

Until the establishment of the LPU, the college did not have a structure or staff component dedicated to the task of conducting market research to identify community and employer demand. Individual college staff did however conduct some desktop research, accessing mostly secondary research sources such as national, provincial, and sector skills development plans, municipal integrated development plans (IDPs), local economic development (LED) plans, and reports from organisations like Wesgro. The information drawn from these sources informed strategic planning, programme planning, and the development of project proposals and tenders. The college also drew important insights on regional demand from its contact with SETAs, employer organisations (like chambers of commerce), municipal Integrated Development Planning (IDP) forums, and various leading employers.

In the current microstructure, the LPU and new business manager is directly responsible for generating new business and carrying out research to determine local demand. The manager is supported by the LPU researcher whose main task is to research programme development and to inform college understandings of local demand. In normal circumstances the researcher is meant to report to the developer and implementation manager. However, this position has not yet been filled, and the LPU manager fulfills the main responsibilities of the position in the meantime.

The college also often calls upon the understandings of demand (in their various disciplines) of the respective programme managers. In that regard, ascertaining local demands is both a LPU and campus level activity and requires significant co-ordination and discussion between LPU staff and campus staff (programme managers and lecturers).

Developing and managing partnerships

Although partnerships are central to South Cape College's overall strategy, in the past there wasn't one cohesive college-driven partnership-development strategy and

approach. Partnerships were developed at campus level by campus heads, HoDs and senior lecturers as the need arose or as opportunities presented themselves. Campuses also tended to be territorial in relation to their own partners and generally resisted central coordination of their partnerships for fear that they would lose this funding for their own campus. Campuses were also concerned that the central office would not be able to adequately maintain the partnerships that they had struggled and worked hard to establish.

The current LPU strategy is to centrally coordinate and manage college partnerships, but also to keep campuses involved in the development and maintenance of these partnerships. Campus staff members that set up partnerships and work with them on a daily basis are thus expected to play an active role in the ongoing maintenance of secured partnerships. This is built on the notion that partnerships are generally quite personal and based on trust, and that the "relationship element" in partnerships needs to be nurtured by the individuals that initiated them. As such, each campus is expected to continue to develop and maintain partnerships and to support the delivery of programmes once the LPU has followed up on the partnership opportunities provided by campus staff.

Importantly, given that learnership implementation is the core function of the LPU, all partnerships that lead to learnership delivery is the direct responsibility of the LPU. The LPU is thus expected to develop procedures within the college structure that frame the ways in which all partnership agreements and contracts are formulated, especially for those that lead to the development of learnerships. This task is the responsibility of the implementation manager.

At this point South Cape College does not have an up-to-date list of all its partnerships, which is one of the tasks that the LPU is expected to give urgent attention. The intention is to develop a partnership database that will be used to track the progress of each partnership.

Programme development

South Cape College hopes to provide two routes to each qualification it provides – the standard NQF-aligned college programme route and the learnership route. The difference between the two qualification routes lies in the makeup of the programme. Standard NQF-aligned college programmes consist of 50% theory and 50% practice

while learnerships consist of 30% theory and 70% practical/workplace training. Each qualification is packaged into short courses and skill programmes, according to the demand.

The LPU is expected to oversee programme development, to monitor the approval process for all new programmes (including learnerships and skills programmes), and ensure that each new programme with its supporting materials is in place for delivery. Indeed, a vital part of the process of determining the viability of any project or programme is to establish if a qualification or the learning materials already exists for the project/programme and then to determine how to go about establishing it. This task of overseeing programme development is the responsibility of the LPU developer and accreditation manager.

The curriculum for each new programme is constructed from available qualifications, unit standards and materials. Close collaboration between the LPU, academic vice rector and programme managers is thus necessary. The programme development process begins with a search for relevant qualifications or unit standards that could possibly form the basis of the new programme. This includes trying to place the new programme into a career path that specifies its entry requirements and the various paths of study that could follow from it. Research is then done to identify suitable learning materials. Once this is complete, a submission is made to the Western Cape Education Department and (perhaps) a relevant SETA in order to gain programme approval and site accreditation. If necessary the business plan is also submitted to a donor organisation to obtain funding for programme development or for equipment to ensure that the delivery site meets SETA or departmental accreditation requirements.

An internal college reference group, which includes the academic vice rector, the relevant programme manager and college lecturers with appropriate subject expertise, is then set up to advise the development and delivery of each new programme. For each new programme the reference committee does an assessment to determine what training, resources and infrastructure is needed for its delivery. This reference group is expected to also include external stakeholder expertise in the future. The establishment of reference and advisory committees is the responsibility of the academic vice rector and serves as an important point of contact between the LPU and the academic vice rector.

The LPU also plays an important role in ensuring that programmes that have already been developed remain updated, and where necessary the LPU supports the process of revising and updating such programmes.

Learning materials development

The LPU further oversees the process of developing learning materials – a task which is (also) coordinated by the LPU programme developer and accreditation manager. Notably, although South Cape College does have some internal expertise in materials development, it does not regard the development of programme materials as one of its core functions. The college considers this to be too time-consuming and as such does not expect lecturers to partake in developing new learning materials as a part of their normal duties.

Instead, when the possibility arises to deliver a new programme, the LPU identifies suitable materials that are already available for use or that can be easily adapted. This is one of the primary tasks of the LPU researcher. Should learning materials not be available, or should the materials that have been located still require significant adaptation, the LPU decides on the financial viability of hiring contract staff to develop or adapt the required materials. In most cases, if funding is not available or cannot be obtained to develop the necessary materials, the college would more than likely not proceed with the delivery of the planned programme.

Should the college however decide to go ahead and develop or adapt the materials, this process is overseen by the LPU programme developer and accreditation manager (in collaboration with the reference committee established to oversee the development and delivery of the new programme). One or more materials writers (on contract) would normally be hired to work on the project and report to the LPU programme developer and accreditation manager.

Once a programme and its supporting materials have been developed it is handed over to the academic vice rector who oversees its implementation within the college, in collaboration with the programme managers, campus heads and LPU implementer (for learnership implementation) and in line with college policy and procedures and the quality requirements of SETAs, the WCED and UMALUSI.

Notably, college lecturers provide input into the process of developing new programmes and materials mainly through their involvement in reference committees. Sometimes

some college lecturers are also temporarily released from their core teaching responsibilities to focus full-time on materials development for a limited period of time. Some even have the option of applying to work on materials development on a contract basis outside of their normal duties during holidays or after hours and on weekends.

Role of external groups in programme and materials development

The Western Cape Education Department's (WCED) college curriculum committee (CCC) presently plays a very important role in coordinating and supporting the development and introduction of NQF-aligned programmes in Western Cape colleges. In that regard the CCC is currently co-ordinating a process whereby each college in the Western Cape is tasked with the responsibility of developing particular qualifications. South Cape College has, for instance, been awarded R1.6 million to develop the following five programmes and their supporting materials – electrical engineering, motor and diesel mechanic, furniture production, craft bread production, and storemanship.

The South Cape College LPU manager and quality manager currently serve on the WCED CCC and also co-ordinate the inputs of key college staff members who at various times are drawn into the CCC reference groups to give input on the development of the curriculum and materials for new qualifications.

The LPU's role in and approach to programme implementation

Learnerships have very particular requirements that are quite different to the process of setting up 'ordinary' programmes. Indeed, the process of delivering learnerships is generally regarded as too time consuming and challenging from a management and administrative point of view. That is because SETA systems and requirements are quite complex and require large amounts of documentation to be monitored, reported on and invoiced. Furthermore, the fact that one learnership can easily be delivered from a variety of sites (that are often very far from each other), yet need to be provided in one standardised form and of the same quality across all the delivery sites, can make the introduction and implementation of learnerships a rather frightening experience.

The current South Cape College strategy to circumvent many of the problems associated with learnership delivery is to employ contract staff on a temporary basis to serve as project managers and trainers. In that respect, the college's full-time and permanently appointed lecturers are used solely to teach standard college programmes

(NATED and NQF-aligned), short courses and skills programmes, while the LPU uses outside project managers and trainers to work on its various learnerships.

The college's learnership delivery strategy is as follows. Every learnership is managed by a contract project manager (who also often serves as a trainer for the learnership). Project managers are responsible for the day-to-day implementation of learnerships. This includes ensuring that all the necessary resources and equipment are available for the learnership, hiring trainers to carry out teaching duties when required, and ensuring that invoices and reports are submitted to the SETA on time. Project managers report to the LPU implementer who oversees the implementation of all college learnerships.

The LPU implementer ensures that all learnerships are implemented according to plan and according to SETA-specified quality criteria. The LPU implementer also ensures that various monitoring procedures are operational. These include the submission of monthly progress reports by learnership project managers, the regular interaction between LPU implementers and SETA-based coordinators, and the regular meeting of an implementation committee made up of the relevant stakeholders to monitor student progress at their place of work.

Preparing lecturers / trainers for implementation and the role of LPU

For the college to engage in responsive delivery and offer a variety of programmes it needs competent educators who are up-to-date with the latest developments in their subject areas and that have constant exposure to and knowledge about their respective industries. In its strategic goal for its *human resources functions* KPA, South Cape College commits itself to developing its staff and ensuring that they are kept informed about developments in the world of work. Staff development, including the placement of lecturers in workplaces for the purpose of them gaining industry experience, is the responsibility of the academic vice rector. The academic vice rector ensures that all of the college's full-time WCED and council appointed lecturers have the training they need to deliver college programmes. The reference committees established to support the development and delivery of new programmes help to identify the skills and knowledges needed for each new programme and thus what staff training is needed for effective programme delivery.

Given that learnership delivery is the responsibility of the LPU it must ensure that all employed contract trainers have the necessary levels of expertise, and where necessary

arrange for trainers to be further capacitated. The South Cape College reported in 2004 that most contract staff that work on learnerships generally have the required subject expertise to fulfill their responsibilities, and the majority are qualified assessors and project managers.

2.3.7 Setting up learnerships

South Cape College has progressed well with regard to developing and delivering NQF full qualifications and learnerships. It reported that all campuses other than the Skills Centre currently provide at least one learnership. All campuses, other than Mossel Bay and the Skills Centre, also deliver at least one full NQF-qualification. Of the five campuses, Oudtshoorn campus is the only campus that no longer provides any NATED programmes.

The learnerships that the college delivered during 2004 are listed in Table 1 below. Some are delivered at campuses, while others are provided at employees' places of work or at external sites like schools. The college reports that each campus has the infrastructure and facilities to support delivery in particular niche areas, and that the niche areas normally determine which campus sites are used to deliver the relevant learnerships. While Mossel Bay campus and the Skills Centre currently provide the main electrical and mechanical engineering programmes, it is expected that these programmes will also be provided at the Beaufort West campus once it is formally established. In addition, the Skills Centre provides construction, hospitality and hairdressing skills programmes.

The Oudtshoorn campus specializes in tourism, ECD and hospitality programmes, while notable specialities at the George campus are hairdressing and ECD. All South Cape College campuses provide business studies programmes and primary agriculture programmes.

Table 1: Learnerships delivered in 2004

Horticulture	NQF 1	PAETA
Agriculture: junior farm manager	NQF 1 & 4	PAETA
Local government: finance and administration	NQF 5	LWGSETA
ABET practitioners	NQF 4	ETDP
ECD	NQF 4 & 5	ETDP
National certificate in furniture production	NQF 2	FIETA

Servicing a motor vehicle	NQF 2	MERSETA
Agriculture machinery technician	NQF 2	SETASA
Tour guiding	NQF 4	THETHA

The LPU manages all of the learnerships (listed in Table 1) from the college's central office (other than the ECD and tour guiding learnerships). It is expected that the LPU will also offer many of the above learnerships in 2005, along with a further 13 new learnerships. Table 2 describes these 13 learnerships planned for 2005, most of which will be delivered under the auspices of the ESDL.

Table 2: Learnerships planned for 2005

LED	NQF 4	LGWSETA	X
Furniture production	NQF 2	FIETA	✓
Vehicle maintenance	NQF 3	MERSETA	✓
Vehicle services	NQF 2	MERSETA	✓
Registered accounting clerk	NQF 3	FASSETA	✓
Baking entrepreneurial practices	NQF 1	FOODBEV	✓
End-user computing	NQF 4	ISETT	✓
Community house builder	NQF 2	CETA	✓
Construction mason	NQF 3	CETA	✓
Project management	NQF 5	ESETA	✓
Secretarial administration	NQF 3	SERVICES	✓
Electrical engineering	NQF 2	ESETA	✓
ECD (two different delivery sites)	NQF 4	ETDP	✓
National certificate in furniture production	NQF 2	FIETA	✓

Moreover, South Cape College will provide a number of new NQF-aligned full qualifications in 2005. Table 3 describes the qualifications envisaged for the various campuses in 2005. The qualifications will also be made available as learnerships should there be a demand for them.

Table 3: New NQF-aligned full qualifications planned for 2005

Business administration	2	UMALUSI
Human resource management	5	CAPUT
Public administration	5	CAPUT
Public relations	5	CAPUT
Electrical engineering	2-4	MERSETA
Motor & diesel mechanic	2-4	MERSETA
Cosmetology	4	Services SETA
Hospitality	2-4	UMALUSI
Sport management	2-4	THETA
Craft bread making	?	THETA

How well are learnerships functioning?

A significant obstacle that all FET colleges are facing presently in the delivery of learnerships is that the overall learnership system is not yet fully developed. As learnerships are being developed they are also being delivered, which places enormous stress on all levels of the skills development system - SAQA, SETAs, and providers. Many learnerships are also being delivered against unit standards that have not yet been registered on the NQF (for instance the FIETA furniture production learnership) and often learning materials are either not available or are inadequate to support delivery. Colleges also invariably experience problems with staff capacity and college infrastructure to provide the practical training components of learnerships.

Notably, South Cape College contracts outside trainers to solely work on learnerships. It does this because most college staff members remain tied to teaching on standard NATED programmes. This situation has ushered in many concerns (around only using contract workers) which, when coupled with weaknesses in certain external processes, often places the college in a somewhat precarious situation. For example, contract trainers/project managers are often found to be unsuitable after the learnership has already been started. Many project managers also find out after they've been contracted to a learnership that the learning materials are (generally) unsuitable or inadequate for immediate use. They also often struggle with getting SETA programme approval and programmes invariably are already being delivered when approval is finally given. Then there are also constant problems with inappropriate infrastructure and/or equipment for learnership delivery, as well as low student attendance. All this places contract trainers in quite precarious and unstable situations.

Most importantly perhaps, staff capacity to deliver learnerships does not get institutionalized where the college depends on contract staff to oversee learnership delivery. Vital knowledge and experience on learnership delivery is lost when contract trainers do not continually work for the college or when there isn't someone within the college structure that continually (annually) works on a particular learnership. In that respect, it is essential that the capacity of permanent staff be developed in learnership delivery in the future, especially given that the college envisages expanding learnerships every year.

A learnership that was reported to be doing very well, bar a few problems, is the *agriculture junior farm manager learnership*. The learnership is delivered in partnership

with Oudtshoorn Experimental Farm and is in its third year of implementation. The role of the Oudtshoorn Experimental Farm is to provide the practical/workplace training component for the students, all of whom are unemployed. The Oudtshoorn Experimental Farm reports that it has a very good relationship with the college and that the weekly meetings that are held with the project manager ensure that identified problems are quickly resolved.

Two learnerships that have experienced some implementation problems recently though are the *agriculture machinery technician learnership* and the *horticulture learnership*. The *agriculture machinery technician learnership* is an ESDLE learnership that began in June 2004 with an intake of 61 learners, all of whom were unemployed. It is expected that once the learners complete the theory and practical component of the learnership at Mossel Bay campus they will be placed at farms or with garages for workplace training, where they will learn to fix farming equipment. The main problem with the learnership is that the workshop that is needed for the delivery of the core theory/practical component of the learnership had not yet been built when the learnership began, and remains uncompleted even though the maths fundamentals, the communication fundamentals and the core theoretical component of the learnership has already been delivered.

A key problem being experienced with many learnerships presently is that project managers often do the bulk of the training and have little time left for project management. They also struggle to keep up to date with administrative requirements like keeping registers, organising extra classes for learners who have missed classes or need additional support, and ensuring that students receive their allowances which are paid directly into their bank accounts.

2.3.8 Summary

The establishment of the South Cape College LPU has been hailed by staff members as a very positive development. There is a general view that the LPU has already begun to provide the necessary capacity for the college to market itself more effectively, to generate business for the college, and to introduce new programmes. The LPU has generally been commended for the "excellent job done bringing in learnerships" for the college, "especially with so few people". Senior management and the college council are fully supportive of the LPU and feel that it will play an even more significant role in

generating new business and partners for the college in the future, and thereby contribute to the college's growth and sustainability.

In that respect, although South Cape College did not have a similar kind of specialized unit (as a LPU) within the college before 2003, the college had considerable experience and knowledge about how to develop programmes, produce learning materials, and implement learnerships, and drew upon this when it set about establishing its Linkages and Programme Unit (LPU). The early stages of setting up the LPU, and trying to functionalise its various responsibilities, also provided some important insights on the overall design of the required LPU. Key lessons that are said to have shaped the design of the LPU and its approach to learnership delivery are:

- The delivery requirements of learnerships are very different and more demanding than standard college programmes. As such learnership implementation works better when separated from standard delivery. In order to ensure standardised delivery of learnerships across delivery sites and across different learnerships that is in line with the requirements of SETAs, central coordination and control is necessary;
- Learnership project managers are very important to successful learnership implementation;
- College staff generally do not have the capacity to handle learnership implementation along with their many other teaching responsibilities. The college thus expands its capacity by using contract staff to project manage and to teach on learnerships. Contract staff can also be more flexibly deployed than permanent staff, which makes it simpler to use them in learnership delivery;
- It is easier to ensure a standard, consistent and coordinated approach to the employment and management of the contract staff working on learnerships if they are centrally managed. In terms of this it is considered to be better for the LPU to oversee the employment and management of all learnership staff even if they are delivering learnerships at campuses;
- To ensure streamlined communication with SETAs, the college needs to nominate one primary contact person to liaise with each SETA. For this reason it was decided that the programme managers would play this role and that other staff members would work through them.

Respondents in the research project also made many pertinent observations with regard to the use of contract project managers, the combining of the roles of trainers and project managers, the availability of training materials, the issue of paying commission to staff and trainers linked to learnerships, and about what they thought a LPU should function as. Some of these comments are synthesised below.

Use of contract project managers and trainers to deliver learnerships

Although the college is planning to get its permanent staff "on track" in relation to the delivery of NQF aligned programmes, it does not intend using staff members to deliver learnerships (at least in the short to medium term). The college firmly believes that contract trainers are the ideal vehicle for learnership delivery as they are flexible and easily adaptable for responsive delivery. Through the use of contract staff, the LPU also predicts a faster start up time on delivering a new learnership. Notably, there are a number of problems attached to the use of contract staff, some of which have been discussed above. The main concern that was raised was that as FET colleges increasingly make use of contract staff (mainly because it gives them flexibility to expand and reduce in size according to the programme demand and also allows them to branch out easily into new areas when previous foci become redundant), capacity and skills are becoming located within individuals rather than within institutions.

Problems that can occur when combining the role of trainer and project manager

Project managers have a crucial role to play in the successful implementation of learnerships in terms of the LPU model. However the role of project manager and trainer is often combined, particularly on smaller projects when the project manager is also required to teach. This can clearly become a problem should the chosen individual not have the necessary skill and capacity to fulfill two key roles. Indeed, it would seem that keeping the functions of learnership project manager and trainer separate could contribute positively to the proper monitoring and management of the delivery of learnerships.

The problem of inadequate learning materials

From discussions with two of the college's partners – New Plant and PAETA – it emerges that the lack of specialized training materials represents a significant obstacle to the successful implementation of learnerships. Each employer has very specific requirements, and often generic training materials are too superficial to serve particular

employer needs. It may well be that South Cape College will need to approach materials development/adaptation as more of a core function than it currently does. The college may also need to ensure that trainers spend more time on adapting available materials, rather than simply teaching those provided.

Paying commission

South Cape College uses a form of commission to reward the LPU team for the effort put into generating business for the college. A commission based on a percentage of the total value of a contract is paid into a pool from which LPU staff members are all paid a production bonus. Staff members that bring in new business for the college are also paid an initiators fee.

This system of paying commission was initially adopted to encourage staff members to bring in learnerships and external revenue and is said to have contributed, for instance, to Oudtshoorn campus's success in generating new business. The commission system is not without its problems however and there is evidence within South Cape College that the commission system can lead to unnecessary competitive friction amongst staff.

Some systems and mechanisms needed for effective LPU functioning

The LPU's finances are currently managed as part of the college. However, the LPU works on a very different basis to the college in that it functions more like a business. The LPU operates on a project to project basis getting paid for each part of a project when completed. It was noted that the money from SETAs in particular comes in "drips and drabs" and often needs to be followed up. The LPU needs to be able to easily track money deposits and report on expenditure to SETAs in the manner specified by them. Given the LPU's different mode of operation to the rest of the college in relation to finances, the LPU unit's finances may well need to be managed in a separate bank account.

Concluding remarks on the South Cape College LPU

At the time that the field research on the South Cape College LPU was conducted it had only been operational for approximately seven months and was still in the process of being established. The LPU's full staff complement was not yet in place and some of its function areas and systems had either not yet been set up or were not yet operating according to plan. The college had many vacant posts that still needed to be filled and a number of systems that required establishment and operationalisation.

Indeed, expanding and developing associated processes within a college while also carrying out the core functions of a specialised unit like the LPU can be a tremendously challenging and stressful experience. Nonetheless, all role-players note that the LPU has made significant progress in a very short space of time. Most importantly, the LPU has thus far demonstrated that it can generate sufficient money to sustain itself and to support the employment of other staff members (like the college's five programme managers), and as such will be able to exist independently once DANIDA funding for the unit ends after 3 years.

Notably, respondents were concerned that the work of the LPU, especially with regard to its work on learnerships, has not been integrated into the everyday workings of the college, and that the knowledge and experience developed in this area was at risk of being lost to the college. Respondents noted that college interaction with SETAs and the development and delivery of NQF aligned programmes and learnerships had thus far not been evenly spread across campuses and that there was often very little capacity embedded at the campus level. Indeed, by delivering learnerships separate to and outside of the core function of college campuses, the college may be risking not developing the in-house capacity of its campuses to introduce and deliver learnerships in the future.

Case Study Three: Sivananda College, Durban, Kwazulu Natal

2.4.1 Background to Sivananda College

Sivananda College comprises of five campuses or sites of delivery, namely Kwa-Mashu, Ntuzuma, Pinetown, Mpumalanga and Qadi. The latter two campuses (essentially skills centres) only offered skills programmes in 2004 (when study was conducted). It is notable that the Mpumalanga Campus originated as a Police College, was then converted into a Teacher Training College, and is currently being developed into a skills centre. These changes have had a significant impact on the growth and development of the facility.

Since April 2004 the core operations of Sivananda College have been managed from its central offices in a corporate office complex in the suburb of Westville (Durban). The core college management team that is based at the Westville central office includes the Chief Executive Officer and his deputy CEOs, the SESD Co-ordinator, the Marketing unit, the TQM co-ordinator, and the FETMIS unit. Unlike other Linkages and Programme

Units (LPUs) in the study, the Sivananda LPU and the Student Support Unit (SSU) operate from one campus, separate from the central office. The choice of the Pinetown campus is ascribed to the more favourable distance of Pinetown to the other four campuses (in township and rural areas). The Pinetown campus, which is located close to Pietermaritzburg, is also the closest college campus to the central office.

It is notable that the various campuses that make up Sivananda College are located in quite diverse environments. The Pinetown campus for instance is located in a peri-urban environment, the KwaMashu and Ntuzuma campuses are based in townships, while the Mmpumulanga and Qadi campuses (skills centres) are found in more outlying rural settings. It is notable that in all these settings the core student population of Sivananda College is African.

The KwaMashu and Ntuzuma campuses offer courses in the 'old fashioned' business and engineering studies, while the Pinetown campus seems to have become 'specialized' in utility studies courses (cosmetics, haircare, interior decorating, horticulture, hospitality, tourism etc), professional cookery courses, and business studies. The two 'skills centres' (Mpumalanga and Qadi campuses) are typically focused on the practical delivery of relatively low level skills training and generally do not have the kinds of facilities and infrastructure as the other three college campuses. The campuses are regarded however as valuable resources within the college to link up with rural communities and serve perhaps the most disadvantaged in the province.

Notably, Sivananda College is a fairly small college with 2320 students (headcounts) and 1023 FTEs, overseen by about 154 staff members.

2.4.2 Developing an institutional strategy based on external partner demand

Sivananda College's strategic 'business plan' takes as its point of departure the focus within the *National Department of Education's Three Year Strategic Plan* on 'working together to build a South African education and training system for the 21st century'. In particular the college highlights the need to "build and expand access to a responsive, flexible quality FET system that enhances the life-chances of all South Africans by accelerating the provision of appropriate skills and the promotion of values and beliefs espoused in the Constitution". In that regard the key college priority areas are identified

as scarce skills and human resources development (HRD). The college Business Plan for (2004/2005) notes that:

Working with all stakeholders, we are committed to develop and implement innovative strategies that will position us as a leading FET provider in the KZN province, providing quality education and training to meet the demands of the communities we serve (Strategic Business Plan 2004/5).

As a whole the business plan reflects long term, reflective, conceptual and creative thinking that identifies key opportunities within the immediate college environment and which is concerned with developing a particular vision for the institution.

This is evident in four of the business plan's main 'guiding principles', namely:

- The College remains relevant to the economic environment and community needs within it operates, and aligned to the framework of the national, provincial and local developmental demands;
- The College seeks to foster innovation, entrepreneurship, creativity and leadership for the benefit of the College, industries and the communities it serves;
- The college seeks to enhance the long-term financial viability of the College through responsible and responsive appropriation of resources
- The college commits to increasing employability and/or self employment of its learners through venture creation and entrepreneurship and to promote personal growth of individuals and communities to support economic development (adapted Strategic Business Plan 2004/5).

However, what was missing when the study was conducted in August 2004 was the existence of an operationable management structure that translated the 'college vision' into an array of short-term, immediate outcomes, requiring action in a small time frame and which concentrated on concrete, routine functions informed by the internal context of the college (see Hanson and Henry 1992).

In fairness, the existing operational structure has not been helped over the previous years by a high turnover of staff, particularly within a specialized management structure like the LPU. When the study was conducted in August 2004 the position of LPU

manager was provisionally being filled by a female staff member who had only just 'taken up' her post and who was also expected to fulfill other key functions within the college. In terms of formal structures and functions, the LPU had been largely inactive when she took up her position.

In that respect, the college strategic business plan for the 2006-2008 cycle is expected to include special attention on 'partnerships, linkages and curriculum development' and a specific plan on how to formalize and stimulate these goals within its 'community interventions'. The college expects that its focus on curriculum and linkages will be aided and informed by the college's first 'comprehensive market survey' and by the stimulation of overall learner numbers and intake. With regard to the latter, the college hopes to stimulate greater student interest and intake through the introduction of 'innovative' SAQA aligned courses over the next year. This will require significantly closer links with SETAs than has been the case thus far.

Indeed, using the business plan of 2004/2005 as a starting point, it is evident that the college is keen to make 'linkages and partnerships' its main priority over the next period, and to develop the necessary internal infrastructure to support the realization of these links and the push to fulfill overall college goals.

Importantly, the college was involved in a number of partnerships or links with external partners in August 2004 that may shape the ways in which the college develops in the next period. In particular, the college is in the process of developing a particular institutional niche area at its Mpumalanga campus where it, with funding from DANIDA in association with a non-governmental organization, the Rainman Foundation, hopes to initiate several organic farming initiatives.

- *Organic Farming with the Rainman Foundation*

This initiative at the Mpumalanga campus is by far the most fruitful and exciting venture that the LPU unit has secured thus far. In collaboration with an NGO, the Rainman Foundation, the campus will provide the facilities and infrastructure to train students in organic agriculture (using indigenous/natural, eco-friendly farming techniques). The project is the brainchild of Dr Franz and Hillary Auerbach, who are ex-University of Natal lecturers and experts in horticulture/organic farming techniques. Using personnel from the Rainman Foundation, the project seeks to train about thirty students at one time. Presently, the programme lasts for nine months and hosts about 21 students. It is

envisaged that present funding will account for four separate batches of students. Taught skills include practical hands-on skills training for growing essentials in an environmentally friendly manner, as well as skills training deemed necessary to trade in the local labour market. Students are also taught about 'rainwater harvesting' (which is essentially about how to make maximize use of natural resources). While the programme has not yet been officially accredited, the organisers of the programme are well-known experts in the field and are also intimately involved in the development of unit standards with the relevant SETA (PAETA). It is unlikely that accreditation will thus be refused.

This programme holds significant promise both for the college in terms of income and for communities in need of access to 'relevant' training. In interviews with students in the August 2004 batch, students noted how useful the programme was to the community and how it was assisting them to better utilize their respective skills to make their 'land work for them' (especially in the waning or absence of formal employment opportunities). The success of the programme could be gauged from the fact that incoming students had heard about the programme from others and were keen to get accepted thereon. This was in direct contrast to 'traditional' responses to agricultural activity, where it was generally frowned upon and regarded as a form of punishment (gardening) used to punish students when they committed misdemeanours. Programme participants note that, in an area characterized by high levels of violence and conflict, the Rainman Foundation project promises a 'way forward' that embraces current skills and resources to both combat high levels of unemployment and help ease societal tension around training and work issues. Notably, the LPU seeks to use this project as a way of engaging the Department of Land Development in discussions around training individuals who received agricultural land as a result of land redistribution policies.

- *The New Venture Creation Learnership*

The New Venture Creation Learnership is a further programme that holds much promise for the college's development. The New Venture Creation Learnership is a specific intervention by the Department of Labour which is using the college as a pilot site for the initiative.

The learnership programme is aimed at assisting individual learners to identify particular business opportunities, and to then start-up and manage such micro-enterprises. The learnership is expected to be provided at the *NQF Level 4* and will take place over

between 12-16 months. It is expected that the programme will train about thirty (30) students in the first round. Advertisements for the NVC learnerships specified the following:

- A formal qualification (NQF level 3 / Gr. 11 / Std 9)
- Previous exposure to entrepreneurship
- At least 6 months work experience

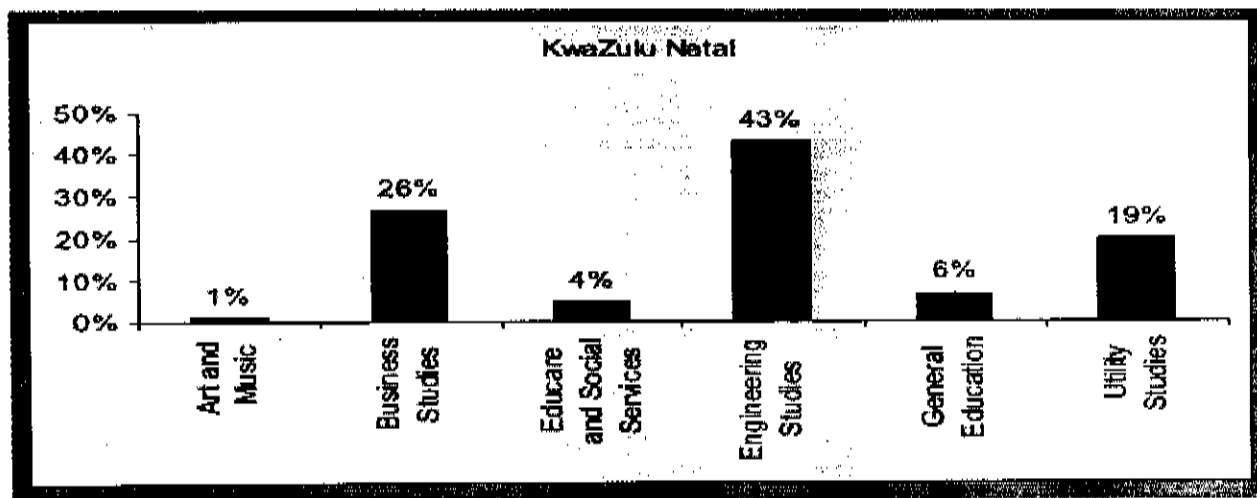
While the latter criteria may seem to contradict the overall goal of the learnership, the project has been extensively workshopped across three pilot sites in association with the Durban Institute of Technology with significant input from a diverse group of informants. A further contribution of the project was to train and capacitate college staff in micro-business initiatives.

- *Technisa and ICDL*

Two final strategic partnerships that may shape the way in which the college engages with external partners in the future are the links between Sivananda and Technisa, and the provision of the International Computer Driving License (ICDL) qualification. Both represent short-term agreements that target particular student populations within the college. The link with Technisa for example targets students keen on higher education qualifications and is simply a franchise agreement between Sivananda College and Technisa whereby students are allowed to register at Technisa and use the college as a venue to register and be assessed (the college is thus a KZN Technisa Satellite). The International Computer Driving Licence (ICDL) is an international basic computer skills qualification which has been offered for some time now within the college, and was originally established by a college senior lecturer. The two partnerships also suggest the different ways in which the college could 'respond to its immediate environment' by developing short term courses and programmes as part of short term agreements with external partners.

Importantly, when one looks at the official partnership statistics provided by the Department of Education for Kwazulu Natal in 2002, it shows significant activity in the 'formal' fields of engineering and business studies. The table below provides an overview of the above described partnership projects.

Figure 1: Partnerships by vocational field in KZN

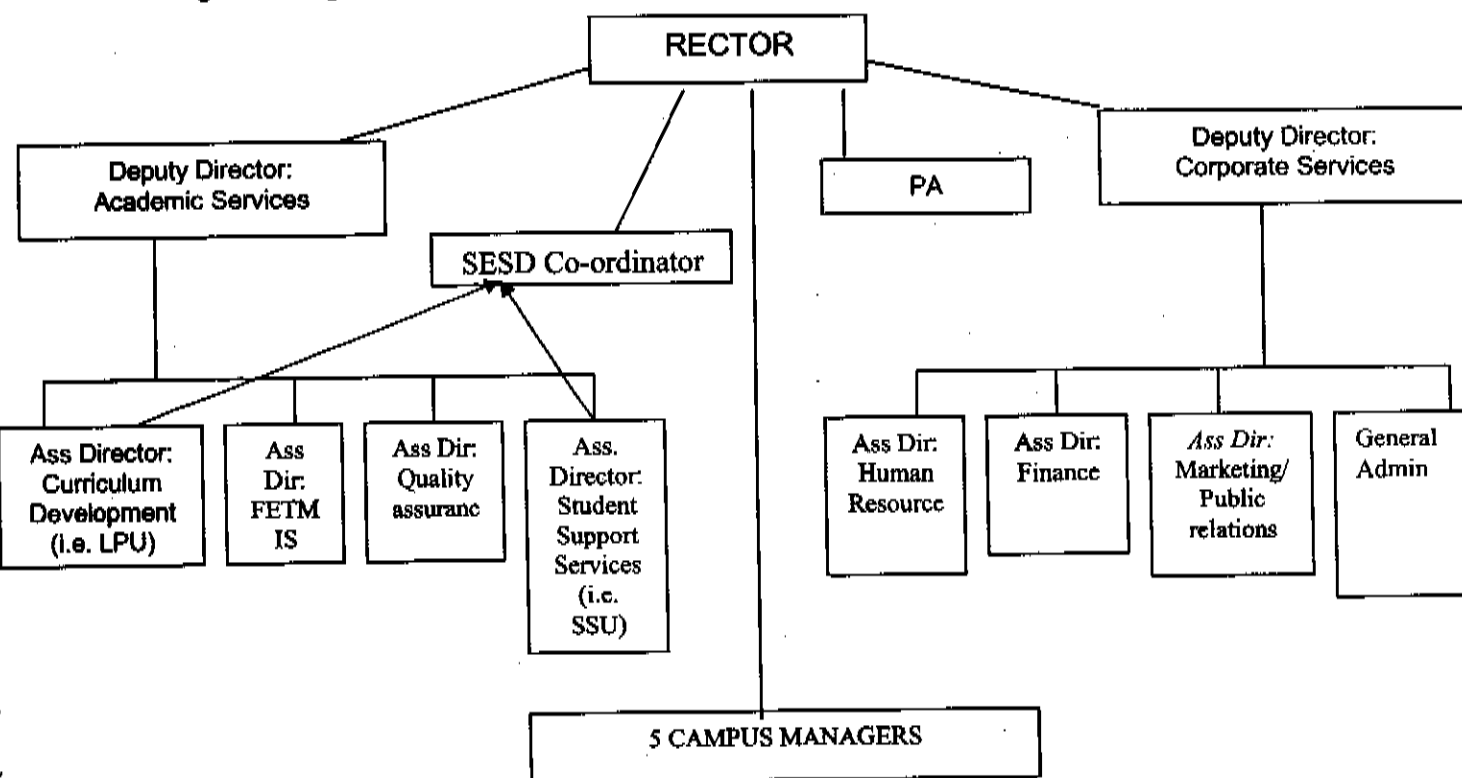


Source DoE, 2004: Partnerships Projects by Vocational Field for KZN (2002)

2.4.3 Setting up an LPU as part of the college infrastructure

The diagram below describes the management structures within the college and the channels through which the various college functions are fulfilled.

Figure 2: Organisational structure of Sivananda College



It is difficult to discuss the role of the LPU within the overall college structure when the unit has accomplished so little since its inception (though not by its own volition). Moreover, as long as college provision continues to be predominantly NATED programmes, it will seem that college structures have not been 'sufficiently tested' with regard to their ability to provide quality, flexible, and diverse educational offerings. Earlier case studies suggest that the first real indication of the growth of college structures only become evident once the college and its LPU starts grappling with profound curriculum change within the college, and once it actually starts grappling with developing structures that 'talk to' both internal and external college processes at the same time.

Notably, even though the LPU has witnessed significant staff changes and approaches in the period since October 2003, many of the required processes noted above have continued. For example, the LPU function was previously merged with the TQM function within the college. This was so because it was felt that the 'forming of linkages' and curriculum development went hand in hand. It was conceded though that the two activities were quite distinct and that ways had to be found to link the two functions. This was an important admission and signalled a need to better understand internal college processes and functions. Currently, the LPU is staffed by two individuals who report directly to the college SESD Co-ordinator. It is expected that they will eventually report to the Deputy Director of Academic services.

The former line of reporting is based on the particular focus of the LPU on inception while the latter line of reporting is expected after the LPU embeds itself more firmly within the college structure. Indeed, it is notable that when the LPU was originally established, the LPU manager was particularly preoccupied with developing relationships with the hospitality and construction SETAs (THETA and CETA), and paid little attention to alternative ways of formulating partnerships with businesses and communities. With time she also began interacting with the Rainman Foundation, looked more closely at IT training provision, and starting to engage a host of partners that could potentially sign formal agreements with the college. Some of these partnerships are explored below.

Importantly, many of the skills programmes (electrical, plumbing and refrigeration) that were developed for SETA accreditation after October 2003 are versions of old department of labour programmes. A key difference in current provisioning is that it is now provided on Saturday mornings in a short course format. This potentially suggests

an astute reading of the local environment, where many students desperately seek more skills training but require more flexible and shorter programmes.

2.4.4 Internal processes and learnerships

The success of the LPU will ultimately depend on how its functions within the college and how it resolves some of its key functions noted below.

- How the college ascertains local demand and generates business
- How it manages partnerships
- How it develops programmes
- How it accesses programme materials

As noted previously, many of the above debates had not yet been engaged with or resolved within the college by the time the study was conducted in August 2004. The text below describes some of the discussions around learnerships at the time.

CETA Accreditation

Partnering the construction industry was deemed a key priority when the LPU was established in October 2003. This was based on the belief that the industry could provide important employment opportunities for a significant number of college students. A subsequent Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) was signed between the Department of Education and CETA, which reportedly paved the way for the college to apply for the accreditation of all its delivery sites, and for the accreditation of staff involved with engineering training at the Qadi, Kwamashu and Ntuzuma campuses. A key stumbling block however was that all the sites had to be upgraded and adapted in accordance with SETA regulations. Furthermore, at the time of the study CETA needed to contract a consortium of curriculum developers to develop learning modules for CETA qualifications (fundamentals, core, and electives) and advise the college on the main training requirements for staff accreditation purposes. At the time, the college was advised to focus on developing fundamental courses. All these processes are time consuming and occur over many months, by which time colleges often 'lose' key staff members (which means processes sometimes have to start again).

With regard to CETA links it is notable that many of the programmes that are expected to be developed are in the 'traditional trades' or regarded as subsidiary, albeit lower level, activities. The following programmes were offered at the various sites:

- Qadi - Bricklaying, Plumbing, Drain laying
- Ntuzuma - Welding w/shop, Bricklaying, Plumbing, Drain laying
- KwaMashu - Bricklaying, Plumbing

Wholesale and Retail Generalist Learnership, INSETA and cabinet making

Many of the discussions around links to SETAs often target the kinds of work possibilities characterized by the majority of students as well as sites where key interventions are required. That would explain the focus on Mpumalanga campus in many of the initiatives. The college went into an agreement with Qubela Training for example when it was approached to provide training for 17 employed learners in Wholesale and Retail Generalist Training in the Durban area. The college also pursued links to the INSETA as a way of capturing a particular niche market around this kind of learnership delivery. What this suggests is that college programme development is significantly informed by the opening up of funding possibilities (a similar process was initiated when the college became aware of a demand for cabinetmakers in the Pietermaritzburg area and explored providing a learnership in that area).

Summary

It is indeed difficult to describe how the Linkages and Programme Unit evolved at Sivananda College, or its various forms and functions within the overall college and management structure. When the study was conducted in August 2004 current LPU staff were simply too new to their positions for a balanced assessment of the LPUs merits or overall functioning. What can be said however is that the college faces considerable challenges in reconstituting itself within the new FET landscape not least because college campuses are located in such a wide and diverse array of local environments. To strategically plan for completely different social and economic contexts, especially in a context of extreme poverty and high unemployment, requires a stable management cadre and unanimous support for college approaches. Unfortunately, this has not happened at Sivananda. The period from 2003 has seen a number of staff changes within the LPU, and staff members at the various campuses continue to voice

disapproval at some of the pathways chosen. Justified or not, the lack of firm processes within the college to oversee college interaction with external partners and subsequent programme development, has meant that the LPU had struggled to 'find its feet' by August 2004.

2.5 Case Study Four: The College of Cape Town, Western Cape

2.5.1 Background to the College of Cape Town

The College of Cape Town (CCT) consists of nine campuses (or what the college prefers to refer to as centres of excellence) which are spread out across the central and southern escarpments of Cape Town and the Cape Flats.

Campus
1. Athlone Campus
2. City Campus
3. Crawford Campus
4. Gardens Campus
5. Guguletu Campus
6. Pinelands Campus
7. Salt River Campus
8. Thornton Campus
9. Wynberg Campus

The college management team of the College of Cape Town is located at its central offices in (south east) Pinelands. This premises is logistically (roughly) of equal distance to all of the nine centres of excellence spread out across the central and southern escarpments of Cape Town and the Cape Flats.

The City campus is the largest of the nine campuses and provides tuition mainly in business and general studies. The latter include crafts, design, interior, hospitality, information technology, hair care and cosmetology, and travel and tourism. The Pinelands campus only offers engineering programmes and accounts for more than 50% of all engineering provision in the College. The rest of engineering provision is provided at the Athlone, Crawford, Thornton and Guguletu campuses.

The Guguletu campus also provides courses in jewellery, art and design, hospitality, tourism, and crafts. The Crawford campus provides courses in engineering, business studies and utility studies, whilst the Athlone and Thornton campuses specialize in engineering provision and horticulture. The Gardens campus concentrates on educare and ECD provision, and the Wynberg campus specializes in hair care and cosmetology.

The Salt River campus houses the Simulated Enterprises in South Africa (SIMSA) Project.

The College of Cape Town is located in the heart of an urban environment. This gives the college considerably more leverage than for instance Mthashana College (in Kwazulu Natal) both in terms of access to employers and industries and with regard to the numbers of students that seek to enroll at the college. Generally, the college campuses are all infrastructurally well-resourced and enjoy adequate financial resources and controls. College respondents note that:

The main aim of the College of Cape Town is to provide high quality education and training that offers a wide range of learning options. In doing so, the college seeks to equip students with the necessary knowledge, skills and attitudes, values and competencies that will allow them to access life-long learning opportunities and thereby ensure that they become economically productive members of society (interview with academic manager).

Indeed, respondents note that the key challenge since 2001 for an established facility like the College of Cape Town has been to get the balance of college provision right; between maintaining and consolidating the older programmes (focusing on what they're good at) and 'developing new programmes that respond to broader provincial and regional economic priorities. In recent years the college has strategically and structurally re-aligned itself to respond to the challenges, demands and requirements associated with the new and unfolding FET landscape, and focused on developing demand-led programmes that are more attuned to the needs and requirements of emerging economic sectors in the Western Cape.

More specifically, the college has embarked on a process of structural development and adapted its various structures, systems, and facilities in ways that, it hopes, will successfully support the operationalisation of the new programme-based model. At the same time it has also sought to consolidate the systems that underpin its 'historical provisioning', given that there remains a demand for this kind of provision (NATED streams) in the region.

In that respect it is notable that the core business of the college remains engineering studies (which remains mostly NATED-based), with about 10 385 of the total headcount of 14 450 students in 2004. (This is notwithstanding the fact that the numbers of students in 'other' courses- see table below- are growing rapidly.)

This has provided the college with some rather particular challenges, some of which are:

- Employers and business partners in engineering fields remain skeptical about and quite resistant to changes that have been made around artisanal training.
- Tools and workshops in engineering are very expensive, both in terms of start-up and maintenance.
- Students remain worried that the college will struggle to provide them with a whole qualification in four years since many unit standards based courses haven't been developed yet. It is noteworthy in this regard that only 20% of engineering courses at the college had become unit standard-based in 2004.

Other notable points about the college are that 73% of the 14450 headcounts are male, 6018 are Coloured and 5397 are African. Also, the college employed 462 staff members in 2004. The table below provides a breakdown of total headcount students for 2004 according to gender, population group and learning fields.

LEARNING FIELDS	MALES					FEMALES					TOTALS
	AFR	COL	IND	WHI	OTH	AFR	COL	IND	WHI	OTH	
ENGINEERING	2823	4398	270	1555	55	634	474	13	74	89	10385
BUSINESS	362	300	6	88	18	956	462	17	135	182	2526
SOCIAL SERVICES	10	0	0	0	0	20	0	0	0	0	30
ARTS	81	108	5	75	16	53	85	4	123	16	566
OTHER	302	59	0	23	17	156	132	9	177	68	943
TOTALS	3578	4865	281	1741	106	1819	1153	43	509	355	14450

2.5.2 Developing an institutional strategy

The central focus and strategy of the College of Cape Town is to become the preferred provider of education and training in the Western Cape and to develop quality programmes that nurture the skills of students in ways that serve the skills development needs of the province. Broadening access is also a critical focus area, and finds expression in the nature and scope of programming and delivery modes currently being developed. The college further seeks to emphasise provisioning for the 'second-chance learning market', namely those learners who have not yet finished Grade 12. The college already has about 600 students that are currently enrolled at its City campus.

Respondents generally note that the revamped academic planning and programme development have brought into play a fresh and innovative provisioning dispensation that will assist the college in meeting the demands of emerging markets in the region and to shape their specific institutional identity. They suggest that this, alongside the continued demand for its historical provisioning of engineering and business studies courses, has favourably positioned the college to be 'a preferred provider' in the province.

Respondents voice concern however that the ways in which these new structures and systems have been instituted within the college may not yet have sufficiently challenged the mindsets associated with NATED programme delivery. They assert that:

The revamped systems and structures that emerged after the merger process are essentially entrenching the NATED programme delivery ethos because lecturers simply don't know what they are trying to achieve. There still isn't a clear and bold academic vision and associated (academic) structures that lecturers can understand and buy into (interview with programme manager).

Nevertheless, the fact that a new system of learning (where students get placed in companies for a defined period) is starting to be preferred to the more conventional system of students' first completing theoretical training and then attempting to find employment for workplace experience, is an indication that a definite shift in orientation is taking root.

In that regard, since 2001 the college has grappled with how to collectively engage with the external partners of the various institutions that constitute the college. By the time the LPU was established in late 2003 the college already had some experience of the difficulties and challenges associated with this activity, and generally kept abreast of economic development priorities in the province (about key trends in job opportunities and employer demand) through random research conducted by its various academic departments (in following up on advertisements and discussions about regional issues in the media and in newspapers). This informed the college's planning as it set about responding to key local demands. The establishment of the LPU subsequently built on and expanded this experience and set up processes to consolidate understandings of these various demands. The areas below describe the kinds of programmes that the college currently seeks to focus on, based on such kinds of research.

Primary sector

- Agriculture including aqua-culture with the associated value chains
- Fishing and mari-culture

Manufacturing

- Clothing and Textiles and the leather industry
- Metals and Engineering (including boat building and ship repair)
- Oil and Gas
- Furniture
- Cultural Industries (including crafts & jewellery)

Service industry

- Tourism
- Call Centres and foreign business process outsourcing centres
- Information and communication technology (ICT)
- Film industry

Notably, given the predominant focus on NATED-based courses like engineering, the college has also initiated the 'formalising' of students' practical training components (given that apprenticeships have waned) through 'job shadowing' initiatives at prospective employers.

2.5.3 Understanding the needs of external partners

The College of Cape Town has an established network of relationships with a wide range of partners, some which go back many years (having being linked to certain college campuses previously).

Relations with *government* are spread across various departments and related structures:

- Within the Western Cape Education Department the College Curriculum Committee (CCC) has come to play a quite critical role in the province in assisting colleges to grapple with processes around curriculum development and in encouraging co-

operation between the nine colleges in the province. The FET Directorate plays a very active role in assisting colleges to engage with and understand the particular roles of FET Colleges within the overall provincial landscape. Close links with the CCC and WCED represent important 'partners' for the College of Cape Town, in terms of fulfilling its mandate of working with groupings outside the college.

- The college also interacts regularly with the Department of Labour (DoL) and associated structures, like SAQA and the SETAs, with regard to policy and legislation, and around NQF-related issues relating to programming/qualifications, registration and accreditation. For example, General Studies, which currently has the widest range of non-NATED offerings, engage regularly with the ETDP SETA, THETA, FoodBev, MQA, MAPPP, FIETA, Services SETA, and PAETA. The SHACKAWAY Project (with a projected value of R3.7 million) is a further example of the kinds of partnerships that the college is presently securing. The partnership is between the College of Cape Town, the SHACKAWAY Building Skills Ltd, the Department of Labour, and the Department of Housing in the Western Cape.
- The Business Centre based at City Campus also have quite close links to W&R SETA around the roll-out of the latter's SME programmes in the Western Cape). Up until 2003 contact used to be directly with SETAs but now colleges are required to go through the WCED and Umalusi. The main activities of the Business Centre is providing business studies short courses and SME programmes, and generating income on similar kinds of programmes for the business studies programme.

Links with other institutions include:

- The college engages regularly with public/private institutions like tourism boards, Telkom and Transnet.
- The college remains focused on providing courses on, or articulating courses with, the *Higher Education* band. It is envisaged that programmes will continue to be offered up to NQF Level 5. The ongoing maintenance of linkages with HE institutions is therefore necessary to ensure career-pathing opportunities for students (to go on to Levels 6-7). N4-6 courses will not be referred as such anymore, but will be replaced with NQF qualifications. At this time articulation with the HE sector occurs essentially through linkages/partnerships with Technikons, for example, a 'generic' diploma in engineering at NQF L5 (under the auspices of the Engineering Council of

South Africa). A W&R learnership is also offered in conjunction with Peninsula Technikon (new name?).

- The college has a number of partnerships with NGOs and *community* organisations, particular with ECD, HIV/Aids and skills training initiatives. The Guguletu campus plays a prominent role in these initiatives.
- Importantly, the College of Cape Town does not have many partnerships with private providers, other than those linked to the outsourcing of learning material development (such as the Centre for Extended Learning- CEL).
- The college has also started a Fundamental Department that oversees the provision of fundamentals courses in all departments. The initial focus is on numeracy and literacy interventions in the engineering studies department, with external provisioning of these courses to NGOs envisaged in the near future. In this regard, the Educare Department within the college has already provided fundamentals courses to about 300 students (from NGOs and private companies) outside the college. It is envisaged that the Fundamentals Department will become a fully-fledged business enterprise within the college and able to generate significant income.

Links with businesses:

- The college also has extensive linkages and partnerships with the private sector (*business and industry*) around various aspects of workplace education and training, like job shadowing and placement of students and staff, in the economic sectors pertaining to the college's traditional programme focus areas (hair care, cosmetology, jewellery design and making, furniture making, wholesale & retail, a range of engineering fields, etc.). Companies that have longstanding links with the college are Wunders, Edutel, Foschini, Truworths, etc. It is notable that most partnership-building initiatives start off in informal ways (usually through informal contact and networking among individuals) and remain dependent on 'individual contacts' even as partnerships become more formally established over time. Rarely do linkages or partnerships become 'formalised' through documents like legal contracts, simply because the college is relatively confident that their provision is of the quality that partners will continually renew their links.

In that respect, the College of Cape Town has invariably focused on its main strengths when it comes to planning its programmes. Respondents note that college staff are generally quite confident about their ability to 'read the local markets' and about the high quality of the college programmes that they provide. They claim that, alongside the 'astute' development of new programmes, the 'better branding' of established programmes will generally ensure that students continue to enroll at the college.

Respondents acknowledge though that the college will forthwith need to provide a far greater mix of NQF-aligned programmes, skills programmes, and learnerships.

The following are some of the offerings that the college has identified for greater focus from 2005:

- domestic worker training
- hair care (current problems around placement need to first be resolved)
- all existing Services SETA programmes will continue
- crafts – provided additional funding can be secured
- Wholesale and retail - to go skills programme route (modular) to learnerships
- FoodBev – increased focus on baking
- New Venture Creation – to continue after pilot
- CETA – it is envisaged that the college to be commissioned to do a significant training
- Graphic design
- ... learnership with ISET SETA
- Film industry – to become more involved in auxiliary services e.g. catering, cosmetics, hair care.
- Education and training around fundamentals has been targeted as an area of significant growth in the future (through the Fundamentals Department) – such training is already being conducted with two plastics companies.

2.5.4 What pre-existed the LPU at the College of Cape Town

After 2001 a core responsibility placed on FET Colleges was to generate its own income to augment their provincial education department funding allocation. Colleges were

meant to generate these funds through the development and implementation of programmes which are also attuned to the particular priority needs, demands and requirements of the various economic sectors, community etc. of the province.

This was a time-consuming and sometimes quite tedious process and evolved at roughly the same time that the various FET institutions were being merged. While the 50 FET Colleges were being clustered and then tasked with the procedures of merging, the prospective campuses of the 'new' FET colleges were faced with confronting some of the dynamics and possible mandates of the new institutional dispensation. Many 'campuses' set about better understanding their external environments at the time. Many were concerned to better position themselves within their new prospective FET Colleges.

Such a process occurred within the City Campus (of the subsequent College of Cape Town). An internal audit of institutional capacity and facilities within the City Campus in 2001 led to the establishment of a R&D department, which in turn (later) also led to the establishment of a Business Centre at the City Campus. The mandate of this structure was to create partnerships with industry (facilitating staff and student placement, job shadowing etc.) and to identify skills development facilitators of companies towards establishing and understanding company needs. Respondents in this study noted that the R&D department and the Business Centre at the City site were quite successful in the period 2001 to 2003 in getting 'the campus to think differently' about external partners.

Indeed, it was this experience of engaging with the needs and demands of external partners that the College of Cape Town called upon when it established its Linkages and Programme Unit (LPU) in 2003. The LPU subsequently took over all the activities of the previous R&D department, whilst the Business Centre's focus was changed to Business Studies-related short course provisioning at the City Campus.

The initial focus of the Business Centre was meant to be on short course (mostly computer related) provisioning in business studies. However, after a review of the short courses was concluded, and the business centre became a separate entity at the City Campus, it was determined that the centre should focus predominantly on SME programme delivery. The Business Centre's current activities centre on it –

- Being the lead provider for the roll-out of SETA SME programmes;

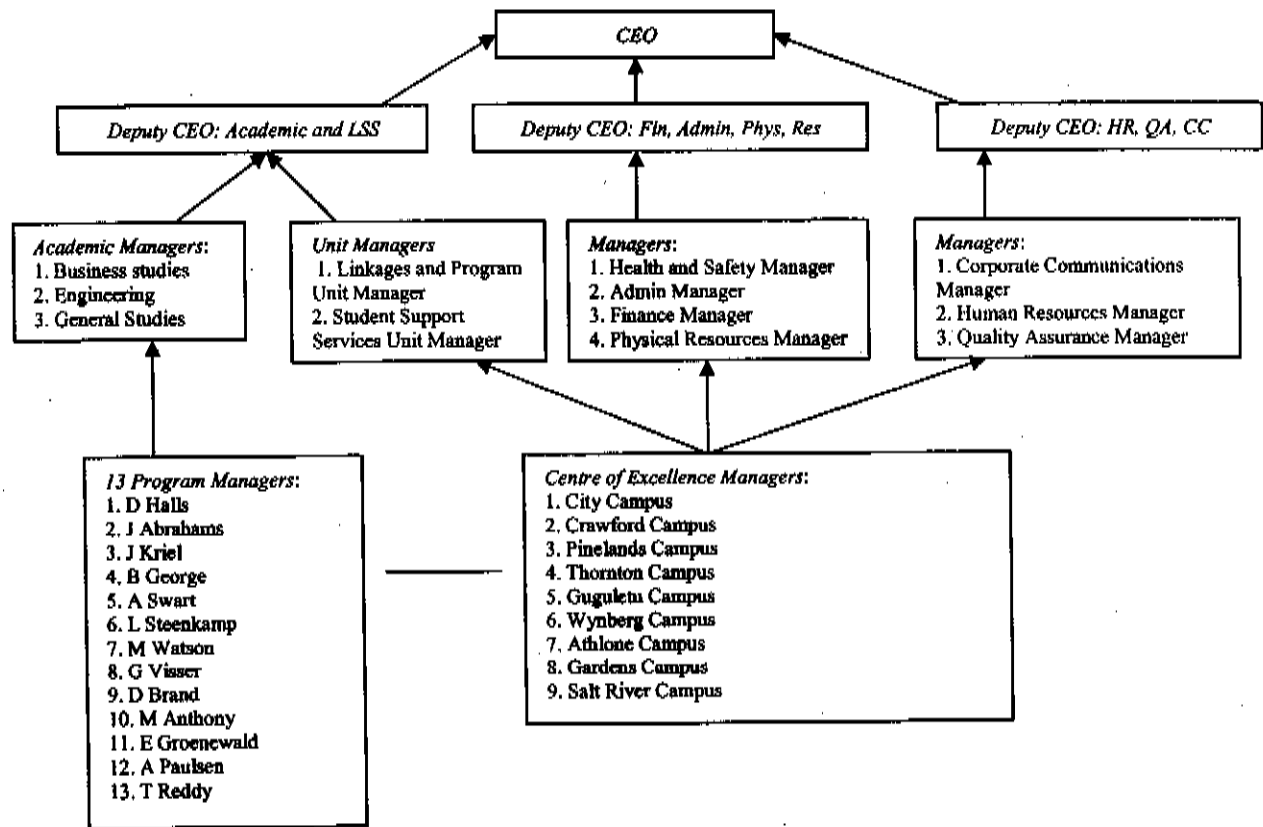
-
- Project managing Project Rave in the Western Cape. The project focuses on concerns around business start-up and business improvement.
 - The business centre also seeks to offer skills programmes as well as a business advice service centre for the New Venture Creation project. In that respect the college seeks to offer to prospective entrepreneurs its experiences at the Simulated Enterprise in South Africa (SIMSA) project housed at the Salt River campus of 'practice firms'.

Such links with the SME sector has significantly shaped the college's recent strategic focus on SME development issues. For example, the college has established within the General Studies department its own hairdressing salons, an incubator for furniture with four attached SMEs, and two incubators attached to the jewellery incubator. The SME involvement has also led to small companies becoming increasingly involved in learnerships linked to the engineering studies section. Compared to past links to the SME sector, these processes represent a significant shift in focus for the college.

Notably, the processes that have occurred at the City Campus site from 2002 have taken place alongside the structural redevelopment and adaptation of the new college's (College of Cape Town) structures, systems and facilities associated with the merger process; changes that were deemed necessary to operationalise a more programme-based model of curriculum provisioning.

2.5.5 Setting up the LPU as part of the college infrastructure

The diagram below represents the core management structure of the College of Cape Town. The diagram illustrates the main structural relationships between the college's different function areas. In terms of this, all functions related to programme delivery – i.e. academic affairs, LPU and Student Support Unit (SSU) - fall under the responsibility of the Deputy-CEO for academic affairs, whose primary responsibility is overseeing the delivery of the college's curriculum. As such, campus managers do not get directly involved in the curriculum issues of their campuses but rather serve as the key administrators and overseers at their respective sites.



The Deputy-CEO of academic affairs is solely in charge of curriculum issues, and has three academic managers that oversee the three main college academic disciplines of general studies, business studies and engineering studies. They in turn manage their portfolios through 13 programme managers who identify, determine and co-ordinate curriculum provision and development at the nine college campuses. Campus managers do not fulfill any significant roles with regard to curriculum issues.

The Deputy CEO in charge of academic affairs is also responsible for the workings of the Linkages and Programme Unit and the Student Support Services Unit. The functions of these units are directly linked and intermeshed with that of the academic managers and the programme managers. The managers of the LPU and SSU thus report directly to the Deputy CEO of academic affairs, and work closely with academic managers and programme managers.

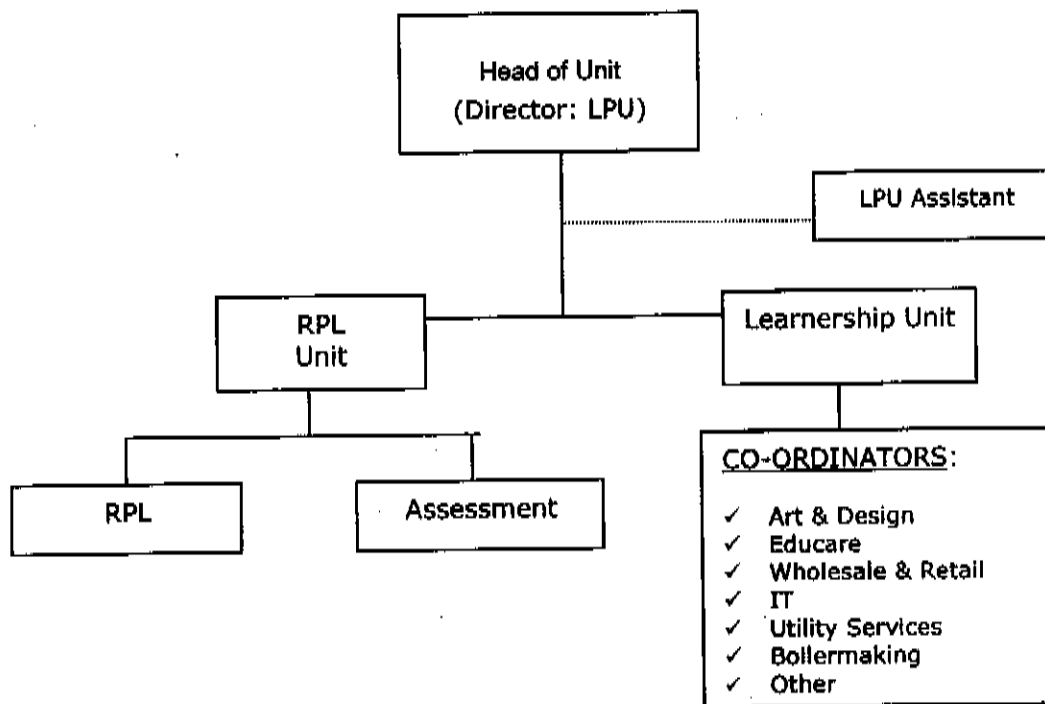
The vision of the LPU is to serve the college in ways that lead to a system of high quality, responsive, flexible, and co-ordinated FET, secondary HET, as well as GET (i.e ABET programmes) provision. Towards this end the declared mission of the LPU is 'to

operate an *effective and efficient research and development service* that is focused on the needs of society (and that of the college) for learning programmes, to support departments in the college with the development of learning programmes and learning material and, lastly, to build a complete database of statistics concerning the college'.

The main function of the LPU is to focus on establishing relationships with external partners (like business, industry, SETAs, government departments), and to facilitate and co-ordinate programme research and development within academic departments (including the alignment of programmes and the accreditation of such programmes and associated facilities). The LPU is normally the first port of call and interface when the 'external world' contacts and interacts with the college.

The LPU microstructure

The current microstructure for the LPU is illustrated in diagram 2 below. It comprises of a director, a deputy-director, a RPL staff member, a learnership staff member and an administrator.



Within the institutional context a particular process has been devised with regard to resources and programme development, with reference to how programme approval works, and the factors associated with programme development.

The actual implementation of a learning programme comprises a highly interactive, multi-levelled and multi-dimensional process. It involves the college being approached with specific requests from industry, business, government departments or associated structures or from the community for specific training interventions (alternatively the LPU links up with these external partners through advertisements in newspapers and in the media). The LPU manager, learnership sub-unit manager and managers of the academic departments then coordinate, support and guide a host of functions, like internal-external liaising, assisting with programme planning and budgeting, tendering, and arranging the placement of learners.

This management team then task designated programme managers with the actual planning, organising and coordinating of programme implementation within a particular discipline or subject area, like electrical engineering. This process includes all college programme provisions and occurs across all the nine college campuses to ensure quality and uniform programme delivery.

2.5.6 Arranging the necessary internal processes and programmes

The primary function of the College of Cape Town LPU is to:

- Identify demand 'out there' in order to determine learnership provisioning opportunities and to facilitate the required linking with prospective clients which have expressed the need for such offerings.
- Prepare proposals to secure business for the college via its provisioning, for example, learnerships and skills programmes.
- Conduct research on opportunities and respond to advertisements (e.g. expressions of interest or requests for tenders) in the media – newspapers in particular but also the Internet – to ascertain the exact requirements involved in order to establish the degree of feasibility;
- Link up with, build and sustain (partnership) relationships with a wide range of stakeholders and role players either in response to expressed needs/demand for the provisioning of learning programmes or to elicit demand by virtue of enhancing the college's visibility as a provider.
- Engage with SETAs and initiate learnerships and skills programmes in consultation with SETAs. In this regard the LPU acting-manager noted in 2004 that 'you make a better impact if SETAs know what you can provide since they then recommend you as a 'preferred provider'.

The success of the LPU is expected to depend on how it fulfills these various responsibilities (above) and how it integrates them into the processes of programme development. These responsibilities, and how it is framed with regard to programmes, are discussed below and include:

- Finding out what external partners want in provisioning, and how it recruits students
- How the college develops programmes
- How it accesses programme materials

Finding out what external partners want in provisioning, and recruiting students

The college has quite effective systems of recruitment and student selection. This is helped considerably by the fact that businesses, communities and municipal structures are keen to access most college provisioning (many are 'repeat customers'). Moreover, when many students that previously applied for NATED courses return to the college for further training, many enrol for NQF-aligned courses. More than anything, the reputation of the college serves as the single most important recruitment mechanism (and 'advertiser') for the college.

This state of affairs is also partly attributable to a 'new culture' among the college's clientele; a clientele that no longer simply accepts whatever provision is provided for students but demand good service delivery and quality programmes. As such, all college programmes are to be 'NQF'd' over the next year (interview with programme manager, August 2004).

This process is easier to achieve in the Business Studies and General Studies departments, where developments have already gotten underway. Changes enacted thus far by the college have been closely 'guided' by the systems and procedures followed by the WCED with regard to programme alignment and approval. About 80% of General Studies programmes for instance are reportedly NQF-aligned.

It is however far more difficult to 'convert' (NQF align) engineering studies courses. The difficulty does not lie with the actual curriculum conversion task but rather with the attitudes of employers and industries that are said to be 'relatively comfortable' with the present system of engineering programme provision (interview with programme manager, August 2004). Academic staff members assert that simply rewriting

engineering programmes in unit standard format to offer them as outcomes-based NQF qualifications will not necessarily lead to employers more readily sending their staff/students to the college. They suggest that many industries and employers are skeptical about the quality of many 'converted' programmes and have often reminded them (within the college) that 'being NQF-aligned does not mean programmes will make students more employable' (interview with academic manager, August 2004).

How the college develops or accesses programmes

This latter concern undoubtedly informed the ways in which the college has recently gone about revamping its engineering studies courses. In that regard, a working committee was first tasked with investigating how to set up a generic engineering qualification. This was then researched and the perspectives of different role-players gleaned. The committee worked closely with the WCED's CCC, which helped them with programme development issues, as well as with college staff members that worked on concerns around the various materials that needed to be developed.

Notably, the majority (if not all) of programme materials are developed by external companies/providers. While college staff do play an active 'consultative' role in materials development, it is envisaged that programme material development will continue to be 'outsourced' for the foreseeable future.

Importantly, the college has developed particular processes that staff members use when approached to provide a particular programme. This process starts either with specific requests from business, industries or municipal and government departments for training interventions or from LPU scanning of prospective interventions that the college could provide. The first task once an intervention is identified is determining the viability of providing such a programme. Part of this process is finding out if relevant and suitable learning materials are available and whether they conform to both the needs of 'clients' and the more general metropolitan and regional skills development priorities. Staff members also have to ascertain whether some materials can be customized or adapted for college purposes.

Often, learning materials are acquired as 'packaged' SET-registered programmes and then customized by college staff members through adding or adaptation. SETAs have been actively involved in the materials development process as many believe that this has been the main 'stumbling block' in the provision of new, demand-led college

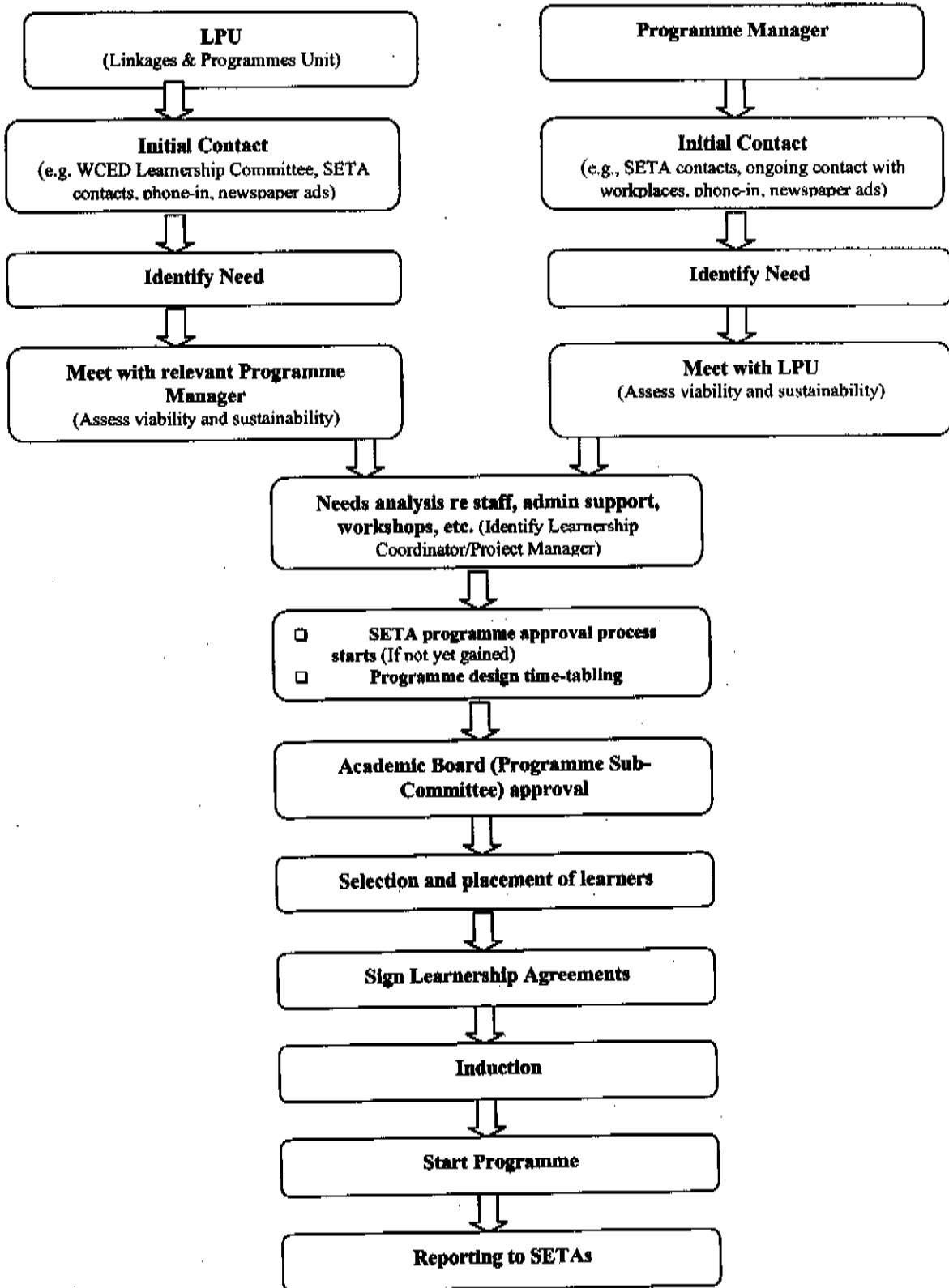
programmes. Where such 'packaged' programmes are not available, the college outsources the development of the programme materials to external providers. Notably, while many college staff members have the required expertise to develop their own programme material, their expertise invariably cannot be used due to them already being overstretched in their current teaching duties and responsibilities.

2.5.7 Setting up learnerships

The procedure of establishing a learnership involves a number of extra processes within the above description and is addressed in the following section. It is notable that the learnership co-ordinators (linked to the LPU) are essentially responsible for interfacing (problem-solving etc.) between the companies and the college at ground level and carry the administrative load around programme implementation. The illustration below depicts the ways in which this process occurs.

With regard to the diagram below, the College of Cape Town has enacted a series of processes for the implementation of learnerships and linked them to specific structures within the college. Getting a learnership started begins with the initiating of a learnership. Staff members then have to plan its setting up, getting the subsequent approval of senior academic staff (with the Deputy CEO in charge of academic affairs and the CEO signing off on the plans), execute the plan, and then control the roll-out process. When respondents were approached about a diagrammatic illustration of these processes, they offered the following (interview with academic manager, September 2005). It is notable in that regard that college senior management are on a daily basis actively involved in the setting up and provision of college learnerships and skills programmes. While the process may be directly tied to the LPU and the academic management team, the success of the process requires the participation of a host of 'other' college role-players, as is evident below. A detailed description of the processes will soon be available in a Learnership Manual that the college management is busy formulating

Learnership Implementation Process.



The tables below describe some of the preliminary thinking that has gone into how processes need to unfold within the college.

Role player	Responsibilities	Who is reported to
Academic Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Programme approval <input type="checkbox"/> Quality assurance 	Reports to CEO
Centre of Excellence Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensures facilities are available 	Reports to Deputy CEO: Finance Manager
Finance representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensures that project stays within the budget <input type="checkbox"/> Does quarterly payouts of campus costs, human resources <input type="checkbox"/> Issuing of invoices <input type="checkbox"/> Collection of income 	Reports to Deputy CEO: Finance Manager
Human Resources representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Advertising for & recruitment of staff needed for the learnership <input type="checkbox"/> Contract negotiations <input type="checkbox"/> Disciplinary conduct <input type="checkbox"/> Performance appraisal 	Reports to Deputy CEO: HR
LPU representative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Does the research <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment of employers <input type="checkbox"/> Assistance with programme approval <input type="checkbox"/> Submits documentation to relevant SETAs <input type="checkbox"/> Feedback to the Western Cape Education Department (WCED) 	Reports to <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Academic Manager <input type="checkbox"/> WCED
Programme Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Establishes Project Team <input type="checkbox"/> Conducts feasibility study to establish requirements with regard to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Resources • Infrastructure • Finance • Learning material <input type="checkbox"/> Presents programmes to Academic Board for approval <input type="checkbox"/> Approval from Academic Board <input type="checkbox"/> Presents budget to Finance department for approval by Budgetary Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Approval by Budgetary Committee <input type="checkbox"/> Programme approval/extension of scope from SETA <input type="checkbox"/> Appoints Project Manager 	Reports to Academic Manager

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Appoints facilitators, assessors, moderators & administrative assistant (if required) <input type="checkbox"/> Liaises with Fund <input type="checkbox"/> Oversees implementation of learnership on campus / site <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure quarterly reports are submitted to LPU 	
Project Manager	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Develops Project Plan <input type="checkbox"/> Sets up time-table for facilitation <input type="checkbox"/> Recruitment of learners <input type="checkbox"/> Pre-selection and level placement <input type="checkbox"/> Orientation programme <input type="checkbox"/> Registration of learners <input type="checkbox"/> Implement project on campus according to project plan <input type="checkbox"/> Coordinate the implementation for each programme <input type="checkbox"/> Manage database of assessment results <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback of learner progress to workplace <input type="checkbox"/> Provide feedback to LPU quarterly <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with companies <input type="checkbox"/> Develop & co-ordinate learners' activities at companies <input type="checkbox"/> Moderate assessment tools & assessments <input type="checkbox"/> QMS of learnership <input type="checkbox"/> Sign off project 	Reports to Programme Manager

The above processes also include the participation of verifiers, moderators, facilitators and learnership administrators. These are:

Administrator (for project)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Administrative support for implementation & maintenance of learnership <input type="checkbox"/> Register learners <input type="checkbox"/> Maintaining of learner records <input type="checkbox"/> Filing of records, etc 	Reports to Project Manager
Facilitator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the completion of pre-course assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Ensure the completion of post-course assessments <input type="checkbox"/> Complete facilitators reports 	Reports to Project Manager
Assessor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plans and prepares for assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submit assessment plan 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • submit pre-assessment documentation □ Conducts assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • evidence to be retained • all documentation to be signed □ Evaluate assessments □ Feedback on assessments <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • completes feedback on each learner • completes overall feedback document □ Reviews assessment <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ensures learners complete review • completes review documentation 	
Moderator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Ensures that Assessor is in compliance with the Assessment Policy and Procedures of CCT □ Conducts moderation 	Reports to Project Manager
Verifier	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> □ Ensures that Assessment is in compliance with the Assessment Policy and Procedures of CCT □ Conducts verification 	Reports to Quality Manager & Project Manager

Current programmes on offer within the college include:

Learnship	NQF level	Certificating SETA
Motor Vehicle Maintenance	2 – 5	MERSETA
Refrigeration, Air Condition & Ventilation	2 – 3	MERSETA
Manufacturing, Engineering & Related Activities	1	MERSETA
ECD	5	ETDP
Bakery	2	FoodBev
Furniture Making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Furniture • Wood Finishing • Cabinet Making 	2 2 2	FIETA FIETA FIETA
Craft Production: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ceramics • Textiles • General 	2 2 2	MAPPP MAPPP MAPPP
Jewellery (Design & Manufacturing)	3	MQA
Ladies Hairdressing	4	Services
Tourism Event Support	4	THETA

Certificate in W&R	2&4	W&R
National Diploma in ECD	5	ETDP
Jewellery design	3	MQA
Upholstery	2	FIETA
Refrigeration	2	MERSETA
Boiler making	2	MERSETA
Security	2	POLSET
Bavarian motor project	2	MERSETA
Manufacturing, engineering and related activities	1	MERSETA
Certificate in New Venture Creation	4	Services
Certificate in Craft	2	MAPPP
Certificate in Craft (Bread and Flour Confectionary)	2	FoodBev
Certificate in Wood Machining/Cabinet	2	FIETA
Certificate in Upholstery	2	FIETA

Skills Programmes (unit standard-based/NQF-registered):

		Qualifying SETA
Traditional Craft Jewellery	SETA – Learner	MQS
Au Pair	Learner – SETA	ETDP
HIV	Learner – SETA	Services
Upholstery	SETA	FIETA
Wood Finishing	SETA	FIETA
Cabinet Making	SETA	FIETA
Soft Furnishing	Learner – SETA	MAPPP
Contribute to information distribution regarding HIV in the workplace	Will apply at ETDP SETA	ETDP
Support children and adults living with HIV/Aids in ECD Settings		

2.5.8 Summary

It is notable that all learnerships within the College of Cape Town are channelled through and overseen by the Linkages and Programmes Unit (LPU). From the initialization of a learnership, through the programme identification analysis conducted by the LPU, to assessing employer/workplace requirements and their implications for provisioning (weighed against what the college can realistically offer), to inducting role players and clarifying their roles and responsibilities, to identifying the logistics of workplace training and which party will handle the administration thereof, to getting the programme approved via established academic management processes, to programme development, final approval within the college, final approval from the WCED, and then by the relevant SETA, the LPU plays perhaps the single most significant role within the college when it comes to programme development. Importantly however, the functioning of the LPU is embedded within the everyday functioning of the college and does not operate as a separate entity as is the case with South Cape College (discussed earlier in this chapter).

When the LPU was established in late 2003, it was informed by the particular realities of the college and the kinds of processes that had previously occurred within the college with regard to curriculum development and innovation. In that respect, many of the processes associated with the college's LPU is unique to the college and is linked to the fact that the college is one of the older further education and training institutions in the country. In that respect, the college has significant past experience of dealing with curriculum change and redevelopment. Nonetheless, the college is currently experiencing the kinds of infrastructural shortcomings and constraints that could soon compromise the reputed and reputable capacities of the college.

3. Chapter Three: Synthesis of case studies

From the experience of establishing Linkages and Programme Units from 2003, it is evident that specialized structures evolve in a variety of ways at the local level in South Africa. This is so because a number of crucial institutional factors shape the different kinds of linkages that colleges initiate with their external environments. These institutional factors include the degree of college effort in setting up an LPU, the ways in which the structure is included in the college set-up and the identification of its core functions, the ways in which the college formulates programme delivery around the LPU

structure, and the ways in which respective colleges have used the structure to oversee learnership initiation and delivery.

Importantly, as the case studies have shown, the ways in which institutional factors shape the make-up of LPUs are strongly influenced by the nature of the local economies around colleges, the kinds of formal links they initiate with external bodies like local government and local municipalities, and college perceptions of the nature of their respective industrial or rural complexes.

The ways in which the different kinds of institutional and external factors mesh are explored below. This is done by using four explorative questions to organise some of the college experiences thus far. The questions are:

1. How did the four FET Colleges go about starting up their LPUs?
2. What different organisational forms have LPUs taken within the four colleges?
3. How are the colleges organising their respective programme delivery?
4. How have learnerships been integrated into college offerings?

The purpose of doing this is to understand more deeply some of the strategic dilemmas that colleges have been faced with and to probe how they have engaged with some of their experiences, and the lessons that they have learnt.

Notably, all four case studies show that structures like LPUs can provide valuable assistance to colleges to effectively link them up to the world of work and other external partners, to help make education and training more relevant to the workplace, and to assist individual colleges to restructure their programmes in ways that lead to the greater employability of college students. Indeed, where such structures have been established colleges have, at the very least, been able to internally engage in discussions around their economic and educational viability.

However, what the four case studies also indicate is that establishing such units is an enormously complex process, the success of which invariably depends on the degree of strategic planning and internal discussion that has taken place within individual colleges, and the kinds of favourable or non-favourable external conditions and challenges that impact on each individual college. It is also shaped by the extent to which colleges, on the one hand, look to 'open themselves up' to the demands and needs of the labour market and to provide programmes that are industry-relevant, short, focused, and often disposable, and on the other hand not allow business and industry to overly dictate

college forms of provision and thereby blur the boundaries between educational sites and the social contexts of college students.

As is evident in the four case studies in chapter two colleges often try to both retain a degree of 'distance' between themselves and the workplace (so that students have a broader contextual and critical canvas on which to position and grow themselves into employment and society), and develop particular ways of getting employers to play a more meaningful role in shaping or informing the kinds of programmes they provide.

3.1 Starting up: How did the four FET Colleges go about setting up their LPUs?

The four case studies in chapter two show that colleges with some form of previous research-and-development unit, or colleges that had already begun engaging with the processes surrounding NQF-alignment before 2003, are invariably better primed to engage with the establishment of specialized units like LPUs. In the case of the College of Cape Town, for example, its City Campus had initiated the establishment of a R&D unit in 2001 as a way of understanding and interacting with its key external partners, and at the same time strategically positioning itself for the time when it became part of a merged FET College. The mandate of the city campus structure was to create partnerships with industry and to get the facility to think differently and more 'progressively' about interaction with external partners. It was this experience of engaging with external environments that the College of Cape Town 'recalled' in 2003 when it established its Linkages and Programme Unit (LPU). This was most clearly evident in the appointment of the previous manager of the R&D unit as the director of the LPU.

While South Cape College did not have such a R&D structure before the establishment of its LPU in 2003, each campus (that eventually became part of the College) had by 2003 initiated, in their own ways, some form of partnership with local industries and employers, and was starting to grapple with how to restructure programme delivery at their respective sites to fulfill some of the emerging demands. In that regard, the college's Oudtshoorn campus was particularly innovative, in the period before the college was merged, in its engagement with and introduction of NQF-aligned programmes and learnerships. Many members of campus staff put in significant time and energy into transforming the campus's curriculum and materials development

functions. Notably, this experience ushered in a changing mindset after 2002 about the kinds of programmes that should be offered at South Cape College, particularly with regard to how to fund them. It was this kind of experience around how to generate funds for the redevelopment of programmes that was then harnessed and incorporated into the establishment of the college LPU in 2003. This is best evidenced by the college redeployment (to the LPU) of a number of staff members that had some previous expertise or experience in thinking about college links with its external environment.

It is notable in the case studies noted above that both colleges relied on previous experiences of engaging with their external environments to inform the ways in which their respective LPUs were initially established.

The case studies also indicate however that the existence of previous innovation and development structures, or experiences with programme re-alignment, can also provide obstacles or close down alternative avenues that such colleges may perhaps have followed. It is apparent for instance that in harnessing the 'previous experience' of key staff members within the new LPU structure, many older institutional 'ways of thinking' were taken on board, reinforced, and re-invented. This has framed the ways in which the colleges have changed 'shape' after 2003, and in many cases has made it difficult for them to engage with some of their other (as important) institutional challenges.

The Mthashana College, on the other hand, is an example of a college that had no previous R&D structure nor had engaged before 2003 with re-aligning its programmes according to the needs of the NQF. It is a college in a significantly poverty-stricken area (with high levels of unemployment) that depended in 2003, and continues to depend, quite heavily on departmental funding associated with NATED programme provisioning. Notably however, with the establishment of the LPU in 2003, the college has put into place processes that allow the college to actively engage with the needs of its external partners, and that attempt to provide the college with the necessary mechanisms to take advantage of further and emerging partnership opportunities. In that regard the college has dramatically repositioned many of its programme provisions to respond to the particular deep rural realities of the region. Importantly, in repositioning its programmes, the college has completely reconfigured the role and contribution of its various component parts (campuses), especially with respect to its skills centres. Contrary to the practice of most other FET colleges, Mthashana College has sought to make its skills

centres the backbone (and fulcrum) of college provision, with provision predicated predominantly on the immediate skills and social needs of its various local communities.

Indeed, the college remains engaged in ongoing processes to absorb more skills centres in the region and convert them into skills development campuses. Whether this approach will be successful hinges on the the kinds of departmental funding that is made available to assist the college in implementing its 'shift in orientation', the improvement of the current level of staff capacity, and the focus on better resourcing of staff. The Mthashana case study does however demonstrate an ability to 'think outside the traditional FET box' while engaging with the realities of both its internal and external environments.

This attempt to find alternative ways of engaging external partners and to embrace some of the structural limitations of its physical resources is also visible (though barely) in the Sivananda case study. Sivananda College for example is currently in the process of developing a particular institutional niche area around one of its traditionally poorer campuses. With funding from DANIDA, in association with a non-governmental organization known as the Rainman Foundation, the college hopes to initiate several organic farming initiatives at its Mpumalanga campus. The initiative is by far the most fruitful and exciting venture that the Sivananda LPU unit has secured thus far, and suggests a college approach that will increasingly focus college attention on the needs of local communities around its 'poorer' and under-resourced campuses. This is most clearly signaled by the location of the LPU at the Pinetown campus in Pietermaritzburg, given that the campus is closer (than the central office) to the Mpumalanga and Qadi campuses situated in nearby rural areas.

Importantly, both latter approaches (by Mthashana College and Sivananda College) to 'try something new' have come about more from necessity and a paucity of external partners than as a result of innovative thinking or agency. This limits the extent to which the four ways of establishing LPUs are compared.

Some colleges re-vision, others en-vision

However, from the above examples of the ways in which LPUs were started up within the four case studies, two approaches seem to prevail. The first is a *re-visioning* approach whereby colleges use the experience and expertise of staff or the available infrastructure of particular campuses as the core foundation for the establishment of their

LPU. In such colleges there invariably already exist a wide range of relationships with industry or business (though mostly not formalized) and the idea is then to transfer and embed these previous experiences of 'what works' within the operation of the newly established LPU. Further features of colleges that focus on 're-visioning' what they did in the past are established college student populations, stable staff complements, and functioning relationships with a diverse group of external partners around each of their campuses. The challenge for such colleges is to continue doing what it previously did best, while also engaging with new opportunities and challenges linked to changing socio-economic environments.

Colleges that adopt the revisioning approach invariably have senior management structures that are already quite formalised, with each senior management member being designated defined roles and responsibilities. LPU managers rarely consult directly with or report to the CEO/Rector. Rather, they report to members of senior management staff whose portfolios normally include overseeing the respective LPUs. In such cases LPUs generally operate from college central offices and are part of structures and processes that are quite formalized and longstanding.

Importantly, LPUs such as those described above partake in key strategic management processes at the various central offices without 'leading the way' in shaping relationships with external partners. That role is fulfilled primarily by senior management structures that determine and formulate college approaches and implementation of its programme delivery and its external partnerships. Notably, the success of the operations of LPUs hinge on the extent to which the college management systems and infrastructures 'work'. This presence of a formalized institutional human resource capacity is a key element within this approach.

The second approach is called *envisioning*, best described as colleges that have had to start from scratch with the establishment of their LPUs and in their interaction with external partners. This approach is mostly characterized by colleges with limited or no formal relationships with industries and business, colleges that have had to completely reconceptualise the ways in which they (as representative of all their campuses) engage with their various local environments. Alternatively, they are colleges where previous relationships with industrial or business partners have disintegrated due to changes in the economic structure of the surrounding regions. In cases where colleges for instance

had strong links previously to the mining industry and can no longer look to this sector for student enrolments or funding, such colleges would have had to completely rethink the ways in which they engage with their local labour markets and how they use their resources to best serve their various external communities.

In the above scenarios colleges often are not able to call upon the *specific* expertise or experience of staff members (though many of their overall skills can often be adapted for the new situation), nor can they necessarily build on existing college infrastructures or ongoing relationships with external partners.

In South Africa the majority of colleges affected by the absence of surrounding industries or businesses, or those that have most felt the impact of dramatic changes in regional economic conditions, are chiefly situated in rural areas (like Vryheid), or in mining towns (like Klerksdorp), or around townships (like KwaMashu or Ntuzuma). Characteristics common to colleges in such areas are fairly low student numbers, small staff complements and facilities that offer educational provisions framed by existing infrastructures.

These kinds of institutional environments often mean that college structures are fairly close-knit, with a core but very small senior staff team. Managers of specialized units like LPUs would in most cases report directly to the CEO/Rector of the college, are often given the power to make their own on-the-spot decisions, and also have 'easier' access (less college structures) to other parts of the management system (like being able to directly phone council chairpersons). Moreover, in many colleges that 'start from scratch', the success of specialized units is generally dependent on dynamic individuals that 'make things happen' in the unit. Such individuals also have to fulfill a number of tasks within the college set-up (which means that they overwork and burn-out quickly). Should they leave the college's employ however, they are generally irreplaceable.

Such colleges struggle however by the absence of a formalized institutional system. This becomes complicated when colleges in this approach choose to follow either a very centralized way of operating or devolve the implementation of key decisions to individual facilities, or when the nature of specific industrial or rural complexes determines that two campuses of one college (one with a number of functional relationships with external partners, the other located a few hundred kilometers away with no possibility of securing

any partnerships with local industries) adopt completely different strategies when engaging with their external environments and responding to the needs of its respective users. In both variants, the colleges' ability to build the necessary Institutional capacity or capability to positively engage with external environments is greatly reduced.

Obviously, the two approaches posited above are very fluid and may not necessarily apply to all FET colleges with LPU-like structures. The main point though is that it is often necessary to start off with 'ideal types' and to build on them as more and more information becomes available, and then to later use them to flesh out emerging contradictions and dilemmas.

3.2 Structure and Function: What organisational forms have LPUs taken?

The diagram below illustrates three organizational forms, a continuum within which college organizational forms are often placed. A key finding in this report is that these three generalized forms often interconnect in quite complex ways. College infrastructures invariably are characterized by elements of all three forms, as is explored below.



The four case studies show that LPUs are located quite differently within the organisational structures of each of the four colleges, notwithstanding the fact that the general format of the four college organograms looks strikingly similar.

The key differences between the 'forms' of the four LPUs lie in where the LPUs are physically located within the four college structures, their relationship with the management structure, and their interaction with other aspects of college structures and systems.

Within the Mthashana College structure for example the LPU is located at the central office and the LPU manager works closely with, and directly under, the college Rector. The rector and the LPU manager regularly brainstorm new possibilities and discuss the various requirements needed to put prospective programmes into place. They also hold

regular meetings with the rest of the members of the management staff to discuss how to follow up and put into place the 'fruits' of their discussions and plans. This is a very centralized form of management where the college rector plays a central role in shaping interactions with external partners.

However, the rector partakes in little of the actual programme implementation once the LPU has initiated a partnership or received an external request for programme provisioning at Mthashana College. After the LPU has contacted the various campus managers and determined and confirmed infrastructural capacity and programme practicality, campus managers thereafter take on the main responsibility for the development of the said programmes. While the LPU does get to check on the progress of projects and the main associated problems and challenges, it is the campus managers that determine the successful or unsuccessful implementation of programmes. Should the campus managers not follow through on 'new links', there is virtually nothing that the LPU can do. So while Mthanshana's management structure can be characterized as quite centralized, namely that all key decisions are determined at central office, the fact that programmes are developed in a relatively decentralized way at the campus level, means that key 'central planning decisions' can often be vetoed at the campus level. In terms of the overall college, campus managers thus play a key role both in the college management structure and in determining practice at the local level. This unclear or separate patterns or lines of decision-making essentially means that either the rector or the campus managers make the key pronouncements within the college structure; which largely excludes the main role-players within internal structures and processes that ultimately determine the implementation and successful development of the college's programmes.

A similar structure exists within Sivananda College where the LPU manager also mainly reports to the Rector for on-the-spot decision making. According to the college organogram the LPU manager is expected to report to the SESD Co-ordinator who then communicates with the Rector for clarity and ratification of decisions. The intention is to eventually develop a management structure in which the LPU manager reports to the Vice-Rector: Academic Services. However, given that the management structures within Sivananda College are still very much in their 'growing stage', it is more common for the LPU manager to simply phone the Rector and ask for advice, guidance or ratification. Senior management thus plays quite a central role in LPU operations.

Notably, the role of the SESD co-ordinator is viewed largely as an overseer and liaison with the main management structure. The SESD Co-ordinator at Sivananda normally simply leaves the LPU to 'get on' with its functions and rarely intervenes or advises LPU members on how to tackle their various challenges. The LPU thus functions as a rather loose structure that seeks direction and guidance from the CEO but otherwise works largely outside formal management intervention.

This is the main difference between the Mthashana and Sivananda LPUs. Another difference is that the Sivananda LPU is located at a campus separate from the central office and generally does not partake in other key management structures within the college. The Sivananda LPU also rarely takes part in strategic planning or decision making processes.

The main task of the Sivananda LPU is simply to focus on how to secure links with external partners, especially in areas where partnerships did not exist before. For that reason the LPU is located at the Pinetown campus, which is closer than the central office to campuses like Qadi and Mmpumalanga located in outlying and impoverished areas. In that regard, the college believes that the success and sustainability of its programmes depends on the active participation of external bodies and that the LPU needs to do focus on generating external funds to develop programmes that lead to the regeneration of these communities and areas.

Thus, even though the college has a fairly rigid centralized management structure, the LPU can be said to operate in quite a decentralized way (given that its daily operation mainly falls outside the scrutiny of any one body or senior management member and because its function is not enmeshed on a daily basis with other management and strategic processes at central office).

Because fieldwork commenced at Sivananda College at a time when the LPU had barely begun operating, it is not possible to ascertain the various kinds of internal college structures that would come into play once a partnership is secured and once college participants have to develop the necessary programmes. However, given that a number of the LPU members previously fulfilled key management tasks at the campus level, it seems likely that the LPU serves as more than just as an advisory body to the various campuses, and actively partakes in helping staff members develop programmes at the individual campuses.

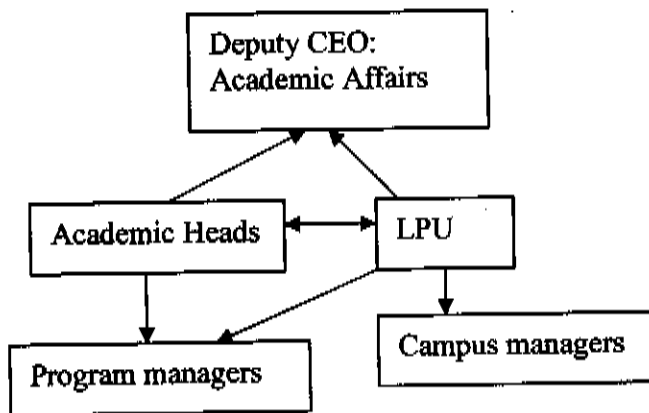
The College of Cape Town (CCT), on the other hand, has a management structure that can be characterised as deeply centralized, but which also operates in quite complex ways to include a large number of participants in key decision making activities. The centralized structure thus does not mean that staff members located at various levels of the college structure and at different sites cannot play important roles in the running of the college.

With regard to the LPU, college management regards the specialized structure as an important way of linking central management processes to campus level developments, as well as playing a key role in curriculum development. In that respect, the college CEO and senior management staff have sought to insert the LPU into the college organogram in ways that include the unit in important strategic planning processes at central office and at the same time making it take charge of key curriculum developments at the campus level.

The LPU is included within the college management structure at the third tier management level. The first management tier is the office of the CEO. The second tier consists of three Deputy CEOs, while the third tier consists of staff that report directly to the Deputy CEOs and who are normally managers in their respective units (administration manager, health and safety manager, human resources manager, corporate communications manager, linkages and programme unit manager, student support manager). With regard to those that serve under the Deputy CEO: Academic Affairs the third tier consists of 4 Academic Heads as well as the LPU manager and SSU manager.

The fourth management tier consists of the campus managers and the program managers. The campus managers basically manage and oversee the everyday activities of individual campuses with regard to infrastructure, human resources and other functional issues, while the program managers oversee the main academic and programme level development concerns. Unlike Mthashana College and Sivananda College, the campus managers at the College of Cape Town don't partake intensively in the day to day central management of the college. They mainly manage the environs of their respective campuses and leave the running of the college to staff based at central office.

The LPU interacts with both campus managers and program managers on a regular basis, but in different ways and for different reasons. These are explained in more detail in the text of the CCT case study in chapter two.



Importantly, given the formalized management structure (noted above) within CCT, the LPU manager rarely interacts with the college CEO. Rather, the LPU manager reports to the Deputy CEO: Academic Affairs and mainly communicates with the Deputy CEO and the four academic heads on a daily basis.

In contrast to the two KZN case studies the LPU manager also rarely interacts with campus managers, other than confirming key infrastructural and human resource issues at individual campus levels.

Thus, while decision making and management structures seem to be tightly centralized within the college, associated processes are generally quite diffused across the various levels of the management structure. This means that on a daily basis a significant amount of discussion takes place around decision making. These discussions invariably include a wide array of staff members that have no management portfolios or responsibilities.

Indeed, the centralized nature of the College of Cape Town's management structure may mainly be due to the size of the institution (close to 15000 headcounts) and its large staff complement. In that sense, tight planning and close management vigilance are deemed important requisites for the managing of a large institution that operates across eight quite different sites.

What may better explain the centralized nature of the college management structure however is the desire to, alongside the generation of 'new business', organize the

college's curriculum planning and development from the central office. The academic heads of the core disciplinary college provisions are located at central office and interact on a daily basis with members of the LPU in formulating and reorganizing old and new programmes. They engage with senior management on how to develop new programmes (or re-organise old ones) and how provide them across the various campus sites. They also interact with the LPU on a daily basis about new programme opportunities and identifying redundant or unpopular programmes. In this respect, the LPU plays an important role in identifying new opportunities that emerge outside the college 'walls' and then discussing with staff members at the various levels about how best to develop and provide associated programmes. These discussions are then formalized at the central office through interaction with academic heads, external curriculum bodies and senior management.

Once programmes are approved at the central office level the LPU then communicates with program managers based at campuses, who then formulate, troubleshoot and implement the approved programmes. This means that programmes are planned, shaped, and put into motion through a complex process that starts with the CEO and senior management initiating them, and ends with campus staff providing them.

This emphasis on the LPU playing a central role in curriculum development is quite different from what happens at South Cape College. At South Cape College the LPU operates largely as an 'extra campus' from where the college generates new business, develops new programmes, and plans the increase of its student numbers.

While the LPU is a vital part of the curriculum development process, the unit does not play as centralized a role within the South Cape college management structure as with CCT. Also, while all functions associated with new programme delivery – i.e. academic affairs, human resources and learner support – fall under the responsibility of the academic vice-rector (whose primary responsibility is overseeing the delivery of the college's curriculum), the ways in which programme delivery is organized is quite different to CCT. The key differences between the two colleges are described below.

Firstly, all campuses, as the primary sites of programme delivery, fall under the direct authority of the academic vice rector for academic affairs. Secondly, there is a program manager at each of the five campuses that co-ordinates programme development and delivery across campuses and liaises with SETAs about quality assurance and other such matters. Thirdly, program managers report to the academic vice rector alongside

the five campus managers and also the LPU manager. They (program managers) also work directly with the LPU in terms of developing and implementing new programmes. Fourthly and perhaps most importantly, the LPU manager reports directly to the vice rector of business development, given that the business development arm is responsible for marketing the college, bringing in new business, developing new programmes, and increasing the college's student numbers. The main task of the LPU is not to partake in curriculum planning as much as bring in new business and generate income for the college.

The LPU thus plays a dual role within the college management structure and adopts a relatively 'decentralised' role that allows it to tone down its engagement in strategic planning processes and in curriculum development. While the LPU often assists in co-ordinating understandings around planning and strategic interventions at the various college sites, it does so mainly in an advisory capacity.

The idea of a de-linked LPU is to centrally co-ordinate and manage college partnerships from one site (and operate it like a campus), but also to ensure that individual campuses remain actively involved in the development and maintenance of partnerships associated with their sites. As such the LPU is meant to initiate and introduce partnerships for individual campuses after which they are expected to continue developing and maintaining such partnerships and to support the delivery of associated programmes.

From the description of the organizational forms of the four LPUs above, it is evident that individual colleges locate their LPUs in quite different locations within their management structures, mainly based on their understanding of the role that the LPU is meant to play within their college. The key point being that an important part of the establishment of a LPU is identifying or determining where to locate the unit within the relevant college structure and to recognize the strengths and weaknesses of adopting a centralized, less centralized or decentralized approach in organizing its functions.

3.3 Modes of Delivery: How are Colleges organising programme delivery?

The ways in which colleges organise the functioning of LPUs within their management structures are often determined by the kinds of programme delivery that individual colleges seek to emphasise, based on what colleges seek to achieve via relationships with external groups. It was noted in the introduction that there are three ways of

interacting with external environments that colleges seem to follow when determining their particular types of programme delivery. These ways are often quite fluid and colleges often develop a mixture of all three (Bush 1999). The three approaches were:

1. When a college adapts its provisioning according to the needs of its external environment and co-opting external groups into the running of college programmes;
2. When a college works to its key strengths and is confident about the kinds of programmes that it provides and for which students seek to enroll. Such colleges focus on branding themselves and their core provisions and then on marketing and selling their predetermined products;
3. When a college secures funding to specialize in a particular niche area so that it can concentrate on a particular segment of the student market. This allows it to reduce the impact that rapid changes in its external environments has on college operations (Bush 1999:11).

The first approach is most evident in the South Cape College case study, though not strictly so. South Cape College focuses on providing two routes to each qualification that it provides; namely the standard NQF-aligned college programme route and the learnership route, with the key difference between the two qualification routes being in the make-up of the various programmes. In that respect, standard NQF-aligned programmes consist of 50% theory and 50% practice, while learnerships consist of 30% theory and 70% practice. By packaging the two qualifications into short courses and skills programmes, the college hopes to attract students that seek to follow 'traditional' routes to qualification as well as students that seek alternative career pathways that nevertheless fit in with their specific social and work needs. In terms of its primary focus on servicing the demands of as many 'consumers' as possible, the college has sought to establish its LPU (and consequently the ways in which it frames programme delivery within the college) in ways that can best exploit external demands as they arise.

The second approach is best exemplified by the College of Cape Town, although the college has also adopted elements of the first and third approaches as well. The core focus of the College of Cape Town has been to build on its reputation for providing quality and relevant programmes and good service delivery. The college generally has quite effective systems of recruitment and student selection, and in recent years has

focused on how best to upgrade and improve the various provisions that they already provide.

The college has also recognised however the need to offer a broader range of programmes. It has thus engaged with the required processes around learnership delivery as a way of including more work-relevant programmes in its provisioning. The LPU is seen as a crucial vehicle in this regard, not only to assist the college in developing and implementing learnerships but also in ensuring that where such programmes are provided they are integrated into, and become part of, existing college processes of programme development.

Differentiated modes of delivery, while deemed important, is understood mainly as a way of improving service delivery and providing an upgraded range of quality programmes. The college acknowledges that differentiated provision holds significant potential for enhanced income generation. However, it asserts that the ways in which the college provides new programmes, and the way it uses its LPU in this respect, must conform to the college preoccupation with developing an integrated and quality curriculum delivery system.

The third approach is most evident in the Mthashana College case study. Mthashana College does not have the luxury of effective student recruitment systems or a steady stream of 'consumers' that it can adapt its programme delivery for. A prominent feature of the area surrounding Mthashana College is the lack of any significant industries or big employers. This has forced the college to completely rethink the ways in which it provides programmes and how it understands the needs of the key target markets for its various forms of provision. In recent times the college has increasingly looked to incorporating more skills centres into the college set-up as a way of providing programmes that target the key skills needs of surrounding communities.

One example of such a skills centre is the Emandleni skills campus (previously a youth training centre) in northern KZN. The Emandleni campus offers short and focused programmes in farming/agriculture as well as in engineering areas like motor mechanics as a way of meeting the immediate skills needs of that particular community. By focusing on providing differentiated forms of provision (mainly short skills development programmes) through its 'skills campuses' the college hopes to impact upon the basic skills of members of communities located in the isolated corners of the Mthashana region. The idea is to sequence provisioning, starting with literacy training (ABET level

1), then concentrating on particular skills development (e.g sewing, beadwork, motor mechanics), and to follow that up with business or entrepreneurial skills training. The intended foci are on programmes in areas like sewing, garment making, beadwork, poultry farming, and organic vegetable growing. Other prospective areas of provisioning are welding, motor mechanics, motor body repairs and electrical work.

This projected provisioning has meant that the Mthashana College has had to completely re-arrange its traditional offerings and orientate itself to providing for a significantly different learner population. Indeed, by increasingly focusing on programme provisions that better serve the skills training needs of deep-rural communities the college has introduced a completely different approach to college programme delivery in South Africa. It is notable however that formal NATED programmes continue to comprise 80% of programme delivery at Mthashana College. In this regard campuses like Vryheid and Nongoma remain focused on providing courses in business management, marketing management, public relations and human resources development, and engineering courses like motor mechanics, electrical engineering and plumbing. This continued demand for NATED courses, even though there are no likely jobs upon course completion, has meant that the college has also had to look at itself as a 'potential employer'. In that regard, the college has set up and is piloting a Business Unit at the Vryheid campus, where the intention (behind the establishment of the Business Unit) is to:

- Generate income for the campus and to specifically manage present links with employers and other external partners
- To double up as an employer by allowing for the workplace placement of students
- To market the agricultural processes inherent within programme delivery and the kinds of end-products produced like pineapple-based goods, bacon making and livestock feeding.

Indeed, the college has looked to provide differentiated modes of programme delivery in ways that best suit the specific demands of its local environment. While the college initially looked at providing a greater number of learnerships, the lack of employers in the region not only made their successful implementation unlikely, but made the college realize that it could perhaps be more effective if it focused on providing short skills programmes.

It is notable in this regard that the ways in which the case study colleges organize their programme delivery is at once framed by a mix of their particular social contexts, their economic and labour environments, and their specific institutional visions. Whether colleges are located in urban, rural or township areas (based on employment opportunities) often do impact on the kinds of provisions that colleges provide.

In that respect it is difficult to predict what mode of delivery is best suited to a particular college, and what locational and socio-economic contexts inform their different kinds of programme delivery provision. The point being that the internal and external factors of individual colleges interact in quite complex ways to inform chosen modes of programme delivery.

3.4 Learnerships: How are learnerships integrated into college offerings?

Relationships with businesses and industries in South Africa have changed significantly in the past two years. With the new skills development dispensation and the role of SETAs in the establishment of learnership agreements, colleges as providers have developed complex interactions with both SETAs and employers to access funds and needed resources for the development of sustainable programmes within respective colleges. Indeed, the focus on learnership provision in recent times has been about broadening access, providing a wider variety in programme provisioning, and getting more money into an under-funded college sector.

The development of learnerships has not been a simple or even process. Whereas learnerships were originally conceived as providing a pathway to enable older workers and members of impoverished communities to access education and training (Badroodien & Kallaway 2005: 15; Kraak 2003: 4), gauging from the four case studies the reality has been that learnership provision at college level has not adequately provided for the above constituencies, or alternatively, has not greatly improved their employment opportunities. Indeed, the hype around learnerships has not lived up to initial expectations (see Jennings et al 2004). That is because learnership provision at the provider level is shaped by a much wider and complex variety of institutional and environmental factors, factors that ultimately determine the levels at which students are given access to programmes, as well as the quality of the programmes. The different

ways in which learnerships are incorporated, shaped and provided at the different provision points of the four college case studies are explored below.

Furthermore, the expectation that employers would play an active role in the development of learnerships has not been fully realized. Indeed, business hasn't entirely come to the party. With colleges coming into the equation very late, employers have yet to be convinced that colleges can provide the necessary skills required. Their reluctance to commit themselves to ongoing partnerships has subsequently led to a college like Mthashana creating and registering its own business centre in order to become an employer (and not just a provider) in its own right.

Moreover, in the post-merger period more and different kinds of sites are being incorporated into colleges. This is not only taking place at Mthashana College. The main concern at Mthashana with regard to the incorporation of new sites is that they are mostly youth training centres or skills centres. These centres don't initially bring in funds and they initially act as a further burden on already overstretched college funds. This has led to a number of organizational shifts within Mthashana College, and will require even further re-alignment of certain functions within the college set-up.

Thus, the incorporation of new sites is not only a costly exercise, but it also will need significant internal changes with an attached 'lull period' for things to 'settle in'. This has two implications. Firstly, the sites have obviously not yet built up the needed reputation to encourage employer participation at their sites. Employers notoriously do not collaborate/interact with college sites in this gestational period- which makes it difficult to initiate learnership agreements and skills programmes at these sites. Secondly, there is a greater pressure then on the college's other sites to 'earn money' and to start lower-level learnership and skills programmes to do this, which ultimately may shape college programme provisioning in quite substantial ways.

A key concern within colleges presently is also the issue of whose money it is that the LPU brings in. While program managers and staff members based at individual campuses play important roles in the provision of learnerships and skills programmes, many campuses complain that they have no control over money brought in, that funds are often regarded as LPU or central office money, and that no matter how much effort campus staff exert they have little say in how the money is spent. From the experiences

of four LPUs above it is clear that this premise (that the LPU is the only place within the college where funds are generated and where programmes are initiated) is not only problematic but that it has led campus staff members to become increasingly negative about their contribution to the growth of colleges and their engagement with external partners. There seems to be a trend and preference emerging among campus staff to focus on other ways of bringing in revenue ('bums on seats') through creating student friendly environments, providing reasonable hostel facilities, starting sport/extramural activities at the various sites, and creating student-friendly university-like campuses. This internal 'conflict' will need to be urgently resolved if learnerships are to become an integrated aspect of college programme offerings and a key source of funds for the colleges.

Experiences with learnerships

Learnerships have very particular requirements that are quite different to setting up 'ordinary' college programmes. That is because SETA systems and requirements are complex and require large amounts of documentation to be monitored, reported on and invoiced. Moreover, it is possible under the 'new programming system' that one learnership can easily be delivered at a number and a variety of sites, which puts pressure on college staff to develop a standardized programme of the same quality at all the sites. These two pressures offer significant (if not insurmountable) challenges to staff members involved in the process.

The current strategy of the South Cape College is to circumvent many of the problems associated with learnership delivery by employing outside contract staff on a temporary basis to serve as project managers and trainers for learnership programmes. In that respect, the college's full-time and permanently appointed lecturers are used solely to teach standard college programmes (NATED and NQF-aligned), short courses and skills programmes, while the LPU contracts in outside project managers and trainers to work on the various college learnerships. This process is described in chapter two.

In essence, educators/project managers from outside the established college staff cohort oversee day-to-day issues associated with the implementation of learnerships, and report directly to the LPU implementer. This LPU individual in turn liaises with all the external quality assurers and monitoring bodies. This means that very few internal

college staff members are actually involved in the process of developing learnerships within the college.

Moreover, given that learnership delivery is the responsibility of the LPU it must ensure that all employed contract trainers have the necessary levels of expertise, and where necessary arrange for trainers to be further capacitated. While the South Cape College reported in 2004 that most of its contract staff that work on learnerships have the required subject expertise to fulfill their responsibilities (the majority are qualified assessors and project managers), the main concern within the college is that college educators play little meaningful role in the learnership process and that a significant part of college funds is being spent on training outside personnel.

A significant obstacle that all FET colleges are facing presently in the delivery of learnerships is that the overall learnership system is not yet fully developed. As learnerships are being developed they are also being delivered, which places enormous stress on all levels of the skills development system - SAQA, SETAs, and providers. Many learnerships are also being delivered against unit standards that have not yet been registered on the NQF (for instance the FIETA furniture production learnership) and often learning materials are either not available or are inadequate to support delivery.

With regard to South Cape College project managers often find out after they've been contracted that the learning materials of the learnership that they are meant to provide are (generally) unsuitable or inadequate for immediate use. They also often struggle with getting SETA programme approval and then when programmes are given the go-ahead suddenly have to provide them. There are also persistent problems with inappropriate infrastructure and/or equipment for learnership delivery, as well as low student attendance. A further problem is that some contract trainers/project managers are often found to be unsuitable only after the learnership has started. This puts enormous pressure on outside staff that do not necessarily have a vested (college) interest in the success of the programmes.

Most importantly perhaps, staff capacity to deliver learnerships does not get institutionalized when the college depends on contract staff to oversee learnership delivery. Vital knowledge and experience on learnership delivery is lost when contract trainers do not continually work for the college or when there isn't someone within the college structure that continually (annually) works on a particular learnership.

A further internal dynamic to learnerships is that project managers do the bulk of the training and thus have little time left for project management. This causes them to struggle with keeping up to date administrative records like registers, organising extra classes for learners who have missed classes or that need additional support, and ensuring that students needs around finance are adhered (such as them receiving their allowances and that allowances are paid directly into their bank accounts).

It is notable however that South Cape College has progressed well with regard to developing and delivering NQF full qualifications and learnerships. The college reported in 2004 that all its campuses other than the Skills Centre provide at least one learnership programme. This list of learnerships is provided in chapter two.

Importantly, the way in which the college has set about developing learnerships is directly informed by the kinds of infrastructure and the 'state of facilities' at the individual college sites, and is framed by the pre-determined niche area within which that particular campus operates.

The strategy of the College of Cape Town with regard to learnership provision contrasts starkly with the system used at the South Cape College. At the College of Cape Town learnerships are an intrinsic part of programme offerings and are integrated into the college provisioning system. This essentially means that the bulk of learnership delivery is provided by college staff and few outside contract workers are involved.

Within the College of Cape Town set-up the LPU fulfills the key role of initiating a learnership, doing the programme identification analysis, assessing employer/workplace requirements and their implications for provisioning (weighed against what the college can realistically offer), inducting role players and clarifying their roles and responsibilities, identifying the logistics of workplace training and which party will handle the administration thereof, getting the programme approved via established academic management processes, to overseeing actual programme development processes and final approval within the college, final approval from the WCED, and then by the relevant SETA. Importantly however, this functioning of the LPU is embedded within the everyday functioning of the college and its provision of other programme offerings, and does not operate as a separate entity as is the case with South Cape College.

Staff members play a critical role in the learnership development process. Not only do they do the bulk of the learnership delivery, but they also play an important role in 'determining', customizing or adapting the kinds of materials that are used.

While the majority (if not all) of programme materials are developed by external companies/providers, staff members are guided by established college processes when approached to develop a programme and when 'adapting' materials for the developed programmes. These processes are described in chapter two.

It is notable that the college relies on learning materials acquired from SETAs as 'packaged' and registered programmes and then customize them for college use. The college actively involves participants from within the college and from relevant SETAs when it sets about providing a programme. This is done to both to improve the success rate of new programmes and to develop staff capacity within the college as to the general requirements and procedures associated with initiating learnerships and skills programmes.

With regard to how the college sets up learnerships, staff members follow basically the same procedures associated with 'normal' programmes, with a few important additional procedures. Most notable is the presence of learnership co-ordinators (linked to the LPU) that are responsible for interfacing (problem-solving etc.) between the companies and the college at ground level and carry the administrative load around programme implementation.

The learnership process is shaped by a series of procedures that link programmes to specific structures within the college. Getting a learnership started begins with the initiating of a learnership by the LPU or a college program manager. Staff members then have to plan its setting up, get the subsequent approval of senior academic staff (with the Deputy CEO in charge of academic affairs and the CEO signing off on the plans), execute the plan, and then control the roll-out process. College senior management, as well as college staff members, are thus actively involved in the setting up and provision of college learnerships and skills programmes, and throughout the implementation process.

However, given the difficulties in starting up learnerships and the overall college focus on 'branding' its existing full-course programmes, the college has sought to include learnerships within college programme offerings in particular ways. Essentially,

learnerships are viewed as a particular way of generating funds and resolving the programme and funding needs of a particular student target group within the college. By way of including more work-relevant programmes within its provisioning, the college has located learnership delivery at targeted sites/campuses. The idea is to develop niche markets at such campuses and to market these newly developed programmes as a way of including students that would not normally be able to attend or afford enrolling at the college. One problem with this approach is that while learnerships is 'marketed' as flexible, shorter, and more focused, they may often also be regarded by the public as inferior and which will not get them into the kinds of employment they seek or desire.

Notably, in both colleges discussed above, a large number of learnerships have been initiated at the various campus levels and set processes exist that regulate the ways in which learnerships have been included.

The process of introducing learnerships at Mthashana College and Sivanda College has however been significantly slower. This relates to the dynamics associated with the geographically spread-out rural areas within which many of their campuses are located, as well as the substantial demands on staff members, college structures and systems, the lack of industry links for the training of students, the low levels of educational qualifications amongst staff and students, and the alarmingly high rates of unemployment and poverty in areas around the college campuses. Simply put, without the staff members, structures and systems (institutional support), and the capacity to introduce and oversee programme development and delivery, learnerships cannot really be operationalised or sustained on an ongoing basis in both these colleges

Moreover, without support from external partners there is no real way of knowing whether learnership programmes would be viable or could be sustained in any systematic way within the two colleges. In view of these limitations, both colleges presently adopt an approach where they establish the essential requirements that the college has to meet to introduce new qualifications/programmes, or to NQF-align existing offerings' and to initiate a process of learning how to include learnerships and skill programmes within their colleges and how to interact with SETAs in that regard.

The colleges are well aware that given their focus on incorporating more skills centres into the colleges that they will soon have to start developing its own programmes (including unit standard generation) and generate their own materials. In skills programmes like beadwork and garment making there are simply no unit standards

packages that have been developed elsewhere, and the colleges have to start engaging with this issue if their new institutional approaches are to succeed.

That does not mean that neither of the colleges is developing learnership programmes presently, or that designated staff members do not focus on a daily basis on the development thereof. For example, at Mthashana College the assistant LPU Manager oversees *learnership implementation* on a full time basis, including liaising with the SETAs. The college also has dedicated learnership co-ordinators at its various campuses that are responsible for organising and coordinating practical on-the-ground aspects pertaining to the preparation, implementation and ongoing management of programmes.

It is expected that once learnerships start to get developed on a significant scale in Kwazulu Natal that the colleges will grapple more meaningfully with how to develop the specialized programmes (electives) that relate to specific and identified industry needs. Disconcertingly, this remains unlikely since the present SETA funding model, alongside SETA criteria governing accreditation and the development of unit standards, limits the extent to which a deep rural college like Mthashana can introduce learnerships.

Indeed, colleges like Mthashana and Sivananda will require substantial cash injections to kickstart learnerships and skills programmes if this kind of provisioning is to 'take off' within the two colleges, especially given the critically high poverty and unemployment levels in the areas around the two colleges, the lack of any significant industry links in the two regions, and the number of facilities that do not have adequate facilities for learnership delivery.

3.5 Some concluding remarks

The defining feature of LPUs in the four case study colleges is that they have been conceptualized as management structures that link the central offices of colleges to the intimate working of campuses, and that they serve as the main link or connection to external funds. This suggests that although LPUs were initially conceived as the key innovation and development hubs of colleges, environmental and institutional factors have determined that some LPUs have come to play a rather dour and mechanistic role within their respective colleges. This has led to very ad-hoc approaches to programme design, where LPU participants have spent minimal time thinking through how the

partnerships that they forge impact on quality curricula provisioning or the long term employability and personal growth needs of students.

A further feature of LPU development thus far has been that college management structures have put enormous pressure on LPUs to concentrate on securing business and to initiate industry links for the college, in the belief that this will ensure their longer term sustainability. This notion is supported by a recent report published by the National Business Initiative (NBI) titled 'The Challenge of staffing and responsiveness in FET Colleges'. In the report it is suggested that there exists a significant correlation between the number of partnerships in a college and the performance of the college in terms of pass and throughput rates (NBI 2004: 12).

However, what is often missed is that when colleges secure partnerships they mean different things for different college campuses. For example, in bemoaning the fact that it is very difficult to formalize links between business/ industries and campuses in township areas, colleges mostly respond to this dilemma by providing as many learnerships and skills programmes as possible at such campuses. The problem though is that:

- Learnerships and skills programmes at such campuses tend to be predominantly provided at NQF Levels 2-4;
- As invariably happens when the provision of courses is demand-based, colleges don't immediately prepare the subsequent level course for the next academic year, which has the effect of then leaving both students and educators at such campuses 'in limbo' the following year;
- Given college staffing shortages, to provide learnerships and skills programmes staff are often moved from teaching formal education and training (NATED) courses to teaching the theory parts of learnerships and in skills programmes. In such cases formal NATED courses are normally discontinued. However, if the displacing learnership or skills programme is not offered to another cohort of students the following year, this has significant implications for the working lives of staff members at such campuses.

Thus, external partnerships can also have the effect of reinforcing or skewing the unequal ways in which the various college campuses relate to each other (NBI 2004: 73).

Moreover, given concerns about the financial statuses of colleges and the kinds of programmes they have historically provided, the LPU approach to innovation is often to

focus on skills development concerns, ie. learnerships and skills programmes, and forego engaging with the overall curriculum requirements of colleges. The NBI has noted that:

There have been significant changes in programme profiles towards more FET, NQF-aligned, customized and SETA-accredited programmes (in recent times) which, in turn, provide for enhanced learning experiences for learners through access to sponsorship, workplace exposure and job placement.... Of concern however is that current partnerships are not making the expected contribution to curriculum development requirements within colleges (NBI 2004: 12).

Conclusion

Butler (2000: 334) points out that FET Colleges, and the specialized mechanisms they employ to access the labour market, need to increasingly be wary of becoming 'complicit actors in the educational marketplace'. She notes that FET Colleges need to be careful of how they redefine or pigeonhole vocational knowledge as 'industry relevant, just-in-time, ephemeral and disposable skills, with short use-by dates' (Butler 2000: 334) and that they should encourage their staff members to continually and critically engage with the process of developing new programmes within colleges.

Indeed, without this kind of participation and intervention, colleges may well contribute to industry having too much input into the terms and nature of college provisioning. This does not only have severe implications for college autonomy over curriculum issues, but could also potentially further blur the boundaries between educational sites and the social contexts of college students/'customers'.

In that respect, the 'responsiveness' agenda that is increasingly being thrust on colleges may potentially be pushing them (as providers of further education and training) towards a far more narrowly-defined concept of human resource development; a scenario where FET provisioning will become very much about 'learning how to work' in a particular context, and not engage with in any meaningful way how to provide students with the broader contextual and critical canvas within which to position and grow themselves into employment and society.

The challenge for South African FET Colleges, as elsewhere in the world, is to find ways of holding on to the skills-related goals of their programmes and at the same time actively engage with the processes that shape how college students enter educational sites, access educational provisioning, and use their acquired skills and knowledge to

secure relevant employment. Unwin has noted that "if learnerships only serve to lock people into low-status jobs without ensuring attainment of the qualifications that will assist them to progress in the labour market, then neither the economic nor the social integration goals of college programmes will have been met" (Unwin 2003b).

Learnership and skills programmes initiatives need to be addressed as part of a package of measures that support employers and providers, like FET Colleges, to improve their performance, and have the ambition to strive for higher quality products and markets. This is perhaps where Linkages and Programme Units can have its greatest impact.

There can be little doubt that innovation and development units within FET Colleges can be crucial vehicles for colleges to effectively link up with the world of work and other external partners, make education and training more relevant to the workplace, and improve the employability of college learners. Indeed, the Linkage and Programme Unit experience of the four case study colleges indicates that while establishing such a unit within colleges is a very complex process that requires a significant amount of strategic planning and internal discussion, the presence of such formal and structured mechanisms within the colleges have made them more viable economic and educational entities. LPUs have also given colleges the opportunity to plan and determine the ways in which they engage with internal and external processes and develop a logic that is directly pertinent to their respective institutions.

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