

REPORT ON THE CHEC / PGWC JOINT REGIONAL SEMINAR ON STUDENT PERFORMANCE

**School of Public Health, UWC
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1. INTRODUCTION

This report summarises key issues presented and discussed at the CHEC / PGWC Joint Regional Seminar on Student Performance held at the School of Public Health at the University of the Western Cape on 7 October 2009.

In welcoming the delegates to the seminar, Ms Judy Favish, co-convenor of the CHEC / PGWC Joint Task Team, explained that its purpose was to share recent research and institutional initiatives that address student performance in order to identify gaps and / or possible interventions that could be addressed with the support of the Premier's Office.

This report begins with a summary of the first four presentations – those by Ian Scott, Francois Strydom, Nan Yeld and Michael Cosser – and the key questions raised in response to these presentations. The following section provides summaries of institutional responses to the challenge of student performance. These focus on research into factors affecting student learning and the Living and Learning in Science Programme (University of the Western Cape), extended curriculum programmes (Cape Peninsula University of Technology), the First-Year Experience (University of Stellenbosch) and a number of research studies that focus on student throughput and drop out rates (University of Cape Town). In addition, summaries of two external responses are also provided – those from the Rural Education Access Programme and the Masakh'isizwe Centre for Excellence in the Provincial Department of Transport and Public Works.

The final section of the report provides a list of areas for possible regional collaboration. Key issues here relate to financial aid, lobbying for curriculum reform and renewal, student tracking, field of study and careers guidance, student accommodation and increasing student participation and involvement. Proposals were also made for further work that focuses on the socio-economic factors that impact on student performance.

2. PRESENTATIONS OF RECENT RESEARCH AND INITIATIVES

The seminar began with presentations from Ian Scott and three panelists, Francois Strydom, Nan Yeld and Michael Cosser, as summarised below:

2.1 Ian Scott: Student performance: national patterns and regional implications

In introducing his presentation, Scott explained that rather than presenting solutions to current problems, the information should lead to collective discussions on the way forward. He acknowledged that the significance of higher education in economic and social development and the need to address the skills shortage in South Africa are not disputed. Similarly, the importance of higher education in contributing to equity and

social stability is recognised. As a result, Scott warned, unless higher education institutions address issues around retention and graduation rates, protests of the service delivery-type around access to higher education are likely.

Scott highlighted a number of statistics derived from DoE's cohort studies of the 2000 and 2001 intakes of first-time entering students (as published in *Higher Education Monitor 6* CHE). Over five years, approximately 30% of these students graduated, while approximately 56% left without graduating. The estimated completion rate of this cohort of students is 44%. In the best performing sub-sector – that of contact students - only 50% of the students graduated. In contact university programmes, there were only 2 cases where the loss may be under 40%. In contact technikon programmes, there were no cases where the loss will be under 50%. Data from these studies reveal that approximately 15 000 potential graduates were lost to the system.

In considering possible responses that these statistics on student attrition are much the same in every country, Scott explained that high attrition rates in other countries are accompanied by far larger participation rates than are found in South Africa. As a result, the effect of drop-outs on the economy in other countries is not as serious as in South Africa. In developed countries, the benchmark for participation in higher education is around 60%, whereas in South Africa it is only 16%. In addition, there is racial skewing in this country where white students outnumber black students 5 : 1.

In addressing the view that a large proportion of current students “do not belong in higher education”, Scott said that this is not tenable; it must be assumed that the 10% of black students that access higher education should be there. In any event, the country cannot afford a smaller intake.

Achieving equity of outcomes (graduation within 5 years in general academic B degrees) and addressing the major discrepancies in success rates of black and white students will remain central challenges for higher education in South Africa. At present, under 5% of the black age-appropriate group is succeeding in the higher education system in South Africa, the black completion rate is less than half the white completion rate, and the number of black graduates is less than the number of white graduates. This lack of equity in terms of outcomes militates against increased access for black students.

Scott reiterated that the current output does not match national needs in respect of economic growth and social cohesion, and that the current system is clearly not meeting the needs of the majority of its students. He also pointed out that the equity and development agendas have now converged: in other words, catering for student diversity has become a necessary condition for economic development as well as social inclusion.

In addressing the question as to whose responsibility this problem is, Scott acknowledged that there are factors beyond the control of the higher education sector such as poverty and schooling. Given that poverty is not about to be alleviated and the school system is not about to produce substantial numbers of university-ready students within the next few years, the educational process in higher education is, itself, a major variable affecting who succeeds and fails. It is here that universities can make improvements. Current performance patterns are unlikely to change spontaneously.

Scott argued that the idea of increasing intake in order to increase output is not sound. He said that growth in intake will merely perpetuate or worsen existing performance patterns; rather, he argued, improving output depends on systemic change.

Scott suggested two key conditions for improving graduate output. The first was introducing change in curriculum structures. He spoke of the “myth” of the three-year degree. Today, a three-year degree applies to less than 30% of students – usually those from privileged backgrounds. Key features of effective curriculum reform include extending the standard duration of core degrees so that these normalize and accommodate the realities of the majority of the student intake, providing flexibility to allow for acceleration or work-while-learning, and enriching curricula to meet contemporary social and workplace needs.

The second key condition mentioned by Scott was that of developing educational expertise in higher education. He argued that while structures are important, those who fill the structures are more important. He also argued that universities can no longer rely on common sense, but need to ensure that a systematic understanding of teaching and learning exists and that this is valued as the scholarship of teaching. National and regional structures to support the recognition and development of educational expertise are required.

In concluding, Scott suggested that the applicant pool for higher education be increased through better alignment with FET, that greater awareness and support for research on higher education reform be provided, that there be increased leadership in extending financial support to students on extended programmes, and finally, that the development of effective regional networks be facilitated.

2.2 Francois Strydom: Student engagement and student success

Strydom reported on a project conducted for the Council on Higher Education in seven institutions in South Africa. He explained that the notion of the “success puzzle” was a central concept used and that this included various theoretical perspectives (e.g. sociological, organisational, cultural, economic, student development etc).

In identifying predictors of academic success, academic preparation and motivation were found to be closely related. In addition, it was found that “what students do” matters to their persistence and success. In other words, the time and effort students spend on study activities have consequences for success.

Strydom then presented a diagram of the student engagement framework adapted from Kuh (2007) which places student engagement centrally because this is an area higher education has control over – as opposed to global and national forces and other influences encountered before tertiary experience.

Using longitudinal data collected in America Strydom illustrated the impact of student engagement in educationally purposeful activities. He mentioned that other countries such as Australia, Canada and China have also used these measures.

A brief description of the questionnaire was provided: this focuses on student behaviours, institutional actions and requirements, students’ reactions to university, and student background information. The questionnaire provides for five areas of information

that can be benchmarked: the level of academic challenge, supportive campus environment, enriching educational experiences, student / staff interaction and active collaborative learning.

In closing, Strydom explained that data from these questionnaires can provide valuable information to higher education institutions on the frequency of student engagement, and can assist in the identification of problem areas. In summary, the data provide a picture of students at an institution, refocus conversations on the quality of education, and inform decision-making for mobilizing actions towards success.

2.3 Nan Yeld: The interface between schools and universities: findings from the National Benchmark Tests Project (NBTP)

The key questions addressed by Yeld in her presentation were: What is the NBTP? What can it tell us? and In what ways can this information be used to strengthen schooling and higher education provision?

In summary, the NBTP, which was commissioned in 2005 by Higher Education South Africa (HESA), is about “higher education addressing its own challenges, rather than about pointing fingers at the school system”. It sets out to do this by providing information about the competence of entering students in terms of three core domains: Academic Literacy, Quantitative Literacy and Mathematics. Yeld noted that higher education’s view on what these core domains are, and at what level they should be mastered, may differ from those deemed most salient by the school-leaving system.

Yeld explained that the standard setting process for developing the tests was done by academics in conjunction with psychometricians from the Educational Testing Service. Several field tests and tryouts were held. Proficient, Intermediate and Basic categories of competence were identified.

The NBTP provides for both individual and group level information. In terms of the latter, for example, a Dean of Commerce will be given information as to how many students will require extended support and how many will require minimal support. This information is not provided by the National Senior Certificate results. In other words, the tests are not merely about student selection since the results also provide an indication of the size of student performance problems in the three domains. At an individual level, the NBTP provides information about the tasks individuals can do at different levels and their level of risk in higher education studies.

In closing, Yeld highlighted some of the results from the pilot testing conducted in February 2009. In terms of Academic Literacy, while the largest category into which students fell was the Proficient Band, almost as many students fell into the Intermediate Band. This suggests that higher education institutions in South Africa need to provide extensive support in language development – not only for a small minority of registered students, but for almost half of them.

The low levels of achievement in the domain of Quantitative Literacy confirm the need for the new NSC subject Mathematical Literacy, but also suggest that the curriculum has a long way to go before it realizes its aims. Yeld pointed out that few universities make any structured provision for developing student knowledge and skills in this area despite

students being expected to interpret tables, understand percentages, basic proportions and trends, etc.

The Mathematics test sets out to assess students' manifest ability related to mathematical concepts formally regarded as part of the new secondary school curriculum. However, according to the NBTP tests, very few students in the overall pilot sample achieved results that would place them in the Proficient category, providing some support for doubts about the large numbers of students achieving over 70% in the NSC examination in this subject in 2008. The challenge faced by higher education institutions in relation to Mathematics is clearly enormous.

2.4 Michael Cosser: Socio-economic status, race and student retention in seven higher education institutions

In describing the key findings of a study undertaken by the HSRC in seven institutions, the Student Retention and Graduate Destination Study, Michael Cosser highlighted the correlations between low socio-economic status (SES) and non-completers. He began the presentation with reference to low student throughput rates and the disparities in the graduation rates of black and white students. A hand-out provided the national benchmarks for graduation rates (2001 and 2004), the success rates of undergraduate contact students in all public higher education institutions (2001 – 2004) and student attrition rates from generic bachelor degrees in South African higher education institutions (2000 – 2003). In terms of the latter, it was demonstrated that only 22% of the original 120 000 students in the 2000 cohort graduated within the specified 3-year period.

The key purpose of the study was to investigate the factors that influence students' pathways through the HE system and into the labour market. In addition to constructing institutional profiles of students from the HEMIS data, the study included two surveys (one for graduates and another for non-completers) and tracked the 2002 cohort of students into the labour market in 2003.

While a number of reasons were given for non-completion (including academic difficulties, frustration with administrative processes, loss of interest in the programme, and inadequate career counselling), financial reasons featured in the three top reasons provided.

The study indicates that while NSFAS is an important source of income for fees for African students, living expenses are covered by parents / guardians, bank loans, bursaries and scholarships.

2.5 Key points arising in discussion

Questions and comments that arose in the discussions that followed these presentations included the following:

- How has socio-economic data been collected?
- Is it possible to replace black / white categories with socio-economic indicators?
- What are the broader socio-economic factors – including home location / environment, access to electricity, etc – that impact on student performance?

Cosser explained that socio-economic indicators included parents' income levels and educational qualifications and that this data was collected via survey questionnaires. He also explained that this data had not always been forthcoming in the study he described.

Comments from a number of delegates indicated that there are “hundreds” of factors that influence student performance (including the type of dwellings students live in, their proximity to school and whether they have older siblings who have studied in a higher education institution), that school results are often unreliable predictors of success in higher education and that many school graduates present a challenge for higher education institutions.

Further questions included those related to the development of national strategy and those related to the curriculum:

- To what extent do the national studies speak to each other? For example, is the CHE using the studies to make decisions about a 4-year degree?
- What is the thinking around curriculum content?
- How might a match between graduate supply and demand be encouraged?

Responses to these questions suggested that the way in which the studies presented speak to each other and inform national strategy has not been clarified and / or communicated to the universities. It was agreed, however, that it would be important for the various findings to be synthesised and that institutions should put pressure on government to do this.

In terms of the curricula, it was suggested that it is important to first ensure that frameworks for these are in place before considering content.

A university representative explained that while universities make use of some steering mechanisms, they do not work off a manpower plan which means that there may be a mismatch between graduates and the labour market.

A key question posed by Province was:

- What are the critical factors influencing student success?

To the above question, there were several responses including references to the numbers of students who drop out because of financial factors and the relationship between financial security and student success. A delegate suggested that the NSFAS application process is not sufficiently nuanced and that a means test should be conducted.

As one delegate suggested, the questions and responses raised in this session demonstrate that there is “no silver bullet”; rather, addressing student success requires a long and complex process built on new conceptualisations of the students and teaching and learning. For example, it was argued that the extended curriculum needs a entirely new approach rather than just an extension of time in which to cover the same material.

3. INSTITUTIONAL RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES RELATED TO STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Institutional responses to challenges related to student performance were presented by representatives from the four institutions as summarised below:

3.1 Vivienne Bozalek: University of the Western Cape

Bozalek's presentation focused on recent efforts to improve undergraduate success rates through research into factors affecting student learning, and the Living and Learning in Science (LLS) Programme introduced at the University of the Western Cape.

Bozalek explained that the research study, which had been funded by the Council on Higher Education, had included 696 second-year students in seven faculties. Participatory action research workshops and questionnaires had been used to collect data in September and October 2008. The former used Participatory Learning and Action (PLA) techniques which, in addition to providing non-threatening, reflexive tools also promoted participation and inclusivity. Examples of visioning, mapping and ranking exercises completed by the students were presented.

This study provides evidence to suggest that student involvement / engagement matters as does being recognised as fully valued members of the community. In addition, the findings suggest that shared learning, students' active participation in learning activities and timeous feedback are all useful in promoting student success.

In response to these findings, the Living and Learning in Science Programme was designed and piloted this year with 49 extended curriculum first-year Physics students. Bozalek explained that the programme makes use of PLA techniques in weekly small group sessions. The content covered includes adjustment to higher education and UWC, navigating via e-learning, goal setting, and time management and prioritizing. In addition, communication, diversity and cooperative learning, stress management and coping and exam preparation are covered.

While a full evaluation will be conducted only at the end of the year, mid-year results show a 4-5% outperformance of LLS students in relation to their peers in the control group in 2009. It is anticipated that this pilot programme will be scaled up next year.

3.2 Terry Volbrecht: Cape Peninsula University of Technology

In providing the context of and need for extended curriculum programmes (ECP), Volbrecht referred to graduation rates at CPUT (26% overall in the given time of three years and only 50% after six years), and said that although this institution is in the top echelons of universities of technology in South Africa, throughput is still too low and failure rates too high.

The initiative on which this presentation was based included approximately 960 ECP students, 55% of whom are in Engineering. Volbrecht outlined some of the key principles or guidelines for ECPs that provide for epistemological and vocational access. These include conceptual development, formative components of assessment, learning to learn more independently as well as disciplinary and vocational engagement. The importance

of introducing students to both the subject material as well as their future professions was highlighted.

ECP students study half the normal number of subjects each year with an additional 50% learning support. A comparison of the regular Chemistry curriculum and that provided in the extended programme highlighted the more intensive nature of the latter. Volbrecht reported that an analysis of pass rates of regular and ECP students in 2007 and 2008 indicate that ECP students often outperform the regular students.

In addition to these successes, Volbrecht also pointed to areas of difficulty in the implementation of the ECP, e.g. staffing issues. In closing, other areas for possible partnerships with government were highlighted. Key amongst these is the need to expose students to the range of fields of study available in order to assist them in making suitable choices.

3.3 Susan van Schalkwyk: University of Stellenbosch

Van Schalkwyk provided an overview of the First Year Academy at the University of Stellenbosch. She explained that this is an holistic, institutional approach that focuses on success for first-year students. It does this by utilizing, coordinating and integrating all existing faculty functions and academic and student support activities. In this way, it draws on all aspects of a student's life – in and out of the classroom. A diagram which places the student at the centre, provided a picture of the various forms of activities including early assessment, mentoring and tutoring, the res-ed programme and technological support

While the First Year Academy only began in 2007, there has already been positive feedback and a reduction in the number of students going to Student Counselling as a result of problems with adaptation. Van Schalkwyk also highlighted the greater awareness of teaching and learning issues in faculties (especially with reference to first-year students) and the increase in the numbers of teaching and learning research initiatives aimed at first-years in the institution. Most significantly, there is evidence of improved retention and success rates amongst first-year students and a ripple effect to other years.

Van Schalkwyk reported that prior to the implementation of this initiative, the institution had under-estimated the power of the systemic-holistic approach and the network of people working together around teaching and learning – this is where “the magic” of the initiative lies, she said. She hoped that external partners such as civil society and Province would be able to join these networks and share responsibilities related to areas such as private residences, student commuting, diversity and responsive curricula.

3.4 Jane Hendry: University of Cape Town

In her presentation, Jane Hendry referred to a number of research studies conducted at the University of Cape Town. The first of these, the Equity and Efficiency Project (2003), aimed to raise awareness of the importance of throughput and graduation rates along with ‘equity of outcomes’, and to analyse student performance patterns with a view to developing effective improvement strategies. A quantitative study conducted in collaboration with the faculties, this study revealed that while there were many small projects focused on interventions to improve through-put, there was no overall strategy

and, often, insufficient resources to extend these interventions. This study highlighted the need for further qualitative studies to explore the reasons for students' dropping out while in good academic standing.

The Interrupted Learners Survey that followed in 2005 aimed to better understand why students left the university before completing their course of study. Possible reasons tested in telephonic interviews included financial and academic as well as those related to student life and health issues. While academic factors were the most commonly cited reasons for drop-out while in good academic standing, financial factors were the most often cited by the former black students interviewed. The low numbers of peers from their schools attending the university was a factor often cited by those students from black, coloured and Indian schools. Recommendations included refining academic processes, widening access to and the quantum of financial aid, and addressing the student climate to make all races feel welcome,

In 2007, UCT participated in the HERD-SA study funded by Kellogg. This study focused on first-year drop-outs and found that the significant factors contributing to attrition included financial aid, home language, age, course success rate, institution course load, and citizenship.

Hendry also referred to ongoing research using statistical modelling to determine significant factors specific to UCT. She explained that although detailed datasets can be extracted from the Student System, the question of how to assign a socio-economic indicator persists. Other projects at UCT include ongoing tracking of student retention within the academic review system, a new undergraduate survey and a focus on students entering UCT from COSAT.

In speaking of gaps in the current research undertaken, Hendry pointed to socio-economic impact and effects on student retention, analyses to support the empirical setting of admissions criteria, and following up on the impact of interventions to date.

4. EXTERNAL RESPONSES TO CHALLENGES RELATED TO STUDENT PERFORMANCE

Two external responses to challenges related to student performance were presented as summarised below:

4.1 Sharman Wickham: REAP research study

Wickham introduced the study *Factors that facilitate (and inhibit) success for disadvantaged students* conducted for the Rural Education Access Programme, an organisation whose mission it is to provide access to higher education for rural youth from poor communities. She outlined the key questions posed and the approach used before summarising selected findings under three themes: financial factors, academic factors and socio-cultural factors.

The complex interconnections between these themes and the significant similarities between the students in the study sample and many other higher education students highlight the need for integrated institutional responses that ensure early identification of "disadvantage" and proactive, immediate and ongoing communication about services / facilities available for students.

The study makes recommendations for both REAP and higher education institutions. Of interest to this seminar were the following: possible partnerships to provide top-up funding for students with potential (as opposed to those who have already succeeded in first year), careers guidance in schools, residential accommodation for first-year students and ongoing orientation to university life and the world of work. In addition, it is recommended that there be ongoing monitoring, evaluation and research of new practices and strategies so that evidence of and explanations for any changes in success rates are identified.

4.2 Sidney Lockett: Provincial Government of the Western Cape

In outlining the context and purpose of the Masakh'iSizwe Bursary Programme in the Provincial Department of Transport and Public Works, Lockett referred to the high unemployment statistics and to the delays and other difficulties that students often experience in accessing NSFAS funding. He explained that the Masakh'iSizwe Bursary programme ensures that students are not distracted from their studies by financial problems. In addition, Lockett referred to the current skills demand in engineering and the built environment as a strong reason for the provision of this bursary scheme.

Lockett explained that the bursary scheme caters for financially disadvantaged learners, with a specific interest in women and those from rural areas, and provides a complete package including the costs of accommodation and travel. In addition, the Masakh'iSizwe Centre for Excellence had negotiated opportunities for student enrichment through lifeskills, leadership and mentoring programmes. Wider collaboration has also ensured opportunities for experiential learning for students.

In closing, Lockett highlighted some gaps in the work of the Centre including cohort analyses which would highlight participation and throughput rates as well as other studies which might identify factors that facilitate success.

5. POSSIBLE AREAS FOR FUTURE REGIONAL COLLABORATION

Most of the afternoon session was devoted to discussions of possible areas for future regional collaboration. The following were identified:

5.1 Recommendations for NSFAS and the current review

It was proposed that a short report be submitted to the current NSFAS review process outlining key findings related to financial factors that affect student performance and making recommendations for improvement. It was suggested and agreed that Sharman Wickham would draft this submission.

5.2 Advocacy and lobbying for curriculum reform and renewal

It was proposed that the issue of curriculum reform and renewal – particularly the issue of changes from a 3-year to a 4-year degree study period – be addressed so as to encourage greater awareness of the need for this change (both within and beyond the higher education institutions) and what it requires. In addition to advocacy and lobbying functions, it would be important to demonstrate what a 4-year degree would look like.

It was suggested and agreed that a written outline be circulated to Institutional Planners for their consideration prior to being submitted to the CHEC Board.

5.3 Sharing models and lessons learned in Bursary Schemes

It was first proposed that the Department of Transport and Public Works write a paper on the Masakh'isizwe Bursary Scheme for presentation at a seminar. This paper would include the model used and lessons learned. It was then suggested that this and other bursary schemes form the focus of a seminar programme where the various models / forms of support provided by Province, institutions and the private sector could be compared and discussed. It was pointed out that the lack of funding for the Honours year of study should be highlighted at this meeting.

5.4 Student tracking

It was suggested that a regional approach to tracking students be adopted and that this be done in conjunction with major employers in the Western Cape. In terms of tracking students from school into university, it was noted that the quintile system of categorising schools is not helpful and that earlier work conducted by HESA in schooling should be made available to the universities.

It was noted that destination studies would need to take into account the fact that higher education institutions are national assets with international foci as well. It was also noted that there is a link between student performance and regional success.

5.5 Fields of study and career guidance

It was agreed that there should be a regional initiative on careers guidance and the fields of study available in universities. The possibility of there being “a one-stop shop” for the latter was noted.

It was suggested that CHEC first ascertain the current status and future plans for this in the four regional universities.

5.6 Student involvement and participation

It was proposed that student involvement and participation in issues related to them, including curriculum change, should be encouraged. It was noted that students had been invited to this seminar but none had attended.

It was suggested that Colleen Howell and Vivienne Bozalek from UWC draft an outline on what is meant by “student participation / involvement” and how this might be encouraged.

5.7 Socio-economic factors that impact on student performance

It was proposed that in order to address the socio-economic factors that impact on student performance, a paper should be commissioned to identify these factors and / or that a “round robin” be initiated whereby each institution could contribute to a list of socio-economic indicators. These are likely to include indicators such as parents’ educational qualifications and income, housing, access to electricity, etc.

It was noted that future research should focus on areas over which the institutions have some control. It was also noted that fine-grained disaggregation of data would assist in shifting attention from race. Such fields could then be added to the HEMIS data.

Additional focus areas mentioned but not discussed in as much detail included the following:

5.8 Student accommodation

The question was raised, What are possibilities for expanding available accommodation through public-private partnerships? The issues of physical safety as well as the location of future student residences could be highlighted in further discussions.

5.9 Discussions on schooling

It was suggested that there is a need to feed back information gleaned from the National Benchmark Tests Project into discussions about schooling. Similarly, lessons learned from the research and other initiatives presented at this seminar could form part of discussions on schooling.

5.10 Student debt

The question was raised, Who sits with student debt – banks or institutions? It is possible that this issue could be included in the seminar on bursaries (see 5.3 above).

5.11 Monitoring and evaluation

The need to monitor interventions and initiatives and conduct cost analyses was raised in discussions.

5.12 Title and focus of the seminar and future initiatives

While no alternative was agreed on, the somewhat narrow and loaded term “student performance” in the seminar title was noted.

6. CONCLUSION

This seminar provided a valuable opportunity for sharing recent national and regional research on student performance as well as a range of initiatives introduced by institutions and other interested stakeholders to address the associated challenges.

The presentations highlighted the need for ongoing work in a number of different areas in order to better prepare prospective students for higher education (e.g. information on financial aid, fields of study and careers to be provided to learners in schools) and to reform and strengthen areas of provision (e.g. extended and responsive curricula to residential accommodation) once they have registered at the university.

In discussions, it was agreed that many of these areas provide opportunities for potential partnerships between the universities and Province and for further research. The need to monitor and evaluate changes and new initiatives introduced would be an important

aspect of the latter. In addition, the identification of valid indicators of socio-economic status, and the development of rigorous methods for collecting such data and analyzing their impact remain important challenges for all stakeholders in the sector.

Finally, it was agreed that there are two existing fora that might manage ongoing conversations about these issues – the one responsible for this seminar and the other another CHEC forum comprising staff from the Education Faculties / Schools at the four universities in the province.