

The Second Colloquium between the City of Cape Town and the Cape Higher Education Consortium

20th October 2008

Sharman Wickham

Mr. Andrew Boraine, Chairperson of the second colloquium between the City of Cape Town and the Cape Higher Education Consortium (CHEC), welcomed the Executive Mayor, Ms Helen Zille, the Vice Chancellors (or their representatives) from the four higher education institutions in the Western Cape and other delegates saying that the relationships between “town and gown” were “the hallmark of competitive and successful cities”. Mr. Boraine handed over to Mr. Mike Marsden, the Executive Director: Service Delivery Integration.

Welcome and introduction

Mr. Marsden also extended a warm welcome to the Executive Mayor, the CHEC Chairperson, Professor Anthony Staak, the Vice-Chancellors and other delegates. He, too, described the partnership between the City of Cape Town and CHEC as critical, and one that seeks to develop skills and knowledge to ensure productivity and facilitate economic growth. He explained that the signing of the Collaboration Protocol at the end of the colloquium would provide the platform for future engagement.

Mr. Marsden reminded the audience of the origins of the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership: the idea of the partnership was first suggested at a breakfast meeting on 11 April 2007. Later that year, on 21 November 2007, a task team was established and then three working groups were formed. Since then, Mr. Marsden said, much work had been done and the colloquium provided an opportunity to report on the progress of a number of initiatives.

In handing over to the Executive Mayor, Mr. Marsden highlighted her recent award as the World’s Best Mayor.

Mayoral Opening Address

The Executive Mayor, Ms Helen Zille, began her address by thanking Mr. Andrew Boraine, the Chairperson of the Cape Town Partnership, for the team effort that had produced results. She also welcomed and thanked Professor Anthony Staak, Chairperson of the CHEC Board, Ms Nasima Badsha, CEO of CHEC, the Vice-Chancellors of the universities, Mr. Mike Marsden and the other delegates

In commenting on the establishment of the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership eighteen months ago, Ms Zille said that while one might expect dramatic results, the processes followed had often been frustrating. Such frustration was not peculiar to this partnership. While there is the necessary technical capacity to build a low-cost house in only 3 – 4 days, the administrative and bureaucratic processes leading up to construction often take 2 – 3 years to complete. In some cases, she said, an idea does not live long enough to be implemented. This, however, had not been the case in the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership.

Ms Zille outlined the role of government in facilitating processes and procedures so that people with capacity can move forward – although not without obeying rules and regulations. She suggested that the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership should be viewed as a tripartite alliance – an alliance where the City works with both higher education institutions and the private sector to achieve significant movement towards societal goals.

Opportunity had to be sought. Ms Zille referred to the economic context where the value of the Rand had dropped, pointing out that while certain sectors were suffering, others such as construction were growing. She spoke of the R 30 billion that was to be invested in development for the Cape Town CBD, alone, in the next few years. There, the role of local government was to create a context in which the private sector felt able to invest. During the financial crisis, the City of Cape Town would emphasise its opportunities and develop its weaker points.

In elaborating on this theme, Ms Zille said that the City's key strategic focus was to develop a platform of solid infrastructure so as to attract the private sector and further investments. She explained that it was essential that the City had the capacity to deliver on this mandate. This was one reason why the City's partnership with CHEC was important: the development of skills, including those related to research, would assist in building the City's capacity to run an effective administration. While acknowledging that research should be done for its own sake since applications for new knowledge produced could follow, Ms Zille welcomed the role of the CHEC institutions in partnership with the City to create conditions for sustainable growth and provide Cape Town with the necessary competitive edge to corner the market in value-added sectors. At the first colloquium in 2007, she had mentioned George Eastman who invented the Kodak film process. He had left his fortune to a local university so that academics would be able to find "the next big thing" that would follow his technology. It was this vision and investment in Rochester, Eastman's home city, that contributed to cutting edge research and the development of new processes and products, such as those in the tyre industry.

A recent visit to Barcelona, a city with competitive clusters and strong partnerships in several areas such as IT and food processing showed that it had a number of organisations, such as the Barcelona Science and Technology Park, that offer support for innovation. The city's technology networks and partnerships with its academic institutions and businesses had ensured excellent outcomes and sustainable growth putting Spain's second city on the map. Ms Zille referred to the way in which Barcelona had used its strategic centres and leverage points (including ideal conditions for beach volleyball) to attract a substantial workforce. More than 30 000 companies had been created annually in Barcelona. The City of Cape Town should learn from Barcelona's success, consider how to attract the best minds from all over the world and identify the practical steps to develop and sustain partnerships.

In highlighting the importance of identifying sectors with potential, Ms Zille suggested that this be done in partnership with business leaders, rather than by government alone. She pointed to the recent efforts of the Cape Clothing and Textile Cluster in identifying potential niche and value-added areas for this sector. She argued that the private sector is in the best position to determine these niche areas and that it was the City's role to identify the infrastructure required to support new visions. She referred to some of the encouraging results achieved to date by the City of Cape Town through its collaborative

agreements and efforts. For example, there had been a reduction in crime and the lessons learned in this sector were being applied in others.

The signing of the Collaboration Protocol at this colloquium would provide a formal platform for identifying collaborative projects for the City of Cape Town and the CHEC universities. Ms Zille said that she hoped that amongst these would be training programmes that would encourage students to pursue careers in local government since the development of human capital represented an important start in the achievement of the growth and development goals of the City. Other important collaborative projects would be in the area of Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in order to ensure that Cape Town became Africa's first wireless city.

Ms Zille highlighted challenges to the partnership and its projects, warning that proposals would be subject to processes and procedures in which the City could not interfere. While City officials might try to reduce the red tape associated with processes, they were often overwhelmed by their other responsibilities. These challenges, however, represented an opportunity for CHEC and the City, as partners, to consider and develop effective strategies.

Partnerships should not be kept alive artificially; rather, both the universities and the private sector should be involved in cluster arrangements for spotting new trends and getting ahead of them, and for identifying areas for value-added outputs. In this way, more entrepreneurial partnerships would develop where through interaction business generated the economic growth, government provided the infrastructure and the academic institutions provided the knowledge and skills. Finding practical ways to ensure the interaction between these players would be a key focus for the partnership.

In closing, Ms Zille reiterated that it was through the building of constructive ties that the City of Cape Town would flourish. She pointed to recent successes – the reduction in debt, the reduction in crime levels, the delivery of services where there had been none – and said that these achievements were as a result of successful partnerships where the right people had been in the right positions. On the other hand, she said, every failure had been a partnership failure. It was imperative, therefore, that the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership harnessed the necessary intellectual capital, not just for the City but for the country as a whole.

In thanking the Executive Mayor for her address, Mr. Boraine also thanked her for the way in which she had enabled the City of Cape Town to increase its ability to build Team Cape Town and work in partnerships.

The Collaboration Protocol

The CHEC Chairperson, Professor Anthony Staak, extended his congratulations to the Executive Mayor on her recent award, mentioning that there had been over 800 nominations for it. He welcomed the Vice-Chancellors and the other delegates to the colloquium.

Professor Staak reminded delegates that the previous year's colloquium had acknowledged that successful cities have vibrant higher education institutions. In this region of South Africa, the higher education institutions were strong, both individually

and through their collaborative efforts. While CHEC was the longest-standing consortium of higher education institutions in the country, it continued to face challenges in its work.

The goals of CHEC's partnership with the City of Cape Town were in line with the mission statements of the four regional universities – to develop research agendas, build capacity and add value in ways that go beyond business as usual. Professor Staak suggested that in meeting these goals, the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership should focus on broader developmental issues and on projects that could be tackled in partnerships or consortia rather than by individual universities. He pointed out that while the partnership was intended to be shaped by the needs of the City, partners needed to respect each other's autonomy. This meant that institutional leaders needed to ensure that there was alignment between the collaborative projects and the strategic priorities of the institutions, that the necessary processes were in place to take these forward, that actions were prioritized, and that responsibilities were clarified. The Collaboration Protocol had been taken through several iterations in working group meetings and was now ready for adoption.

In the process to date three key areas had been identified and three working groups established, each with members of CHEC and officials from the City on it. Regular meetings had been held to ensure the development of a relationship of trust and a common understanding of the partners' interests and responsibilities.

Professor Staak pointed to differences in the cultures or ways of working in the partnership. For example, he said that higher education institutions tend to favour slower working cycles and longer-term outcomes in line with academic cycles, while cities tend to be driven by deadlines and shorter-term deliverables. In addition, planners in the City might have different expectations to planners in higher education institutions. For example, universities do not see tightly focused skills development programmes as their primary responsibility, but are interested in the broader developmental issues facing the City and the region. There were also complex relationships within CHEC as regional universities compete against each other in certain areas.

Given this situation, the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership had experienced a number of challenges, difficulties and constraints, including those related to capacity and time as staff involved in the partnership already had full workloads. In addition, the partnership had not had the benefit of a road map to guide it, participation amongst leaders had been uneven and communication had tended to be a problem. Professor Staak emphasized that ensuring buy-in, identifying champions, developing good communication strategies at all levels, and establishing project management processes were essential next steps for the partnership. In addition, to date, the work of the partnership had not received special funding.

In conclusion, Professor Staak summarized the lessons learned, including the development of new understandings of partners' cultures, constraints and strengths. He highlighted the need for further consolidation, dedicated time to ensure that projects were sustainable and the identification of partners in other sectors, especially business. He explained that CHEC's role was a facilitative one and that the projects identified needed to be channelled to appropriate departments. He believed that the willingness shown by the partners to work together and the signing of the Collaboration Protocol at the colloquium would provide a strong platform for future collaboration.

Report from Task Team

Mr. Boraine commended the four universities for their collaboration for the good of the region. He said that these institutions had demonstrated commitment and maturity and that a lot of work had been done over the past 18 months. Mr. Boraine also challenged Ms Badsha, the CEO of CHEC, to develop a less unwieldy name for the partnership! He then introduced the next speaker, Ms Justine Quince.

Ms Quince noted that there would be some overlap between her presentation and the earlier ones. She, too, highlighted the complexities of the partnership; she said that the planning period had been a fascinating experience but that the partners had not always operated on the same planet as they worked within different paradigms. This meant that the value of collaboration needed to be critically reviewed to ensure that partners identified and worked in areas of common interest. One of the key lessons learned to date was that the areas of highest collaboration were usually those where there was the greatest overlap in partners' interests. Another lesson learned was that speedier development takes place where there is already work underway.

The next challenge was to move beyond the existing working groups by matching projects with people in city and university departments. There was also a need for funding and for robust models that reduced the inhibiting red tape involved before implementation could begin.

In building a pool of relevant skills, the partnership would work towards establishing direct interactions between the City departments and the university faculties. The partnership had decided to focus on Civil Engineering, Planning, Management / Leadership and Finance, all areas of critical skills needs in the City. In seeking curricular alignment, it would be necessary to share information about the competencies required and the gaps identified. Ms Quince gave the example of the need for a sub-specialisation in Finance, one that would focus on strategic public planning. She hoped that the introduction of such a programme would create opportunities for students to engage in City projects. She explained that there was a huge opportunity there and that although the City hosted undergraduates completing their practical training, it had not yet explored voluntary opportunities.

In the establishment of cross-cutting working groups to facilitate the promotion of research, Ms Quince suggested that careful thought was needed to expand the current narrowly focused research and development hubs in the City. In addition, she said, there was an opportunity for the CHEC institutions to contribute to leadership and professional development programmes, many of which were outsourced to the private sector. Ms Quince highlighted the need for flexible learning opportunities through modular training and evening courses. She also highlighted the potential benefits of cooperative student arrangements and internships for both the City and the students from the CHEC institutions. Similarly, she said, the development of a practical approach to recognizing prior learning would have important outcomes.

In conclusion, Ms Quince summarised a number of critical success factors to ensure sustainability of the projects to be taken forward. These included the need for projects to be built into the day-to-day work of staff members, partners to be realistic about any short term successes as, ultimately, this was a long term partnership, the need for sufficient funding and resources, and the need to bring business on board. Finally, Ms

Quince mentioned the importance of employee-driven development and the need for a talent management strategy.

Discussions

When the discussions were opened to the floor, a number of important issues were raised, including:

- Internationalization. It was suggested that this issue be taken into account when future project plans were developed by the partners.
- Job creation. It was argued that it was not government that created jobs, but business. Government's role was to reduce any red tape associated with the creation and development of new businesses. In addition, graduates should be encouraged not to find jobs, but to start their own businesses and to create jobs. Students should be encouraged to start up businesses while still at university.
- The broader context. It was argued that a lot of partnerships (such as those in Barcelona) address issues of equality and social inclusion and that the City of Cape Town / CHEC partnership should do likewise when planning collaborative projects within the partnership.
- Research capacity. It was argued that, currently, South Africa is not globally competitive in terms of its research capacity and that partnerships were needed to take research projects to scale.
- New structures to enhance productivity. It was suggested that South Africa could learn lessons from those countries that have developed new structures to enhance productivity, e.g. where higher education and business partners work in the same building.
- Collaboration with business. Ms Badsha responded to the calls for encouraging partnerships with business by confirming that partnerships were being developed with Accelerate Cape Town and the Cape Town office of the National Business Initiative (NBI) and that joint meetings will be held shortly. In addition, Carol Coletta, a visitor from the US with expertise in this area would address a breakfast meeting later in the week.
- Student safety. A concern was raised that insufficient attention was being given to student life and the suggestion made that a task team on student safety on campuses be established. Another delegate suggested that certain matters needed to be engaged with internally rather than in partnership, while a third delegate suggested that certain activities (such as entertainment and transport) might be dealt with in the partnership. Later, the Executive Mayor commented that the City would be able to achieve greater security for students if the police and campus protection officers worked in partnership. Improvements in campus life would assist in internationalization.
- Leverage points in Cape Town and its environs. It was suggested that in addition to the concentration of universities in and around Cape Town, this city had other advantages that need to be exploited: for example, it was a port city, a global tourist destination and there were a number of hospitals close by. In addition, there were a number of important partnerships, such as that with Mintek.
- Ensuring an attractive and affordable environment for staff and students. A question was raised as to whether the partnership could investigate ways in which the city of Cape Town could be made not only attractive but also affordable for students and for staff, especially young staff and people from abroad.

- The need for commitment and leadership. A delegate suggested that a deep cultural shift is needed in South Africa wherein knowledge is respected and individuals view the development of Cape Town as a personal matter. In achieving this, it was argued, powerful leadership is required.

Mr. Boraine summarized some of the key issues raised in the discussions by saying that the partnership needed to address the question “What makes staff and students choose one place rather than another?” In this way, issues of safety, affordability, culture and ethos could all be addressed. Debates could also address issues around research and ways in which to attract researchers to the CHEC institutions. Ultimately, these debates would focus on how the partnership could guide the City of Cape Town and its institutions in positioning and marketing themselves.

Signing of the Collaboration Protocol and last word

The signing of the Collaboration Protocol by Mr. Mike Marsden, Ms Nasima Badsha, the Vice-Chancellors (or their representatives), the Executive Mayor and other City officials was followed by the taking of a group photograph.

In closing, the Executive Mayor referred to a phrase used earlier -“building Team Cape Town” – saying that success was critical for building Team South Africa and Team Africa. She reiterated the need for partners to spot trends and take the right decisions. She argued, too, that “we are what we have” and that collective efforts would be maximized if the partnership agreed on the direction it would take and then progressed step by step towards its goals. In doing so, she said, jobs and opportunities would be created. Two essential elements in the progress envisaged were skills and capital. The Executive Mayor hoped that next year’s colloquium would see report-backs on the projects themselves. She concluded by saying that she had never been as optimistic about South Africa’s prospects as she was then.



**COLLOQUIUM BETWEEN THE CITY OF CAPE TOWN AND
CAPE HIGHER EDUCATION CONSORTIUM (CHEC)**

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, 6TH FLOOR - PODIUM BLOCK,
20th OCTOBER 2008
PROGRAMME**



CITY OF CAPE TOWN | ISIXEKO SASEKAPA | STAD KAAPSTAD

THIS CITY WORKS FOR YOU

TIME	ITEM	PRESENTER
13:00 - 14:00	REGISTRATION & FINGER LUNCH	
		Andrew Borraine – Chairperson
14:00 – 14:05	Welcome & Introduction	Mike Marsden
14:05 – 14:30	Mayoral Opening Address	Executive Mayor: Helen Zille
14:30 – 14:50	Collaboration Protocol	CHEC Chairperson: Prof Anthony Staak
PROGRESS REPORTS ON AREAS OF COLLABORATION		
14:50 – 15:10	REPORT FROM TASK TEAM :	Justine Quince
15:10 – 15:30	DISCUSSIONS :	Andrew Borraine
15:30 – 16:00	SIGNING OF THE COLLABORATION PROTOCOL:	Andrew Borraine
16:00	CLOSURE	