

**CHEC BURSARY WORKSHOP:  
Towards a common framework for bursary provision in the region**

**Sports Science Institute,  
Newlands**

**27 October 2010**

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**1. Welcome and introduction to the meeting: Rob Woodward, CPUT**

Rob Woodward, Institutional Planner at CPUT, welcomed all delegates to the workshop and outlined its background and purpose. In particular, he mentioned the earlier NBI-CHEC breakfast meeting held in July 2010 where the importance of comprehensive support packages for students was emphasised, and the need to explore, share and further develop bursary models in a climate of limited resources where uncomfortable paradoxes exist.

**2. Presentations**

Five presentations were given from:

1. The Financial Aid Offices of CHEC member universities: Tasneem Salasa, UCT
2. NSFAS: Bonny Feldman
3. The Western Cape SETA cluster: Lana van der Westhuizen, Chair of the Western Cape SETA cluster
4. NBI: Judith O'Connell
5. Provincial Government: Elizabeth Walters, Office of the Premier

While several presentations highlighted variations in the financial support provided (e.g. in the CHEC member universities, the SETAs, businesses and departments in Provincial Government), the presentations also indicated that:

- the old dilemma as to whether to fund more students by providing less comprehensive packages or to support fewer students and provide fuller funding still exists
- students' financial need and equity are key drivers of bursary provision
- insufficient financial support impacts on students' academic success and, therefore, throughput and graduation rates
- there are many examples of 'best' practice that can be shared
- there are inadequacies in the government means test. The amount reflected for the family's contribution is not always realistic in terms of total household income in today's environment. In addition, because the amounts made available to fund students are insufficient to meet the demand for financial aid, many students whose families are not able to fund their studies, do not receive NSFAS funding.
- greater levels of communication and coordination are required for funding partnerships to be established.

### 3. Discussion and the way forward

The wide-ranging discussions that followed the presentations included reference to issues related to secondary schooling (the need to ensure university readiness, provide careers guidance etc), FET Colleges (the need to change public perceptions and increase enrolment rates), and the need to ensure the employability of graduates and for graduate tracer studies. It was noted that work on the government means test was underway. The value of information-sharing sessions such as this was also noted.

Critical issues pertinent to bursary provision that emerged in the discussion included:

- The need to improve relationships between HE and the SETAs for future potential collaboration around student bursaries and workplace experience
- The need to continue to share example of 'best' practice in bursary provision
- The need to balance students' individual interests and strengths with the skills needs of priority areas / areas of scarce skills identified by government and economic sectors when developing a bursary model
- The need to accurately assess students' needs and their family's ability to contribute to their higher education costs, including living / maintenance costs
- The need for bursary providers to be able to access students' results from the HEIs timeously so that these might be passed on to funders – and the value of being able to identify the various institutional interventions used by these students.

It was agreed that

- UCT will convene a forum where representatives from the Financial Aid offices of the CHEC member universities, the Western Cape SETA cluster and NSFAS can meet to discuss collaboration around students bursaries and workplace experience
- Other platforms for communication and coordination will be explored, including one with the NBI and Provincial Government
- Good practice guidelines should continue to be identified and shared
- Research should be undertaken (e.g. case studies, international benchmarks).on collaborative bursary support and the results.

**Delegates**

Tasneem Salasa, UCT  
Bonny Feldman, NSFAS  
Lana van der Westhuizen, Chair of the Western Cape SETA cluster  
Judith O'Connell, NBI  
Elizabeth Walters, PGWC  
Rob Woodward, CPUT  
Mabrey Bennett, UWC  
Melanie Mitchell, UWC  
Michael Kwatsha, UWC  
Cornelius Claasen, CPUT  
Arrie Hanekom, SU  
Chantal Swartz, SU  
Sharon Lynes, SU  
Lynette Williams, SU  
Sindi Ntshongwana, UCT  
Johan Ryk, SETA Cluster Coordinator in the Western Cape  
Theuns Henning, Agriseta  
Thembinkosi Siganda, City of Cape Town  
Derrick Smith, Dept of the Premier, PGWC  
Loretta Cox, Dept of Agriculture, PGWC  
Mark Apollis, PGWC  
Lesiba Tloubatla, PGWC  
Melissa Wicomb, DEDT, PGWC  
Russell Davies, REAP  
Glenda Glover, REAP  
Vernon De Vries, Distell  
Sonia Morkel, Distell  
Renee Sabor, Metropolitan  
Karde Buys, TFG  
Nasima Badsha, CHEC  
Sharman Wickham, CHEC