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Higher Education South Africa NPC t/a HESA
Reg. No. 2005/013211/08

30 April 2013

TO: VICE-CHANCELLORS

CIRCULAR 12/2013

**HESA DRAFT RESPONSE TO THE REPORT OF THE MINISTERIAL TASK TEAM ON
COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRES**

The Minister of Higher Education and Training, Dr Blade Nzimande has gazetted the report on Community Education and Training Centres for public comments on 4 April 2013. **See attached for ease of reference.** The Task Team was tasked to investigate and recommend alternative and more effective institutional form for addressing the education and training needs of adults and out-of-school-youth.

The Office has initiated a process to respond to the report and developed the **attached draft HESA response** for the consideration of Universities. You are kindly invited to submit your institution's comments to Ms Nondumiso Lufele at [ssso@hesa.org.za](mailto:sso@hesa.org.za) by no later than **Wednesday, 15 May 2013**. These comments will be incorporated into the draft HESA response paper and will be sent to the MHET by 17 May 2013.

If you have any queries, please direct them to Ms Jana van Wyk at jana@hesa.org.za or 012 481 2895.

We look forward to receiving your institution's response.

Yours sincerely

DR JEFFREY MABELEBELE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

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**DRAFT HESA RESPONSE TO THE
GOVERNMENT GAZETTE, VOL. 574,
'CALL FOR COMMENTS ON THE REPORT OF THE TASK TEAM ON
COMMUNITY EDUCATION AND TRAINING CENTRES (CETCs)'**

1. This Report is the product of a Task Team chaired by Ms Fébe Potgieter-Gqubule, which submitted the Report to DHET a year ago in April 2012. The Report ostensibly deals with adult and community learning, and not with higher education (HE). At the heart of the Report is the proposal of a **new institutional model for post-school education**, thus extending the vision put forward in the *Green Paper*. As such, this Report rather pre-empted the White Paper that is expected shortly.
2. At the heart of the proposal is the expansion of non-formal and formal provision to out of work adults and NEETS, and the mechanism for this expansion are two new institutional forms:
 - a. **Community Learning Centres** or CLCs (NQF levels 1-3), subsuming existing Adult Learning Centres and ABET;
 - b. **Community Colleges** or CCs (NQF levels 4-5). It is with these that HESA is concerned.

The Report goes on to outline two options for configuring the new institutional landscape, a two-tier or a three-tier system, and opts in the Report for a **three-tier** system, on the sensible grounds that lumping them in with the Colleges would simply 'undermine(ing) existing institutional and human resources capacity' (pg. 91). The proposed new system would then comprise:

- **A Higher Education tier**, as now, with enrolments increased in line with the *Green Paper* and *National Planning Commission* projections for 2030;
- **A Colleges tier**, which would include the current FET colleges plus **nine new Community Colleges**, one for each province (hence nine new institutions), whose duties would include supporting CLCs (*downwards articulation*) as well as providing for university access via two-year postsecondary qualifications which could become HE Certificates and Diplomas (on the model of the American liberal arts community colleges) as well as offering university bridging courses (*upwards articulation*). In other words, CCs are envisaged as overlapping the college sub-sector and HE.

Two things are clear at this point. The first is that the Task Team has not taken note of the HESA position in the *HESA Post-school Task Team* report. The present Report is persuaded neither by HESA's 'limits to articulation' argument (which includes a detailed empirically based exemplification of how upwards articulation works in practice), nor by the 'limited capacity' argument, where the *HESA Task Team* urged phased growth on the grounds that capacity does not

exist in the existing FET colleges, let alone for a 10-15% increase in the number of institutions. Indeed, the present Report repeats the mantra, which has become tiresomely repetitive, that it is 'huge vested interests (particularly in HE) inhibiting easy access' from the existing colleges to HE (pg 41).

It is worth mentioning too that the Report envisages 'single purpose' colleges (presumably new ones), examples of which, given at various parts of the Report, include: teaching, nursing, agriculture, hospitality, and performing arts. Some of these domains are currently the sole preserve of HE, and some negotiation with the sector should be expected before launching a proposal of this scope.

- **A CLCs tier.** The Report envisages that there would eventually be a CLC in each municipality, with a very wide educational brief spanning non-formal and formal provision, including literacy and ABET, KhaRiGude, public education, vocational and occupational courses, as well as community and non-formal education. HESA questions where the trained staff for these institutions is to come from. In addition, the Report mentions in passing that KhaRiGude and adult education should move from the DBE, where it presently resides, to the DHET. No clear rationale for this is given, even though ABET qualifications resort with UMALUSI and are clearly pre-post-school.

3. The Task Team plots the way forward schematically for two decades ahead, with the following steps in the immediate future:
 - a. The proposals in the Report should be incorporated into the next draft of the *Green Paper*, which is the *White Paper*. This is almost certainly premature and should be resisted. The proposals in the Task Team's Report are still in too abstract and schematic a form for them to leapfrog into policy. The second envisaged step should come first, which is;
 - b. For a new Task Team to produce a detailed implementation and funding plan. This should precede any entry of these proposals into a *White Paper*;
 - c. Establishing the nine new CCs with the potential to overlap the HE sub-sector of the post-school landscape. It is this proposal which needs far greater consideration of its feasibility and desirability, the noble aims it is supposed to support notwithstanding;
 - d. Piloting the CCs and the CLCs.

The Report takes it as given that there will be a vocational education institute (SAIVET) as proposed in the *Green Paper*, and proposes also a new *Adult, Youth and Community Learning Agency*. The Report realises that all this is going to be expensive, and, contrary to the *Green Paper* which envisaged no new money needed from the public purse, states that implementation of the Report will require 'additional public funding' and the 'increasing of the skills levy' (both pg. 95). With HE funding already not keeping pace with enrolment growth, this further envisaged competition for tight public funding ought to sound a warning bell to the HE sector.

In conclusion: one could see this Report as a first pass at spelling out some of the speculative proposals regarding adult and NEET educational opportunities mentioned in the *Green Paper*, and as such, it is certainly to be welcomed. But by promulgating it in a Government Gazette the impression is created that it is on a legislative fast track. It is HESA's view that these proposals are not ready for that. HESA would like a representative on the next Task Team to draw up the implementation plan, on the grounds that it has material interests in the expansion of the college sector, and in particular, in institutions which will overlap the HE sub-sector. After that, wider consideration of the implications of this proposed expansion of the landscape by the broader HE community could only be a good thing.

30 April 2013.