

Policy on Community Colleges

Report of the Interview with the Minister's Advisor: John Pampallis

Interviewed by John Aitchison and Jenny Glennie

1. **Purpose of the policy** – to take forward the concept and implementation of the College Sector which was formally introduced in the Post-Schooling White Paper. This could have many dimensions
 - Further developing the concept of Community Colleges
 - Providing guidelines for the development of the pilot Community Colleges
 - Providing the framework for the function shift of AET from the Provinces to DHET.

Given the content of the so-called Policy and the hurry in which it has developed, it may better be referred to as a set of guidelines for the function shift of the AET sector from provinces to the National department. This would allow for the development of a set of guidelines for the establishment of the pilot Community Colleges – see below.

2. **Importance:** Community Colleges seen to be of the utmost of importance, especially in the light of the ongoing growth of the so-called NEETs group.
3. **Community Colleges vs TVET Colleges:** These colleges were seen to differ in a range of respects from each other
 - The key stakeholders for TVET Colleges are industry and other business
 - The key stakeholders for Community Colleges, though including industry and business, are a far wider group.
 - TVET Colleges aim largely at learners who have completed Grade 12. Community Colleges need to cater for a far more diverse group including those who have not completed their general education (Grade 9) as well as those who have completed Grade 9 but wish to complete Grade 12
 - Of particular importance is that the curriculum of Community Colleges needs to be responsive to the Community. Essential to the operation of the CC is that a formal structure needs to be provided to engage with the Community. This needs not be a governance structure but could be an advisory one.
 - Finally, learners enrolled in Community Colleges need to be able to study close to their homes – this implies that the CLCs making up the CC need to be distributed.

Given all the above differences between TVET and Community College, attention needs to be given to whether TVET and Community Colleges should function in the same way. Currently the FET Act makes this assumption. *Suggest that we recommend that the structure and functioning of a Community College needs to be determined in the process of developing the concept of a South African Community College – see below.*

4. **The proposed new Community Colleges:** In John P's view, the pilot Colleges being established in the Provinces will develop prototypes for the Community College sector. He agreed that a set of guidelines for the development of such pilots would have been appropriate. *Perhaps we should recommend that the leaders of the pilots and other key players in the field be called together to a series of workshops to develop such a set of guidelines and forge a further conceptualisation of the sector.*
 - a. John considered the amalgamation of the PALCs into a single entity called a Community College a legal fiction. *Perhaps we can recommend a different name for this entity? It*

would need to have some status? Perhaps the centres can simply remain centres under the national college offices in the provinces? It really seems a great pity that we introduce a new type of educational institution – SA's first Community Colleges and the first new type of institution in our democratic era - and bestow the name on a collection of largely ill-functioning PALCs. Can we recommend that we rather reserve the name for an entity that will bring excitement and hope to the post school-sector?

- b. John P understood that the intention is that the old PALCs will be administered by the provincial college offices. Is this at odds with the idea of establishing a Community College with a Principal and a Council. If this is the case what would the provincial college office do?*
- c. John P was particularly concerned about the capacity in the department to take forward this critical task of establishing the sector. It really requires people of vision, energy, and passion, and with a range of high level skills to take this matter forward. In John's view, it is essential that at least a new Directorate be established and ideally a new. sub-branch be established. We must ensure to recommend this, and perhaps to add that a high level team of people, suitably inspired, be brought in to support the DHET in its endeavours.*
5. **Funding for the Community Colleges:** John P was of the view that no new money had been set aside from Treasury to run the pilots, especially since DHET had not made a submission to this effect. He believed that funds may become available from the NSF.
6. **SAIVCET:** John P confirmed that Treasury had not been responsive to the notion of establishing SAIVCET. He noted that DHET had used NSF funds to establish the National Institute of the Humanities, and thought it might be useful to use that model to establish SAIVCET.
7. **Distributed Nature of Community Colleges:** John P confirmed the importance of the notion of the distributed nature of a Community College.