

*Thematic Article*



## **An Appropriate Organizational Model for Community Colleges in Hungary**

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### **Abstract**

The Hungarian government has recently decided to establish a new type of higher education institution: the Hungarian version of the American community college. While the existence of an institution that serves the local needs is inevitable, the organizational solution elaborated by the Hungarian educational government raises doubts about the viability and efficiency of the so called “community higher education centres” (CHEC). Based on extensive research we propose the modification of and amendments to the present organizational model. Our suggestions do not overrule the most important governmental principle: CHECs should not be independent institutions, but affiliates of existing universities. Yet, according to our proposal, CHECs should be more than just training locations of faraway universities. We are convinced that the organizational solutions outlined in our paper are more appropriate in terms of management, quality, learning outcomes and local impact. We underpin our proposals by analyzing the deficiencies of the current model, building on our primary survey and the foreign experiences well documented in the literature.

**Keywords:** community college, university governance, affiliate campus, local engagement

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## **Introduction**

In the communist era, Hungarian higher education followed the Soviet system with relatively small, specialized institutions of two levels: colleges and universities. After the change of the political system large universities were created by integrating formerly independent colleges and universities. Several former colleges and college faculties were upgraded to university status. The notion of community college<sup>2</sup> first appeared in the new higher education strategy of the present government in 2014. It says that – following the US model – community colleges should be established in regions with no higher education provision, to keep educated workforce there and to foster local development (EMMI 2014). Then, in the 2015 amendment of the higher education act of 2011 it was declared that the new type of institutions would be called “community higher education centres” (CHECs), and they would not be independent institutions, just training locations of existing universities (HEA 2011). The detailed regulation says that we follow the French model instead of the American one, emphasizing again that CHECs are not higher education institutions, just training locations of one or more universities. It also declares that CHECs should have staff only for facility management, there will be no local faculty nor local student services. As far as the establishment of CHECs is concerned, local government(s) and/or local corporations and/or churches should found a nonprofit organization that operates the local CHEC (Gov. reg. 2015). So far, 4 CHECs have been established in Hungary and the foundation of one more received permission from the ministry.

Providing the fact that this is a new type of institution in Hungarian higher education, it is necessary to have a comprehensive model for its status, structure, governance and operation. The success of any kind of institution strongly depends on the organizational solutions chosen. The current organizational model of CHECs raises doubts about their viability and efficiency. There is a serious contradiction between the chosen organizational model and the expected mission. The CHECs are expected to foster regional economic development, to be intellectual centers. But if only training premises are established on the new higher education locations, and the local actors are responsible only for providing the infrastructure, and all the other functions and capacities remain at the gestor universities, the expectations may not be met. Another problem is that in the given operational model some tasks and decisions, like assessing the training needs of the region, deciding on the proper training portfolio, coordinating between the local actors and the gestor universities etc. do not have an owner. It may be assumed that the CHECs, with ‘travelling’ professors and no local student services do not provide the same learning experience to the students as the gestor universities. The governance of the CHECs also

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<sup>2</sup> Community colleges were first established in the USA in the 1900s as an alternative to the four-year universities. Their main characteristics is that they give practical training locally and at affordable prices (Dobbins 2008). In 2015 there were 1123 community colleges in the USA, with more than 12 million students (AACC 2016).

has some flaws: without a board including representatives of the local actors and the gestor universities certain authority clashes may emerge and it will be difficult to provide a joint strategy.

Because of the fact that when writing the paper no CHECs have started their operation, we do not have any experiences with them. The aforesaid assumptions are based on international experiences, and are deducted from organizational and educational theory. Taking the experiences of other countries and the principles of organizational and educational theory into consideration when establishing and/or fine-tuning a new type of HEI may reduce the possible flaws and increase the chance of viability and effectiveness. Thus, we propose some modifications and amendments to the present organizational model.

### **Methodology**

To underpin our suggestion, we explored the theoretical background, the different foreign solutions and experiences (both in the USA and in Europe) and learned the opinion and ideas of the actors involved in a potential CHEC in Hungary. We studied the history, mission, operation, governance, faculty, relations, local engagement etc. of the American community college; its counterparts in European countries. We also inquired into the challenges of operating and managing multi-campus systems, the conflicts in the relationship of a university and its affiliate institutions; the lessons learnt from the reforms aiming to establish a new type of higher education institution in other countries. We studied the possibility of establishing a CHEC in a county center in South East Hungary with the University of Szeged as a gestor institution. Thus, an interview was made with the rector of the university and the opinion of the local government was explored through several meetings with the vice mayor and through communication with the municipality in writing. The former mayor, now MP, who initiated the project was also interviewed. The secondary schools of the potential CHEC location were asked, but only one of them responded to our inquiry. The local corporations and enterprises were more cooperative: more than 50 employers answered to our questionnaire.

### **Community colleges and similar institutions in the USA and Europe**

#### ***Community colleges in the USA***

The community college as a special type of higher education institution was born in the USA in 1900. The basic idea was to provide higher education locally. Nowadays more than 50% of students study in community colleges (Dobbins 2008). In 2015 there were 1123 community colleges in the USA (AACC). It means that community colleges constitute 25% of all the HEIs (Tollefson 2009). Their mission is to grant everybody the opportunity to study: locally, openly and affordably. They may be a bridge to university, to a profession and a job, or to lifelong learning and self-actualization. Thus, they provide bachelor, vocational and non-credit short-cycle training programs. Moreover, they show strong local engagement and have significant local impact.

Community college faculty comprises of full-time and part-time teachers. On the one hand, having part-time faculty not only spares money but, by having a 'real-life' job as well, they bring their expertise and practical knowledge in to the colleges (AACC). On the other, there are qualification, quality and career opportunity issues regarding community college faculty (Twigg 1989, Lankard 1993, NCES).

As far as the operation and the governance of community colleges are concerned, some of them are independent colleges, others are affiliate campuses of universities. In the latter case, the college may have a governing board of its own, or it may be governed by the board of the university. Similarly, the administration of a multi-campus system may be centralized or decentralized, in the latter case with full administrative staff on each campus (Creswell et al. 1985, Lombardi et al 2002). Each solution has advantages and drawbacks thoroughly discussed in the literature.

### ***Similar institutions in Europe***

In each European country, we find institutions that differ from (research) universities and have some characteristics of the American community college. Most of them provide lower-level (bachelor) degrees, and some run professional/higher vocational training as well. Practice-orientation in the education is a common feature, and local engagement is often emphasized, but – unlike their Hungarian counterparts – they were not pronouncedly established to serve the needs of the local labor market. They differ from the Hungarian CHECs in that these institutions are independent in most of the countries. Although, in England further education colleges may be run as university franchises, and in several countries (Austria, Denmark, Finland, Belgium) recent governmental policy decrees integration in the higher education system, and compels colleges to cooperate with universities.

In England *university colleges* are institutions that award taught degrees but which do not meet the numerical criteria of a full-time equivalent of students for a university title. Many other institutions that may use the title '*college*' do not have degree awarding powers but provide complete courses leading to recognized UK degrees. Courses at these institutions are validated by institutions which have degree awarding powers. Higher education programs are also provided in *further education colleges*. Such programs are normally designed and approved directly by a higher education institution with degree awarding powers, under a formal recognition arrangement. This franchise arrangement means that a student is registered at a higher education institution, which receives the funding and is responsible for quality assurance. The higher education institution then passes a proportion of the funding to the further education college providing the teaching (Eurydice/England).

In Austria *Fachhochschulen's* primary mission is to educate a workforce in line with the needs of the regional economy. In the academic year 2015/16 additional state-subsidized student places were created in the *Fachhochschulen* for the training of highly qualified

specialists. The assignment of student places is based on the condition of cooperating with universities (Federal Ministry of Science, Research and Economy).

In Germany *Fachhochschulen* were integrated in the system of higher education in the Federal Republic of Germany as a new type of institution in accordance with an agreement between the Länder from 1968. They fulfil their own specific educational function, characterized by an application-oriented bias in teaching and research, a usually integrated semester of practical training, and professors who have, in addition to their academic qualifications, gained professional experience outside the field of higher education. *Berufsakademien* (professional academies) form part of the tertiary sector and combine academic training at a study institution with practical professional training in a training establishment, thus constituting a dual system (Eurydice/Germany).

In Denmark, there are *Professionshøjskoler* offering medium-cycle programs and *Erhvervsakademier* (business academy) offering short-cycle programs. All short-cycle higher educations are now concentrated in nine business academies, and the majority of the medium-cycle education is concentrated in 7 Professionshøjskoler (Eurydice/Denmark).

In Finland *polytechnics* have the status of independent legal entities and operate as limited companies owned by municipal consortia or private organizations. (Eurydice/Finland) According to the governmental policy Finnish universities and polytechnics are to unite into 4 leagues by 2020 to make the higher education system more effective and of better quality (Boer et al 2009).

In Sweden first and second cycle (undergraduate) education is given at an equivalent level at *hogskolor* and universities. What traditionally has differentiated the two types of institutions is that universities have had degree awarding powers at first, second and third cycle level while hogskolors have had degree awarding power at first and second cycle level. Since the early 2000s, some hogskolors have additional degree awarding powers at third cycle level regarding a specific disciplinary domain (Eurydice/Sweden).

In Estonia, an *institution of professional higher education* provides professional higher education, it may provide Master's study and vocational training and at least two thirds of the students study on the basis of professional higher education curricula. The task of institutions of professional higher education is the preparation of motivated specialists with excellent professional skills and work attitudes at the first level of higher education, considering the needs of the labor market. Study is characterized by flexibility and practical focus of curricula as well as close cooperation with enterprises, vocational unions and other social partners (Eurydice/Estonia).

In Belgium (Flemish Community) *university colleges* organize the professional Bachelor's programs and advanced Bachelor's programs; within an association with one university they also organize academic Bachelor's programs, Master's and advanced Master's

programs. An *association* is an official cooperation between one university and one or more university colleges. There are 5 associations in Flanders. The Flemish government decided to integrate the academic university college programs in the universities from the academic year 2013-2014. Since then only the universities can offer academic programs. The university colleges will only be able to offer professional Bachelor's programs (and associate degrees), as they are to transfer their academic Bachelor's and Master's programs to the universities or integrate them with the universities (Eurydice/Belgium).

In the Netherlands *hogescholen* provide higher professional education. They contribute to the development of those occupations to which their teaching is geared and conduct design and development activities and research related to specific occupations. They provide bachelor's degree programs and, in some cases master's degree programs, and transfer knowledge for the benefit of the community (Eurydice/Netherlands).

### **A proposal for an appropriate organizational model**

#### ***A proposal for the organization and staff of community higher education centers***

According to the decision of the Hungarian government, no new higher education institution, faculty or department would be established in the new higher education locations. Instead it would be a nonprofit organization consisting of the local government(s), enterprises and/or churches (henceforth we refer to it as 'the owner'). This organization would be responsible for providing infrastructure to the off-site training programs of remote universities. All the functions related to education, administration, student services would be located at the gestor universities (EMMI 2014, HEA 2011, Gov. reg. 2015).

At the same time, the strategic document of the government lists the following expectations regarding community colleges:

- they improve the competitive potential of underdeveloped regions,
- they strengthen the service providing character of higher education both towards the students and the local society,
- their everyday operation revolves around quality,
- they are intellectual centers of the region,
- they become crucial factors of local economic development (EMMI 2014).

It is a basic principle in management that the organizational solutions should support the mission of the given organization. But in the case of CHECs, a serious contradiction may be seen between the chosen organizational model and the expected mission. If only training premises are established on the new higher education locations, and the local actors are responsible only for providing the infrastructure, and all the other functions and capacities remain at the gestor universities, none of the above listed expectations will be met. We underpin our opinion with 3 statements.

**A) In this operational model some tasks and decisions do not have an owner.** For example, it is not clear who would:

- assess the training needs in a given region and provide follow-up,
- define the optimal training portfolio and change it when necessary,
- choose the proper gestor universities,
- coordinate and cooperate with the local enterprises and the gestor universities,
- find resident instructors,
- coordinate the trainings if there are more than one gestor universities.

At present, local governments, particularly in small municipalities, do not have the necessary capacities (labor force, experience, knowledge) to organize higher education provision and it obviously must not be the responsibility of the local enterprises either. Thus, the non-profit organization founded by them to operate the local CHEC may not be able to carry out the above listed tasks.

One of the Hungarian county centers, the city of Bekescsaba has had a higher education institution since 1996. Yet, the vice mayor replied to our inquiry that since the operation of the institution has never been the responsibility of the local government and they never had an insight to its operation, at present they do not have the necessary resources (neither in quality nor in quantity), and the competencies to own and operate a CHEC. Then, what about smaller cities that never had education institutions above secondary school level, and have less human and financial resources than a county capital?

The case of the Sumeg CHEC suggests that local governments may make questionable decisions concerning the establishment of a CHEC, the selection of the gestor institution and the training portfolio. The local government of Sumeg (a city in Veszprem county with a population of less than 7000) decided to establish a CHEC in cooperation with the Wekerle Sandor Business College (a private college in Budapest founded in 2006). The CHEC called John Henry Newman Education Centre was to be operated by the John Henry Newman Education Center Ltd. The owner of the Ltd. is the University of the Future of the Carpathian Basin Foundation (a private foundation located in Pecs in Baranya county). The CHEC planned to start business BA training programs. We have serious doubts about the establishment of a higher education institution in Sumeg, since there are several higher education institutions with reputation and tradition in the vicinity (Keszthely in 30 kms, Zalaegerszeg in 50 kms, Veszprem in 60 kms), and the concept of the government was to establish CHECs in regions where there is no higher education provision. Choosing business training as the educational profile of the Sumeg CHEC is also questionable, since business training is already available in Zalaegerszeg and Veszprem. Still, the Sumeg CHEC got permission from the ministry and the training was to start in September, 2016. The partners the municipality had chosen also turned to be unfortunate. It does not seem reasonable to choose a college in Budapest and a foundation in a third location as partners (this entire setup seems rather vague) instead of the adjacent University of Veszprem. In academic circles there are doubts about the professional content of the University of the

Future project and about the professional performance of the academics involved in the John Henry Newman Education Center. In addition to the professional doubts, financial problems also arose recently. First the owner of the Ltd. that operates the CHEC dismissed the CEO of the Ltd. due to the suspicion of financial fraud, there is an investigation in progress. Then the municipality of Sumeg initiated a liquidation process against the Ltd., because it owes the municipality for several months and is not willing to pay in spite of several calls. The local government announced that due to these scandals the training may not start.<sup>3</sup> This case seems to be the evidence of a systemic error, and clearly shows the consequences of the lack of expertise and coordination. But the case of another CHEC, established in Hatvan, shows that with a well-grounded concept and the commitment of the municipal, academic and corporate partners allow more optimism concerning the feasibility and usefulness of the program. In Hatvan, the largest employer, the Bosch Electronics Ltd. and the local government together initiated the establishment of the CHEC, and two universities from Budapest joined. In the first semester 35 students were enrolled to electronic engineering BSc, 34 of whom are employees of Bosch, and one student of another local firm.<sup>4</sup> Partnering with local employees and running contracted training for their employees may be a viable function of the CHECs.

***B) Off-site training in itself will not have the desired effect on local development.*** By studying the mission and functions of American community colleges it is unequivocal that they serve the local community in several ways besides teaching. (For details see for example Mullin, Phillippe 2013). This mission is identified by phrases like “local engagement” or “the steward of the place”. (About the regionally engaged university see Goddard 1999, Chatterton–Goddard, 1999, 2000, Reindl 2005, “Stepping Forward as Stewards of Place”, AASCU 2002). This mission – that is only a “third role” in the case of leading national and research universities – is of equal importance with teaching and is more important than research in case of small local colleges. Local engagement may include a wide range of activities, depending on the characteristics of the city and the institution.

- Professional counselling: Higher education institutions often provide professional counselling to local enterprises (especially to micro enterprises generally lacking the necessary human resources), building on the expertise of the faculty and the creativity of students. It can involve finding technical solutions to production problems, organizational development programs, marketing campaigns, etc. Thus, small enterprises get professional support locally at affordable prices, while students can work on real-life problems and the institution obtains extra revenue.
- Participation in local governance: Faculty generally take part in the different bodies of local governance and regional development. Thus, local governing actors

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<sup>3</sup> [http://index.hu/gazdasag/2016/07/14/felszamoljak\\_a\\_botranyt\\_kavart\\_jovoegyemetet](http://index.hu/gazdasag/2016/07/14/felszamoljak_a_botranyt_kavart_jovoegyemetet)

<sup>4</sup> <http://hkflk.hu/index.php/hallgatoink>



can use the expertise of the professors. Moreover, higher education and the institution are certainly included in local and regional strategies.

- Volunteering, civic initiatives: Higher education institutions initiate and flagship different civic programs directed towards the local community, most often in the frame of social responsibility. Taking part in them may serve as the compulsory professional practice for students, and they may get credits for their participation. The programs can vary from environmental initiatives to projects for social equality and inclusion.
- Cultural and sport events open to the public.
- Knowledge sharing: Faculty and students of the higher education institution often organize lectures, presentations, seminars, and workshops to educate the public (“open university”), as well as hold preparatory courses for secondary school students.

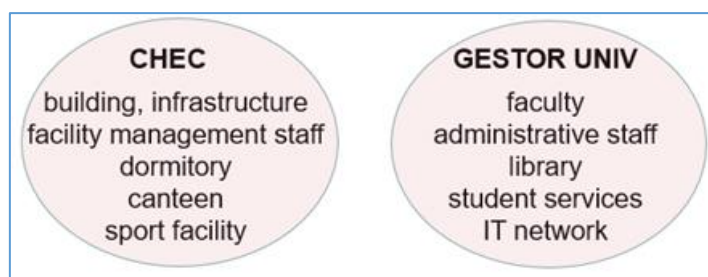
(For good examples see OECD 2007.)

Training programs and local engagement activities jointly have an effect on local development and on the competitive potential of the region. If CHECs are only premises where commuting professors come and go to give lectures, we obviously cannot speak about “intellectual centers” or about “crucial (f)actors of local economic development”.

***C) The planned CHECs do not provide the same learning experience to the students as the gestor universities.*** A higher education provision limited to lecturing by commuting professors, with student services available only at remote universities (in each case the gestor university is farther away than a commuting distance) would deprive students from everything we call learning experience and student life. This problem is well-known in international literature. According to Altbach (2010) and Bambrick (2002) branch campuses provide poorer learning experience than main campuses. Allison and Eversole (2008) emphasizes that both faculty and students may feel themselves on the periphery on branch campuses, Hilary et al (2006) talks about branch campuses feeling marginal.

By analyzing the Hungarian government regulation of 2015 we can see the following “division of labor” between a CHEC and its gestor university:

Figure 1. Elements of higher education provision provided by the CHECs and the gestor universities



Source: Own compilation based on Gov. reg. 2015.

Everything that makes an organization a higher education institution is located at the gestor university. Of course, info-communication technology may bridge the distance between the students of the CHEC and the gestor university in certain fields, but it does not solve the problem of intercity professors<sup>5</sup>, it does not replace mentoring, talent management, joint student-professor research, direct communication with teachers and administrative staff, taking part in professional programs, using the library, etc.

Thus, we agree with the Hungarian Accreditation Committee's opinion: The establishment of CHECs will lead to "garage universities" and the phenomenon of "intercity professors" raises serious doubts concerning the quality of teaching. It would lead to the dilution of higher education provision (MAB 2015). Foreign experiences verify it; according to Singh and Khanna it is difficult to keep quality when faculty is employed both on the main and the branch campuses (Singh & Khanna 2011).

The following is suggested.

**To problem A):** In each of the new higher education locations a professional body should be operating to perform the tasks listed above in point A), at least on the county level, and it must have the necessary capacities to do so. It should not necessarily be a newly set up body; it can be the owner (i.e. the nonprofit organization founded by the local actors) itself, but with more functions than at present. In cases where there is not enough human resources and expertise at the moment, additional funding and strong cooperation of the local actors may contribute to the necessary capacity building. Another solution can be to assign the above-mentioned tasks to the already existing County Committees of Development and Training<sup>6</sup> by delegating higher education experts to them. Either setting up a new body or assigning the new functions to existing ones with the necessary capacity-building can ensure that the decisions concerning the establishment of a CHEC in a certain region, the definition of the training needs and the optimal training portfolio,

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<sup>5</sup> Intercity professor is a term used in Hungary for faculty travelling by intercity train to off-site training locations of universities or to institutions where they are employed in a second job. The term refers to the fact that intercity professors take a morning train, hold their lectures and go home with the evening train usually only once a week or biweekly. Earlier, the regulations limited the employment of intercity professors.

<sup>6</sup> These committees are responsible for coordinating vocational education on county level.

the selection of the gestor institution(s), the control of the CHEC's operation is a deliberate, professional and well-coordinated process.

**To problem B):** In the new higher education locations, certain capacities should be established that are able to perform typical functions and activities of community colleges other than teaching, related to the traditional local engagement of this type of institution. Some examples of these functions are:

- working with local enterprises, secondary schools, nonprofit organizations and civic communities,
- initiating and taking part in lifelong learning and contract training,
- organizing professional, cultural, sport activities open to external audiences,
- initiating social responsibility programs,
- doing fundraising,
- initiating and managing joint projects with local actors (clusters, consortia, EU tenders),
- organizing and sustaining alumni.

The case of Bekescsaba shows that without deliberately facilitating these functions, an affiliate campus does not necessarily become an organic part of the city. The municipality told us that, “the institution somehow always stayed away from the cultural, civil and student life of the city”. They added that this attitude should be changed, the college should be incorporated to the city and should open towards local actors, especially towards secondary schools.

It is not likely that all these can be initiated and pursued by the staff at the gestor university – being far away and having no connection with the city – even if the gestor university would have the necessary capacity. But due to the permanent financial cutbacks in Hungarian higher education, gestor universities do not have spare resources (human and financial) to deal with the local engagement issues of off-site training locations. Thus, capacity building is inevitable, and it is definitely the most effective to locate it at the CHECs. According to Penucci and Mayfield, when the mission of a branch campus is different from that of the main campus (like in the case of the CHECs and the gestor universities in Hungary – G.K.) the branch should be rather independent in terms of local administration and management (Penucci, Mayfield 2003). A small, but professional staff and sufficient financial resources have to be provided in order to obtain activities in CHECs that make them “intellectual centers” and “significant factors of local development”.

**To problem C):** CHECs should have permanent local staff, including faculty and administrative professionals providing certain student services on-site.

As far as the local faculty is concerned, gestor universities should involve professionals from local enterprises and organizations in the teaching, either as lecturers or as master

instructors (a new category introduced in the amendment of the higher education act). They can guarantee that students get practical knowledge, and that they establish a link between the economic actors, local organizations and higher education. The other side of the coin is that part-time faculty is only a partial solution – literature shows that it is a permanent issue in the American community college system. Thus, having resident faculty besides the local part-time professionals and the commuting professors is essential. “The fundamental defining issue of a genuine branch, as opposed to a rented site or ‘storefront operation’, is the presence of a resident faculty” (Fonseca & Bird 2007).

However, in order to make CHECs (and other non-research-university-type higher education institutions) attractive to cutting-edge professionals, to convince young faculty with potential to choose a CHEC as a workplace (and an underdeveloped rural area as a home) an alternative career model is needed. The idea of an alternative career model is based on the distinct tasks and roles of CHEC faculty, deriving from the different missions of the different types of higher education institutions. Instead of the “publish or perish” paradigm, the alternative career model should reward competencies and achievements in teaching and local engagement. (See later in detail.)

Concerning the administrative staff, there are tasks and services that must be provided locally in order to grant a comprehensive educational experience to both students and faculty, such as:

- scheduling training,
- ETR/Neptun assistance,
- library and joint services,
- student administration and services,
- organizing and coordinating practical training (complementary professional practice for students, dual training),
- assisting commuting professors and external lecturers.

It does not mean that full-scale services should be provided locally – this would significantly decrease cost-efficiency. Yet, it is also unconceivable that students do not have anybody to turn to locally with their administrative or educational issues, and that faculty and other lecturers have no professional assistance on the training venue.

### ***A proposal for the governance and management of community higher educational centers***

Since in our concept CHECs are not only training premises, but organizations with several functions and a permanent staff, their governance and management have to be considered.

First, having a campus director seems to be necessary to supervise the permanent staff and to manage the daily operation of the CHEC. It should also be their task to represent the CHEC in the decision-making procedures of the gestor university in operational issues,

and to be an “interface” towards local actors. As Creswell says, having an administrative leader on the affiliate campus shifts the organizational solution towards decentralization (Creswell et al. 1985). In Australia, most of the branch campuses have a campus director. Their task is to oversee campus operations, implementing the strategy and ensure that the campus meets the local needs (Allison & Eversole 2008).

Since several local and non-local, educational and non-educational actors are involved in establishing and operating a CHEC, a supervising/governing board should be set up from the representatives of these actors. Only the establishment of a board can solve certain authority clashes and provide a joint strategy. Without a board, several authority clashes may emerge, namely: who’s right is it to make decisions regarding certain issues, the owner (the local nonprofit organization) or the gestor university/universities? The interests of the owner, of the local actors and of the gestor university may be different in several cases, just as there may be conflicts of interest between the gestor universities, if more than one is involved. It can be resolved only by corporative decision-making in fundamental and strategic issues. According to Lombardi, governing/supervising board can guarantee the necessary checks and balances, strategic platform, multifocal decision-making. There are several examples for branch campuses having governing boards on their own in the USA (Lombardi et. al. 2002).

CHEC, as a new type of institution in Hungarian higher education is a good opportunity for the government to introduce – as a pilot – shared governance in universities. There are two general types of governance systems in higher education: unicameral and shared. In the unicameral system one body (senate or university council) is responsible for both strategic-financial and academic issues. This body generally does not contain external members, just faculty and students. This is called the European-continental model, since most of the countries of continental Europe have applied this system for a long time. In shared governance, a board is responsible for strategic and financial decisions, while the senate deals only with academic issues. The majority of the board members are generally external, representing the different non-academic stakeholders. This system was born in England and the United States, and is nowadays rather widespread in the world. This is due to the fact that in the last decades of the 20th century, most of the European countries (including The Netherlands, Belgium, Sweden, Norway, Denmark, Finland, Italy, Spain, Austria) switched to shared governance. In the post-communist countries, there were attempts to introduce shared governance in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but they were aborted.<sup>7</sup> (See Keczer 2010, 2014 for details.) However, unicameral governance has several drawbacks. We agree with Taylor: nowadays universities provide professional services in a competitive environment, thus a certain amount of authority-sharing is necessary for their successful governance (Taylor 2013). Gayle interprets shared governance as a joint responsibility and cooperation of board members, university

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<sup>7</sup> The latest amendment of the higher education act introduced the so called konzisztórium, a board including external members appointed by the ministry, and they were set up this year in state universities.

leaders, faculty and students based on mutual respect and open communication (Gayle et al. 2003). Or as Fried says: good governance keeps the integrity of academic values, but meanwhile makes the university responsive to the expectations of its environment (Fried 2006). These ideas that justify shared governance are inevitably relevant in the case of CHECs, since they are established as a response to external, local needs, and their founding, funding and operation is a multi-player game.

The board should be composed of the representatives of:

- the owner of the CHEC (local government and enterprises and churches if they are involved)
- other local actors, stakeholders (secondary schools, county assembly, chamber of commerce, regional development agency, largest employees, NGOs, public organizations)
- gestor university/universities

The primary task of the board is to define the mission and strategy of the CHEC and to supervise its accomplishment. The campus director is appointed by, and is accountable to the board. Subsequently, the board synchronizes the different interests of the actors involved, monitors the effects of the CHEC on the region, and makes the fine tuning, if necessary. So, the board does not deal with operational issues, but has authority in all those questions that need the joint decision of the different actors.

A crucial issue concerning CHECs is finding the right training portfolio, namely, what and how to teach. The training in CHECs has to satisfy both quality standards and the needs of the region. It means that training must be standardized but flexible at the same time. The task here is to match the expectations of local employees with academic excellence. From an organizational point of view, the main campus – affiliate campus relation is a typical divisional setup, the question being: where to place the decision on the training portfolio, to the center or to the division?

This divisional (i. e. hierarchical) thinking does not solve the problem outlined above. If the center (the gestor university) has the right to decide, then local aspects might be overshadowed by the general academic interests of the gestor university. The needs of the local employees for specialized, practice-oriented training and for up-to-date, ready-to-use knowledge may be ignored; at best because of guarding the academic standards, at worst because of the ivory-tower attitude or the lack of capacity to flexibly change the training content and methods. If the owner of the CHEC has the right to say the final word in what and how to teach, general academic standards might be overshadowed by the expectations of the local employees at best, by pure financial interests or the lack of expertise at worst.

A matrix approach could be a solution. In matrix organizational structures, two or more equal depositaries of authority make joint decisions, taking into consideration the

professional standpoints of all the participants. Thus, guaranteeing a decision of maximum professionalism. In the case of CHECs this means that neither the gestor university, nor the owner has the right to say the final word. They make the decisions jointly, and the aspects of the gestor university and the local actors are taken into consideration with equal weight. Local actors contribute to the decision with their knowledge of the region and its special needs, while the academic units of the gestor university bring in academic standards and disciplinary professionalism. As far as the training methods are concerned, the university knows what is the best pedagogic method to deliver a certain knowledge, and the local actors can suggest ways to make theoretical knowledge practical (e.g. by dual training). Thus, a matrix approach may provide graduates with solid theoretical and useful practical knowledge.

### ***A proposal for an alternative career model for faculty***

According to Altbach (2010), the greatest challenge in a main campus – affiliate campus relation is the provision of faculty on the affiliate campus. In Hungary, a key factor in the success of CHECs is a proper training staff. Especially in underdeveloped regions that do not have higher education so far, where there is no sufficient supply of professionals to build a faculty entirely from the locals. Professionals of local organizations may naturally compose a significant part of CHECs' teaching staff (part-time), and the newly introduced category of "master teachers"<sup>8</sup> opened the door to it in legal terms. However, we saw when studying this issue in US community colleges that part-time faculty is only a partial solution. Its advantages are sometimes outweighed by its drawbacks, as literature clearly shows. (See Twigg 1989, McGuire 1993, Sczhuetz 2002 and Lankard 1993.) Yet, to provide full-time teachers from the gestor university, then either the problem of intercity professors or the necessity of relocating faculty must be faced.

It is obvious that with 'intercity professors' the quality of the training cannot be granted and local engagement is impossible. These people would spend more time on route than in the classroom, and would not be available for the CHEC students and the local community after class. The alternative also has drawbacks: "dragging out" faculty from the gestor university and relocating them to a CHEC would put them into a rather disadvantageous position concerning their career prospects and life quality. It may be assumed that the tenured professors would not be moved from a research university in the capital to a CHEC of a small town in an underdeveloped region to teach in vocational training, but junior faculty at the beginning of their career. However- since at present, in the traditional career model, promotion depends almost exclusively on scientific output – faculty located at CHECs does not have a chance to climb this career ladder. They lack

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<sup>8</sup> One may become a master teacher at a university if they do not have a scientific career (PhD), but have a master degree and a minimum 10 years' work experience in a certain professional field. They may be employed full-time or part-time (HEA 2011, Gov. reg. 2015). The purpose of the introduction of this new type of faculty is to allow practicing professionals of the corporate world to engage in higher education, to make it more practice-oriented.

research infrastructure, they are far from the academic community, they have a higher workload in teaching, etc.

What makes the issue more complex is that at CHECs teachers face different pedagogical challenges from those in a research university. Due to the mission of the community college-type institutions, their faculty has to deal with a more heterogeneous student group including young people and adults, students entering and re-entering higher education, full-time and part-time students and on-the-job trainees, etc. They differ in age, motivation, prior knowledge, personal and professional goals, and family background. To educate these diverse student groups special knowledge, competencies and attitude is necessary (Sprouse et al. 2008; Twombly 2005 quoting: Cejda 2010).

Our suggestion is the introduction of an alternative career model for higher education faculty. By alternative career model we mean:

- a role perception that is different from that of the research university (RU) and,
- a special promotion system based on the distinct role of a non-RU professor.<sup>9</sup>

The alternative career model is based on the notion that teachers' roles and tasks are different in the different types of higher education institutions. Along this line, the alternative career model should expect and reward performance that is important and valuable in a CHEC with its special mission. These are related primarily to teaching and to local engagement, since these are the most important elements of CHECs' mission. Thus, achievements in teaching efficiency, innovative pedagogical solutions, and cooperation with local actors should be more important than research and scientific output in the case of CHEC faculty. The alternative career model must also count with the fact that the conditions (e.g. to conduct high-quality research) are different in a CHEC and in a RU. It must be emphasized that there must be a thoroughfare between the traditional and the alternative career model, since the personal goals and professional opportunities of any faculty may change in course of their career. The alternative career path should not be inferior to "university-type" careers. Performances, although in different fields of activity, should be the same in quantity and quality, thus, they should result in the same rewards and prestige.

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<sup>9</sup> The alternative career model is relevant not only in the case of CHECs, but also for other non-RU teachers, e.g. for faculty of a college of applied sciences.



## **Summary**

Underpinned by the extensive study on community colleges and primary research we concluded that the government's concept of the so called CHECs has certain flaws. Therefore, we propose some modifications and amendments, not overruling the government's decision on CHECs not being independent institutions. Nevertheless,

- concerning the organization and personnel: a professional coordinating body, permanent staff, resident faculty,
- concerning the governance and management: a strategic board, a campus director and matrix solutions,
- concerning the faculty: an alternative career model

are necessary to facilitate CHECs in fulfilling their mission, engaging in local development, and providing a full learning experience.

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