

When we commenced our Strategic Plan we undertook to communicate with you regularly. Our editorial this edition provides an update on Semester 1 activities.

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Taking it to the next level

A Strategic Plan for Marist College Canberra, 2007-2011

Progress Report July 2009

The third year of the Strategic Plan 2007-2011 has seen the introduction of a number of exciting and innovative initiatives, the culmination of two years of research, consultation analysis and planning. The following reports from the four Priority Working Groups give details of what has happened in the first semester of this year. As well they outline the continual planning and work of the members of the Priority Working Groups as they continue to address the objectives of the Strategic Plan.

Priority Working Group 1 – Identity and Values

The Identity and Values Group focussed on the task of raising awareness and understanding of the core values during the first semester. At the beginning of the school year, 6 varieties of coloured banners were installed in every classroom and major public area of the college. The banners present the heart logo with the value and a simple statement explaining its meaning. As well as being a reminder of the core values themselves, the banners are serving as useful teaching tools and providing a colourful addition to classrooms, particularly in the senior school.

Prayer and liturgy throughout the college this semester also took up the themes of the core values – faith, love, compassion, justice and hospitality. While the focus has been on hospitality as our college theme for 2009, each term, one of the other values is highlighted for reflection. Staff and students are encouraged through a variety of opportunities to reflect on and consider how to make these values a real part of college life. These include assembly prayer, staff prayer, Monday morning prayer, Friday Morning Mass, Easter Liturgy, as well as the time together in their House Groups and Religious Education classes.

During Term 2, members of PWG1 conducted a series of school visits to Brisbane, Sydney and also to local Catholic primary schools in Canberra. These visits served as research and fact-finding exercises into areas such as the implementation of values, faith formation, animation of staff spirituality and the integration of religious education through the whole curriculum. While a wide range of ideas were gleaned from these visits, they also confirmed the good work that is currently being undertaken here at the college.

Finally, in keeping with the committee's mandate in the strategic plan to “*establish new ventures that explicitly include social justice awareness and service components that harness the passion and commitment of the students to be involved in integrated ministry and faith development projects*”, members of PWG1 have combined with members of PWG3 to develop plans for community service initiatives throughout the college. The first of these will look at a programme for community service for all senior students to be involved in starting in 2010.



Priority Working Group 2 – Learning and Teaching

Work has continued on the implementation of the College's *Vision for Learning & Teaching @ MCC in 2012*. This has included the introduction of the new Year 4 courses as well as *Footsteps* in Year 9. In addition, staff are now working on designing and planning for new courses in Years 5, 6 and 10 to be introduced in 2010.

Footsteps has involved a range of activities throughout the year as a part of the integration component. The photos below are from *The Great Canberra Race* and *Life's Toolbox*.



The Middle Years

The Middle Years work has involved all teaching staff developing a set of strategies that will be used to underpin the course writing which will begin during Term 3. Much of this work has focussed on the provision of ‘enrichment’ for all students and how we, as teachers, will implement the College *Charter of Learning & Teaching*, specifically how we as teachers will:

- support, promote and cater for individual learning styles
- develop student awareness and understanding of the ‘bigger picture’
- build a classroom environment that supports and encourages risk-taking

This exciting phase of our work involves teaching staff from the Junior and Senior schools working together on all aspects of this work. It should be noted that underpinning all of this work is a plan to provide a seamless curriculum or a continuum of learning and teaching from Years 4 – 8, hence the team approach that we have adopted of involving staff from across the College in the Middle Years work.

Taking it to the next level continued...

Year 10

A great deal of work has been undertaken in detailing the structure for the new Year 10 courses to be introduced next year. Year 10 will be a transition year between Year 9 and Years 11 & 12 with courses being designed to prepare students for their studies in later years.

Integral to the success of the transition year will be the linkages that need to be made between Footsteps in Year 9 and the requirements and expectations of study in Years 11 & 12. It is important to 'raise the bar' for Year 10 students so the students understand the expectations of senior study, irrespective of the type of package being considered for Years 11 and 12.

An increase in rigour for all courses is to be incorporated to ensure the boys begin to experience first hand the expectations and the standard of work required for study in Years 11 & 12. An example of this would be to use such things as the assessment requirements for Year 11 & 12 in Year 10 courses.

To continue with the engagement of students as they move from Year 9 to Year 10 we will continue to provide choice for the boys. This will be within courses as well as offering elective subjects and a number of enrichment type days to be held at various times through the year. Choice at times will be guided, with students needing to undertake a range of activities or tasks as set out by the College or by particular subject areas.

Priority Working Group 3 – Caring

We will set new standards for an outstanding pastoral care program that is centred on the quality of the relationships between, and the support and care for, staff and students.

A number of initiatives were launched by PWG3 in 2009 and a further three initiatives are at the research stage.

Big Brother, Little Brother program

This is a mentoring program which brings together Year 11 boys and Junior school boys. After training and selection, around 85 Year 11's signed up to work with Junior school classes for an hour each fortnight. Initially, Big Brothers facilitated activities for their Little Brothers such as Getting to Know You exercises and tours of the senior school. Now the activities are negotiated between the Junior school classroom teacher and each Big Brother and are based around assisting the younger boys with their schoolwork. From semester 2, the

classroom visits will be monthly and the Big Brothers will join their younger brothers for lunch every other fortnight.

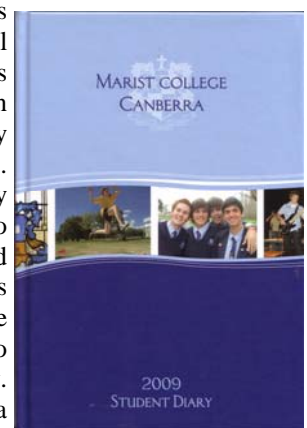
Vertical groups

Vertical House groups were introduced in the senior school at the beginning of term 1 and both boys and staff are enjoying their success. Initially, the primary goals for each group were getting to know you and the integration of the Year 7- 12's within each group. All Year 12 students were appointed as 'House Seniors' with a particular leadership role. Groups engaged in a variety of fun activities including icebreaker games and team building activities. A photo competition was launched and photos have been screened before College assemblies. Currently, the initiative is moving from the 'forming' to 'performing' stage with an emphasis on 'academic care' during semester 2.



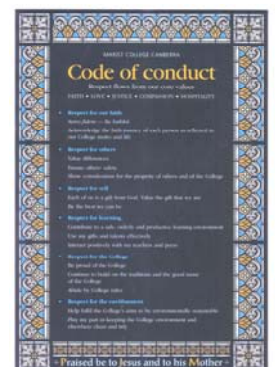
New diary

An updated diary was introduced into the senior school this year. The hardcover has proved more durable than previous editions and the diary includes a number of additions. Boys are encouraged to carry their diary to all classes to record their homework and assessment information. Diaries are sighted weekly in House Group and parents are also asked to sight and sign weekly. The diary is also a communication medium with a section dedicated to home-school communication.



Code of Conduct

This was introduced from the beginning of 2009 as a way of shining a positive focus on school rules. The code, which is displayed in all classrooms from Years 4-12, integrates our College rules into seven statements based on respect. As well as a statement of expectations, the code is a visual cue.



Taking it to the next level continued...

Restorative practices

The College adopted a restorative approach to discipline from the start of this year. All staff participated in a work-shop on the approach by the Marist Youth Care team who also returned to the College in May and worked with middle managers. Restorative practices provide a framework of management that moves away from the traditional punitive response. While still providing limits and consequences, it looks for ways to repair the damaged relationships and improve existing relationships.

Personal Learning Plans (PLPs)

A number of House groups are trialling PLPs this year before a school-wide introduction from 2010. PLPs engage the boys in reflection on their learning, goal setting and conversations with their House Group Leaders. In the future, they will become a feature of our academic care approach.

Updated safe school policy

This document was mailed to all families in January and has been a topic of discussion this year, including at College assemblies. Among the changes in the policy is a greater emphasis on all members of the College community doing something about harassment or bullying that comes to their attention. The policy features an Edmund Bourke quote, 'The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing'

Members of PWG3 are also researching three further areas this year which are (i) 'academic care, (ii) a College-wide 'community service program' and (iii) merit/demerit systems. Research into community service is a combined project with PWG1 as mentioned earlier.



Academic care involves promoting well-being through academic structures and processes which are sympathetic to adolescent needs. It is linked to Pastoral Care in its attention to positive learning and developmental outcomes including knowledge of self, self efficacy, healthy risk taking, goal setting, negotiation, reflection and empowerment. Academic Care has the capacity to strengthen the pastoral work of schools by enhancing protective processes, particularly resilience. Thus, Academic Care is care delivered through the academic domain, most significantly through learning experiences which become protective processes (Nadge, 2005). A draft Charter of Academic Care has been prepared and will be further developed in consultation with PWG2.

PWG3 has commenced collecting information from schools around Australia who use a disciplinary merit/demerit approach. Responses have been received from over a dozen

schools and a draft report prepared. Some initial responses suggest that there could be a conflict between a restorative approach and a demerit system. However, some innovative merit approaches have been received which warrant further investigation.

Priority Working Group 4 – Leadership and Resources

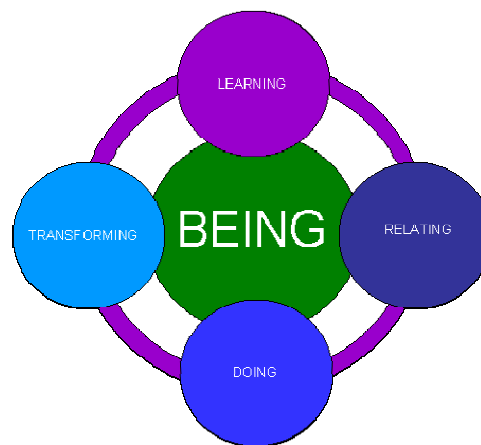
The Leadership and Resources Priority of the College strategic plan has four distinct Focus areas: 1) Leadership; 2) Finances; 3) Environmental Management; 4) Information Communications Technology

Leadership

Extensive research of available literature suggested that any framework of leadership should include:

1. The clarification of values
2. The framing of a vision
3. Strategic intervention to bring about change
4. Reflection and evaluation

It was decided to develop a Leadership Framework and a Charter of Leadership that includes all staff – teachers, non-teachers, as well as those in formal leadership positions – because we realized that developing leadership in the College is about developing the leadership capacity of all staff as leaders in their role and as potential leaders. Students, too, have been included.



Effective Leadership



- is built on a foundation of self-knowledge, commitment and resilience
- values integrity, self-awareness and self-management
- is open to reflection, disclosure and feedback



- is relational, facilitating collaboration
- inspires and encourages others by example, by support, by expressing their high expectations of self and others
- requires inclusive and empathetic engagement with others
- requires clear communication

Taking it to the next level continued...

LEARNING

- provides a rich learning environment
- builds on the commitment and passion for their own learning
- models excellence
- facilitates deep, sustained and relevant learning for others

DOING

- is about action and strategic thinking
- provides a sense of purpose and direction, making informed decisions and delivering quality results
- ensures a culture of achievement, inspiring action in others
- establishes processes that empower leaders as agents of change

TRANSFORMING

- develops capacity to respond to current needs and plan for future needs
- enhances the skills and knowledge of others, building professionalism and management capability
- involves active research and application of best practice
- articulates and promotes the College's and their own vision and goals

The framework is intended to support all, staff and students, in their leadership, to enhance professional learning, to provide channels for reflection, to encourage review, to build capacity and to provide a process of continual development of skills.

To enable members of the community to reflect on their leadership, a Framework has been developed based on five domains (Being, Relating, Learning, Doing, Transforming). The Charter of Leadership provides a platform for reflection, review, goal setting and development.

Four documents have been produced and these have been approved by the Implementation Working Group:

- 1.Preamble – where we have come from
- 2.Flowchart - where we hope to go
- 3.Framework for Leadership for all @ MCC – what we believe
- 4.Charter for Leadership for all @ MCC – how are we going to get there

These will be available for comment later this year.

A fifth document is yet to be developed which will provide a reflection, review and development process for all staff.

Finance

Trust Deeds required to incorporate a Foundation have now been completed by our solicitors and are currently awaiting final approval from the Headmaster and Province. This will allow the entity to apply for tax deductibility status, an

important benefit in soliciting contributions from College Benefactors. The next stage involves the appointment of appropriately experienced Directors to oversee the Foundation projects.

The initial project for the Foundation, the promotion of the “Brother Mark May Bursary Fund” is the focus of initiatives being undertaken by the College Development Office. The re-engineered publication, “The Maristian”, is a critical component of this strategy as is the galvanizing of our 8000 ex-students to be an important stakeholder and to adopt a higher profile in the Marist community. Tangible results to date have seen a commitment by the Canberra Southern Cross Club to donate \$90,000 to the fund over the next 3 years, subject to certain conditions. In addition over \$17,000 has been raised by other donors from parents of current & recently departed students, one donation of \$10,000 being extremely generous and encouraging.”

Environmental Management

The College has continued to reduce its water consumption, both inside and outside the buildings to the point where we now use approximately a third of what was used 5 years ago.

The Senior School boys’ toilets are presently undergoing refurbishment to install waterless urinals, thereby further reducing our water consumption.

The Junior School will commence a comprehensive recycling program later this term.

ICT

The College obtained substantial funding under Round Two of the NSSCF, which is one of the programs in the Commonwealth Government’s “Digital Education Revolution” initiative. At this stage it is anticipated that we will incorporate a mix of additional computer labs and a significant number of laptops to provide 255 additional computers.

To this end, the ICT Strategic Planning Committee has endorsed a trial of a wireless network to three areas of the College.

The trial will take place throughout Term 3 this year. A formal evaluation will be conducted towards the end of this period to assist the committee in determining the future of this particular technology at Marist.