



## Report to the Mount Alvernia College Community – 2014

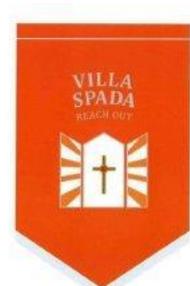
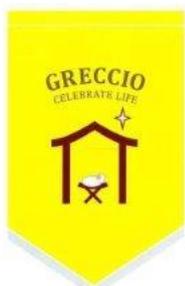
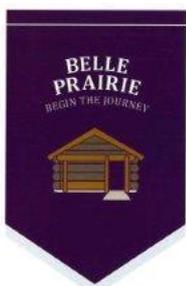
### From the College Principal – Doctor Kerrie Tuite

As the Year 2014 ends, the college is well poised to manage the significant changes to Secondary school when Year Seven students become part of Mount Alvernia College. These changes have been both structural and infrastructural. Structural changes have included the extensions to Anthony Building which will include six Science Learning Areas, a Canteen, two Home Economic Kitchens and Administration offices has already begun and will be finished, all going well for the start of the 2015 Academic year. The entrance to the college will become an Outdoor Learning Area to be known as La Foresta. La Foresta will consist of a working garden and spaces for classes to gather. I am really pleased that the plans that have been made for the Teaching and Learning Spaces are coming to fruition. As a community we have really benefited by being able to use La Verna in 2014 and we were pleased to discover that the design of this building took advantage of the summer breezes and obviated the need for the use of electricity for air-conditioning. I know our neighbours will be pleased that the major building project is over and peace can return to the neighbourhood. It is our intention in 2015, to



open the Café and La Cucina – the kitchen to our neighbours to enjoy the Mount Alvernian hospitality.

Infrastructural changes have involved the restructure of Middle Management. Throughout 2014, a committee met to decide upon the structures that were suitable for the college in its transition to a Secondary College from Year 7 -12. All positions in Middle Management ceased at the end of 2014 and staff members were required to apply for the new positions. These Middle Leaders are in both Curriculum and Pastoral Care including a new House structure with the addition of two new Houses to assist with House Spirit and Pastoral Care. The two new Houses, Belle Prairie and Villa Spada have direct connections with the Foundress of the Missionary Franciscan Sisters of the Immaculate Conception, Elizabeth Hayes. As the college will move under the governance of Mercy Partners in 2015, it was considered important to put the historical connections with the Sisters as a designated part of college life.





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This year our enrolments reached 830, the largest number of students since the college began in 1956. We are very proud of what we have achieved in all areas of school life and so to highlight these achievements I have asked each member of the College Leadership Team to reflect on the achievements in their areas of leadership as part of this report.

The past few years have been exceptionally busy in preparing the college for the extra year level and increased enrolment. It will be good to come to the end of the projects to refurbish the Anthony Building, build La Verna and undertake the other developments in the college. In 2015, it will be good to open the new facilities for the use of the whole community.

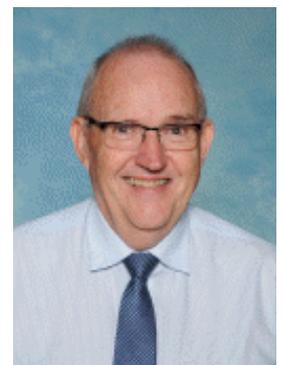
As reported last year the change in Federal Government has resulted in some changes to Funding into the future but to date, schools are guaranteed funding for the next three years. With the potential for a State Election in 2014, the State landscape may change as well. Of particular interest for students in Secondary School is the review being undertaken into Tertiary Entrance and Overall Positions. I would urge all parents whose daughter is beginning at Mount Alvernia College to keep informed about what this review advises because of the potential impact on their daughter's future after school.

I am grateful for the support of the College Board and the Parents and Friends' Support Network for the unselfish way they support our community. I thank them sincerely for this and am constantly encouraged by their willingness to give freely of their time in support of the work we do at the college.

### **From the College Deputy – Michael McDonald**

The Vision of Mount Alvernia College is to be a leading 21<sup>st</sup> Century educational community

- producing individuals who have the skills, ability, and attitudes to succeed as productive citizens and develop a mindset of life-time learning
- demonstrating high standards and expectations for all
- maximizing the utilization of school resources
- recognizing excellence, achievement and commitment
- implementing an Curriculum based on Australian standards
- striving to provide valid educational opportunities for all students



In line with this vision, we moved classes into the LaVerna building that was specifically constructed to provide flexible simple learning spaces. Our Year 8 and 9 students moved in to these rooms for their core

studies in English, Religious Education, History, Geography and Mathematics. The rooms were also available for other year levels to learn in. These rooms in this building have been constructed and furnished to allow for a learning space where young people are not tied to their desk and face the front – the front does not exist.

The rooms are furnished with desks that are easily movable to allow for different types of learning. Students



also have a choice to sit at a desk or a bench when working by themselves or in groups. Ottomans are also available for the students to use. But the main parameter in the choice of furniture has been flexibility to enable the easy creation of different spaces for learning. The rooms have large glass doors that form the walls and allow the rooms to be opened to the outside spaces on verandas on both sides. The principle that natural lighting and ventilation assist in providing an

environment for optimal learning was the basis for this design.

Technology is simple. Each room has wireless access to the Internet and interactive televisions. Students have their own laptop and this set-up provides for individual as well as collaborative activities. The interactive televisions are portable and when linked to a student's laptop, provide an easy platform for sharing results and projects with others. Each room has up to 24 power points and data points to allow students to continue to use their devices if they need recharging.

The rooms have a white wall on one total wall and whiteboard areas on the glass walls which can be written on as well by students and teachers. Both students and teachers use the whiteboard for instruction, planning, collaboration and sharing of results eg in building a class mind map where a large number of girls can be working on the wall at the same time. An important aspect in the research and planning of these classrooms meant that there is no fixed teacher desk or space in the rooms. Teachers are learners with the students and have been provided with a bench that is also moveable to anywhere in the room.



In summary, the rooms have been built and furnished to provide an environment which is inviting and where students may be active and engaged learners. They are places where students can learn and create both



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individually and in collaboration with others. Each room is designed and furnished so all adults and adolescents are learners and teachers.

An important hub that adjoins the LaVerna building is the iCentre which is an innovative space that is often referred to as the school Library. Our iCentre allows “students to connect with the skills, tools and information they require for learning, they need a physical space where they can go to work, access help, locate resources and experiment with new media. Learners also require a digital space that allows them to access resources and support in an environment which is on-line and available anywhere at any time.”

[\(http://mta-icentre.mta.qld.edu.au/about-the-icentre/\)](http://mta-icentre.mta.qld.edu.au/about-the-icentre/)

As part of the implementation of the Australian Curriculum, we have continued with a major commitment to mapping the curriculum in all areas from Years 8 to 12, but especially in Years 8-10. We have commenced mapping the proposed curriculum in Year 7 and will continue this in 2015. A major purpose of mapping the curriculum is to gain a clear understanding of what is happening in all subject areas from Years 7 to 12. Such an exercise allows us to see clearly what is happening in the total education of students with the ability to easily see where they have come from and where they are heading to.

The screenshot shows a web-based curriculum map for 'Integrated Studies 9 (CM)'. It includes sections for 'Essential Questions', 'Skills', 'Common Curriculum Elements', 'General Capabilities/Cross Curricular Priorities', 'Australian Curriculum: Achievement Standards', 'Religious Education', and 'Content'. The 'Content' section is expanded to show details for 'Text Unit 2' (Weeks 19, 20) and 'How do the effects of change become apparent?' (Weeks 1, 9). It lists 'BIG IDEAS' like 'The Industrial Revolution fundamentally shaped contemporary society' and 'ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS' under 'RELIGIOUS EDUCATION'. It also details 'Students will be able to' skills, 'Common Curriculum Elements', 'GC: Literacy Continuum' (Level 6), 'F-10: English Year 9 Achievement Standard' (Receptive modes), and 'Mt. Alvernia - Religion (2013) Year 9 Sacred Texts' (Christian Spiritual Writings and Wisdom - Religious Knowledge and Deep Understanding). 'Students will know and understand' includes 'IMMERSION ACTIVITIES' like '1. See/think/wonder approach to (i) photo of girl in factory (ii) Floor-Lave poster (iii) photo of an 8-hour banner (iv) painting of'.

The curriculum maps that have been developed detail what is to be taught and elaborates on the Australian Curriculum Standards where relevant. The further development of the Curriculum Maps results from the review conducted by the

Australian Council for Education Research in October 2013, and in their report they referred to the Curriculum Maps and their importance to the cohesion of the whole school curriculum.

In 2014 we have worked, under the coordination and direction of the Assistant Principal, Student Transitions, on the development of the programs for Year 7 in 2015. More details of this can be seen in the relevant section of this report.

We have continued to develop and improve our course offerings in Years 11 and 12 in line with the requirements of the Queensland Studies Authority. Our offerings of TAFE courses and School Based Traineeships have continued to be made available to students off campus. To allow for students to complete a vocationally oriented course at the College, we introduced Information Communications Systems, Social



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and Community Studies and Business Studies in 2013 and these subjects are now offered in Years 11 and 12. They add to the other School Subjects we already offer – English Communications, Pre-Vocational Mathematics, Media Art Studies - Fashion and Media Art Studies - Visual Arts. Our year 11 and 12 courses now provide all students with the opportunity to select a program of study which is best suited to their individual needs and aspirations.

We continue to offer a broad range of academic subjects in Years 11 and 12. Student enrolments in Mathematics and Science continue to be strong in the school. We offer Mathematics A, Mathematics B and Mathematics C courses and all students study one of the Mathematics offered. A large proportion of students study at least one science from our offerings of Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Science 21 in Years 11 and 12.

	Year 11 – 141 students	Year 12 – 156 students
Mathematics A	57	80
Mathematics B	71	61
Mathematics C	7	6
Biology	66	57
Chemistry	22	25
Physics	15	13
Science 21	0	17

A majority of students in Years 11 and 12 study at least one Science subjects.

### **From the Deputy Principal Student and Staff Development – Annette Butterworth: Facilitating and Supporting a Culture of Learning and Growth**

Staff and Student Development has two specific roles:

1. To create opportunities for staff to enhance their professional learning and to subsequently enable student development to occur, and
2. To assist students to develop to their potential academically, socially and emotionally.



The preparation and improvement of our Induction Program for staff and volunteers has been a major project in 2014. This year the induction program included a special focus on newly graduated teachers to provide opportunities for them to prepare the evidence required to move from provisional to full registration. In all, eight staff members were required to begin the process to meet the expectations of



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the Queensland College of Teachers. Regular meetings were established with each individual and for the group so that each of the staff members could become familiar with the National Standards for Teachers and the evidence that would best prove their progress from graduate to accomplished teacher. Each piece of evidence was required to be annotated against multiple descriptors within and across the standards and only then could a provisionally registered teacher move to full registration. Due to the amount of work required in this process, many of the eight have chosen to continue the evidence gathering for a second year and as such will continue to be supported in their endeavours in 2015. The school's Italian and History teacher, Christina Cassidy is to be congratulated for her successful and well deserved progression to full registration.

Induction programs have also been developed for employees who wish to be considered for short and long term contracts or as potential supply staff. Coupled with an on-site induction program, prospective employees are provided with a tour of the school's facilities, an introduction to basic procedures such as behaviour management and first aid, and to the school's online resources. Future staff are also expected to read and acknowledge an understanding of the Student Protection Policy and the Code of Conduct for employees at Mount Alvernia. This induction program has been well received by potential employees as it is one that they are not privy to in other schools where they may seek employment and helps them to be comfortable in their role within our community.

In 2014, the Pastoral Guardians and Guidance Counsellors have begun exploring and utilising some of the characteristics of the Restorative Practices Program for rethinking behaviour management. From our involvement with this program through workshops and seminars, we have found that the program complements our pastoral care in the Franciscan tradition. At Mount Alvernia we wish to ensure our girls develop respect for one another in a community that honours processes that ensure equal justice and fairness when dealing with problems. The program honours the importance of relationships as the core of learning and managing behaviours. The 'Fess up, Face Up, Fix Up, Finished' posters that adorn the pastoral areas provide a clear message of one of the easiest approaches to issues that may arise. When the process reaches its conclusion, relationships for the most part have been repaired and connections restored. In 2015, the program will be introduced to all staff members. The main aim being to ensure there is a consistency in how relationships can be restored if a break down occurs.

One of the pleasures I have as part of my role is in overseeing the Mount Alvernia Spirit Team. The team consists of three parts:



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- The Spirit Squad – who learn the college cheers and support school representatives at interschool events
- The Welcome Committee – who add hospitality to school open days, new parent tours or new student orientation
- The SSIC (Students for a Safe and Inclusive Community) committee – who develop creative ways to ensure all students feel comfortable with who they are and their place in the community. An off shoot of this group is the Cyber Savvy Committee which will become a major project in 2015.

One of the successes of this year's Spirit Team has been the introduction of the online reporting tool for reports against Non Franciscan Behaviours. This tool provides community members with an anonymous avenue to report student actions that may harm people or property. While many of the students prefer a face to face consultation with their Pastoral Guardian, the tool is an option that has been utilised as an effective alternative.

### From the Deputy Principal Mission and Community – Alison Stone



*“And as you go, preach the message, the kingdom of heaven is at hand.”*

*Writings of St Francis.*

Mission and Community is a vital component of Mount Alvernia College education. St Francis and St Clare of Assisi together with Elizabeth Hayes' way of life calls us to keep our eyes on God, to treat all of creation with respect, to be peacemakers, to embrace life joyfully and to serve others.

Our task in 2014 was motivated by the need *‘to trust in God and walk in newness of life’*. On the ground this meant being among the community and animating it in the Spirit of Jesus. Words and actions were made relevant for our community.

The goals were:

- to animate the spiritual life of the community in concrete ways;
- to serve the needy, disadvantaged and displaced within and beyond the gates of the College; and
- to balance action with contemplation and prayer everyday.

### Animating the Spiritual Life of the Community:

In 2014 Mount Alvernia College lived the mission of the Catholic Church through liturgical and outreach programs that are enriched by the Franciscan spiritual tradition.



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The written word was active since, by way of our Liturgical, Outreach, Pastoral and Curriculum programs, we were called to *preach the Gospel every day*. Preaching the Gospel means not only written and spoken words but hands and heart action. This is what our community lives every day in the busyness of our College life.

Through the Gospel values of love, compassion, simplicity and peace we found ways to pray, to spend time in stillness and silence, to enter more deeply into the sacrament of the Eucharist with Fr Stephen, to advocate for justice and reconciliation at the 6th Annual Apology Event, to sit with God on reflection and retreat days, to walk with memories of World War I soldiers, to help in time of need and to be Christ to each other and our community in ordinary, everyday ways throughout 2014.

We did this as we went beyond the boundaries of the College into the community. We served afternoon tea to the residents at Delamore, hot chocolate, muffins and bar-b-que to the homeless at the Brisbane Homelessness Services Centre and on the Paddies van, played with the children at the Wonder Factory, had fun raising thousands of dollars in funds for Caritas, Catholic Mission, MFIC Ministries, Cancer Council and charities and organizations whose charter it is to better women's and children's life and status in the communities in which they work.

The Mission and Community Team of Mrs. Alison Stone, Ms. Trish Bartlett as Campus Chaplain and Mrs. Lisa Humphries as Assistant, works with all members of the community, to strength our Catholic ethos and Franciscan charism both within and beyond the College gates.

Our connections to our local Kedron Catholic Parish continued to grow because of the willingness of our parish priest Fr Stephen Bliss ofm, to be of service to our community. Fr Stephen's keen presence in our community meant that once again we were able to train student Ministers of Communion and Mass servers. With Ms Bartlett's and Mrs Humphries organization and Fr Stephen's readiness, we were able to offer student lunchtime masses and staff morning masses in the Delamore room most months of the year. Mt Alvernia College continued to join with Padua College at the popular FOTH Friday lunchtime Masses regularly throughout



the year. Both communities are enriched by the experience of coming together as a Franciscan family to celebrate Eucharist. Ms Bartlett and Mrs Stone were responsible for the masses and designed the Spiritual Conversation Circle program for parents, staff and friends of the College throughout the year.



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In 2014 our whole community came together to celebrate through our Catholic and Franciscan traditions with a Welcome Assembly including the Induction of our College Leaders, Opening Community Mass including the Commissioning of the College Captains with Bishop Bill Morris, FOTH burning of the ashes in preparation for our Ash Wednesday Liturgy, Easter Liturgy of the Word, ANZAC Day Liturgy, Elizabeth Hayes Week lunchtime Mass, Clare Liturgy, Parent Helpers Prayer Service, College Feast Day Liturgy, Feast of St Francis' FOTH Prayer Service with Fr Stephen ofm, Graduation and Thanksgiving Mass, an End of Year Thanksgiving Liturgy and a Staff Christmas Thanksgiving Liturgy.

A couple of highlights of our Mission calendar were the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Apology Event in February when Mt Alvernia College hosted close to 100 guests from Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities, Murri Ministry and Catholic Schools in Brisbane, the engaging Catholic Mission's Village Space programs for Year 9 and Year 10 and a half day FOTH event with St Anthony's School and the Little Flower Parish in honour of St Francis' Feast Day in October.

During 2014, the retreat and spirituality program at Mount Alvernia College provided the whole



community with the opportunity to grow in Christian self-understanding, to develop a life of prayer and worship, and to respond to Christ's call to serve others. 2014 again saw the Mission and Community team together with Pastoral Guardians continue to integrate the spiritual and pastoral programs within the College to ensure that the personal development needs of the students were met holistically. This meant that every year

level participated in a compulsory spirituality day or retreat. Senior students in Years 10, 11 and 12 were offered opportunities to participate in Justice and Leadership Days as well as an optional SVDP School Sleep Over with the Principal, Dr Kerrie Tuite. All these experiences provided opportunity for senior students to engage with and act upon Catholic social teachings.

Mount Alvernia College staff were also offered spiritual formation days in the professional learning program during 2014. The College Leadership Team participated in a five day formation experience grounded in Franciscan eco-spirituality on their September holidays. Franciscan priest, Fr Bernie Thomas ofm from the Franciscan Retreat Centre in Auckland led this experience in a rural retreat centre outside of Brisbane.



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**Within and Beyond the Gates To Serve:** St Francis and St Clare of Assisi, following Jesus, sought out the marginalized by going beyond the *gates of Assisi*. Like them, we fostered genuine outreach both within and beyond the College gates.

In 2014 we set about consolidating our established educational partnership with Catholic Mission, Caritas Australia, SVDP, the MFIC Ministries worldwide, Delamore Retirement Community, MICAH, The Brisbane Homelessness Services Centre, the Paddies Van, Sony Foundation Children's Camp, the Kedron Wavell RSL and other organisations whose charters aim to better the lives and status of women and children in their communities.

Buoyed by the Franciscan values of trust, joy, respect and service, the number of students directly involved in our Outreach Programs in 2014 was 194 people. This amounted to 24% of the total population of 809 students. This year, we have poured time, energy and over \$24,000 worth of financial assistance raised by the students, staff and the wider community into justice organisations, families and individuals who needed support locally, nationally and internationally.



By putting our faith into action we develop 'good' young women with a social conscience who are motivated for justice, peace and integrity of creation.



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### Current INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY OUTREACH at MOUNT ALVERNIA

Currently Mount Alvernia College Mission and Community offers a wide variety of Outreach programs through which our community can embrace Franciscan spirituality.

<p><b>Year 8</b>  <b>“Kid’s Fun Packs”</b>  <b>MICAH Projects, INC</b></p>	<p>95% of Year 8 students supported the community partnership with Micah Projects in Brisbane by putting together “Kid’s Fun Packs” for their Families to Home service. The Year 8 students supplied bags full of entertaining ‘fun stuff’ to assist the children of homeless families in housing crisis.</p>
<p><b>Year 9</b>  <b>“Family Motel Packs”</b>  <b>MICAH Projects, INC</b></p>	<p>90% of Year 9 students supported the community partnership with MICAH Services and the Brisbane Homelessness Services Centre by collating “Family Motel Packs” for families that present at the centre on a Friday and need to be housed in a motel over the weekend.</p>
<p><b>Year 10</b>  <b>“Hot Choccy &amp; Muffin Mornings”</b>  <b>MICAH Projects, INC</b></p>	<p>34% of Year 10 students were engaged in the community partnership with MICAH Projects through the Brisbane Homeless Services Centre and Common Ground where they served the “Hot Choccy &amp; Muffin Morning” every fortnight.</p>
<p><b>Year 11 and Year 12</b>  <b>Van Outreach</b></p>	<p>10% of Year 11 and Year 12 students served the homeless in the inner city of Brisbane every fortnight by way of the Van Outreach – (Paddies Van = 29 students and 18 staff members). This program ceased in September, 2014.</p>
<p><b>Year 11 and Year 12</b>  <b>“Relay for Life”</b></p>	<p>20% of Year 11 and Year 12 students walked in the Relay for Life aiding the Queensland Cancer Foundation. They were supported by 2 staff members and 8 parents. Members of The Mt Alvernia College choir also sang at this event.</p>
<p><b>Year 12</b>  <b>“Wonder Factory”</b>  <b>RBCH</b></p>	<p>46% of Year 12 students (71) visited the Wonder Factory at the Royal Brisbane Childrens’ Hospital every week to play with sick children and their siblings. They were supported by 8 staff members.</p>
<p><b>Year 12</b>  <b>“Sony Foundation Children’s Holiday Camp”</b>  <b>with Marist College, Ashgrove</b></p>	<p>In partnership with Marist College, Ashgrove, 22 x Year 12 students were buddies and support personnel on the Sony Children’s Holiday Camp over four days in the September holidays. They were supported by 4 Mt Alvernia College teaching staff, 10 alumnae and 16 parents and community members.</p>
<p><b>Whole College</b>  <b>“Delamore Outreach”</b></p>	<p>5% of all College students visited with the elderly residents of Delamore Retirement Community on a fortnightly roster during term time = 14 x 4 students = (43 students (<i>mainly Years 8 – 11</i>) and 10 staff)</p>
<p><b>Whole College</b>  <b>“Caritas Project Compassion, Catholic Mission Month &amp; SVDP”</b></p>	<p>SVDP = 85% of all students and 80% of staff were involved with these Catholic ministries during 2014, most particularly during Lent, October and November with Mission Month and the SVDP Christmas Hamper and Gift Appeal.</p>



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**Balance – action and contemplation:** To engage with moments of contemplation and prayer is an essential part of a rich and integrated education that embraces Franciscan spirituality.

In 2014 a highly motivated team of students from Years 8 to 11 ran Franciscan Five – *Mount Alvernia College's five minutes of stillness and silence thrice per week*. Teachers were encouraged to begin every class with a “prayer filled moment” and Religious Education classes and Home Room are constantly engaged with a variety of prayer and contemplation techniques. When a Staff Mass was not scheduled Staff Prayer continued every Wednesday morning for fifteen minutes in the Delamore Room.

There will be changes to the Leadership structure of the College in 2015. House Guardians will be established and a greater emphasis placed on the Mt Alvernia College Home Room Program. There was emphasis on writing a new program for the new Home Room structure. We acknowledged through consultation with staff and students that Home Room is at the heart of daily College life, for it is the foundation of our pastoral program. It is a place of joy, respect, compassion and care. Therefore the intention of the Home Room program is to build positive relationships in the Franciscan spirit. The Home Room program weaves the building blocks of relationships, prayer, dedication and the simple life together so that all members grow within the Franciscan way. We will see its introduction and continued evaluation in 2015.

### **Vision for 2015**

2015 will be a year where the College will ‘*build new community*’ with the entry of Year 7 and Year 8 students into the College, the opening of new buildings and the establishment of Mt Alvernia as one College with three distinctive schools. Named after our role models of St Francis, St Clare and Elizabeth Hayes, three schools of learning will be established. There is much ‘goodness’ taking place on the campus. The focus in 2015 for the Mission and Outreach area of Mt Alvernia College will be ‘*to trust in God and walk in newness of life*’.

### **From the Assistant Principal – Strategic Transitions (Students) - Deb Evans**



With the research and groundwork beginning last year, 2014 saw the planning continue and ultimately culminate, as Mt Alvernia transitioned towards becoming a Year 7 – 12 College in 2015. The ‘Year 7 into Mount Alvernia Committee’ met regularly to continue to work on strategies, formulating options and proposals for consideration by the college community; in particular the College Leadership Team.

Consequently, in March this year I was able to lead the Middle Managers and

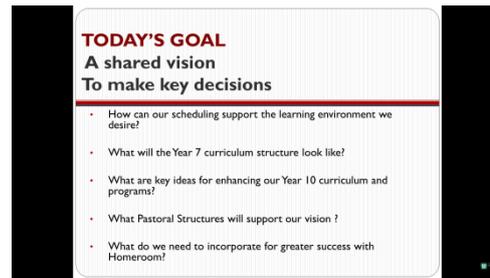


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Leadership Team through a one-day workshop, presenting options, plans and proposals, through activities, conversation and discussion. This final process ensured that all key decisions made regarding our structures for 2015 and beyond were not only grounded in thorough research, but were made in a climate of collaboration. From here, we were able to set in place processes that would enable our Pastoral, Curriculum, Middle Leadership and overall learning structures to be developed.

Key decisions were all student centred and based around:

- Scheduling
- Pastoral programs
- Leadership
- Homeroom
- Learning spaces
- Curriculum



Curriculum development was a key focus for Year 7 and 8 of 2015, and our continued intention, the creation of relevant and engaging Inquiry based programs, at the heart of these processes. The decision was made to create three schools within our College – Francis School (Yr 7 and 8), Clare School (Yr 9 and 10) and Elizabeth Hayes School (Yr 11 and 12), and for our Francis school to continue operating according to the inclusive and middle years philosophies that we pride ourselves on.

I facilitated a series of planning days for teachers and middle managers from all Learning Areas during the second semester enabling the development of Integrated and Interdisciplinary programs around Big Ideas and Essential Questions.

As an integral part of our move towards becoming a Year 7 to 12 College, it has been our intention to ensure that teachers were provided every opportunity to engage with, understand and be able to effectively work with our newest year 7s (and 8s) in 2015. As such, connections were made with our feeder primary schools and in April, a large number of principals and teachers attended a very productive afternoon at Mt Alvernia College to discuss the needs of our young learners. From here, we set up opportunities for many of our teachers to shadow a Year 6 or 7 primary teacher on a number of occasions. This Professional Learning, which occurred during Term 2 and 3 proved extremely beneficial for our secondary teachers, allowing them to gain some first-hand understanding of these younger students and to experience life in a primary school setting. The schools involved in this program were: St Dymphna's, Queen of Apostles, Our Lady of the Way, All Saints, St Columba's.



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Building our College Community is a central focus here at Mt Alvernia College. It was therefore, important during 2014 to begin to engage with our new parent community of 2015. As such, with other members of the College Leadership Team and the 'Year 7 into Mt A committee', I conducted a series of Information Evenings in Term 2 and again in November for parents of the incoming Year 7s and 8s to ensure that questions could be answered and any fears alleviated. As well, Year 7 and 8 (of 2015) Parent Newsletters were disseminated three times during the year to ensure that all remained aware of structures and plans for the coming year. Orientation Days for our incoming Year 7 and 8 students were conducted during Term 3 and 4, and led by Pastoral Guardians and Deputy Principal (Staff and Students); these will continue to be an annual event for our new Year 7s.

Whilst preparation for our Year 7s and 8s in 2015 has been my key focus this year, a number of other important initiatives for Mt Alvernia College were undertaken and are continuing. We have a close connection and involvement with *Adolescent Success – The association dedicated exclusively to the education, development and growth of young adolescents* and as such I was able to take three teachers to **The Asia Pacific Conference for Adolescent Success** held in September of this year. Helen Stower (Curriculum Leader Teacher Librarian) and Kathryn Schravemade (Teacher Librarian) presented the work they are doing in the area of Digital Citizenship and our Year 8 Research and Technology (RETECH) subject. These two programs will be part of our curriculum for Year 7 and 8 in 2015 and beyond.

As well, Greg Sikich (Geography/History/Integrated Studies teacher) presented two key activities around our Integrated Studies program during the Poster session. He highlighted programs in the area of Geography and English that have proven successful for our students this year. Mt Alvernia College continues to be showcased for the work that we do around transitioning our students into the college and our Middle Years programs in forums both within Australia and abroad.



Figure 3 - Digital Citizenship at Mt Alvernia College



Figure 3 - Geography in the middle years

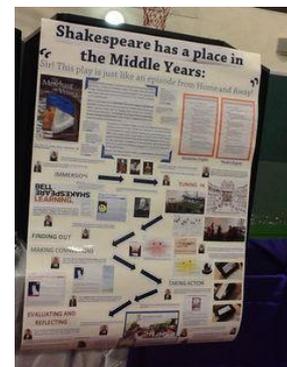


Figure 3 - Shakespeare - Year 8

Transition (Staff) – Daniel



From the Assistant Principal - Strategic Crump



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In today's educational context there is a "growing focus on, and investment in, teacher development" (Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership, 2014, p.4). Hattie (2012) identifies the most significant source of variance that can make a difference in student learning is the teacher. As such, Mount Alvernia provides opportunity for staff to engage in a wide variety of learning experiences in the pursuit of transforming practice.

This year, teaching staff have engaged in a number of conferences, webinars and workshops to better inform their craft. In addition, Mount Alvernia has been showcased on the national and international stage with many of our leading teachers presenting their research and practice to the wider education community. Of particular note is the work of the iCentre team who presented at the highly esteemed EduTech conference at the Brisbane Convention Centre and the Adolescent Success conference in Singapore. This work is seen as an exemplar for other educational institutions and we at Mount Alvernia are very proud.

Consistent with current trends in educational literature, professional learning at Mount Alvernia has looked to utilise the resources of staff within the college to provide professional learning experiences for each other. This more in-house approach has seen staff co-tutor and share their expertise with one another. In this format, teaching staff have been involved in a number of workshops focusing on developing a feedback culture, inquiry learning and information technologies.

This year the Leadership Team established a professional learning working party, charged with developing a strategic plan for professional learning at the College over the coming years. This group researched current practice, surveyed staff and also completed a number of school visits to similar Catholic schools to research their initiatives in professional learning. The findings demonstrated Mount Alvernia displays the characteristics of an effective learning community and is well on the journey of professional learning for staff. The strategic plan will be used to inform the future development of professional learning at the College with the goal to being a model of excellence in learning for staff.

### References:

- Australian Institute for Teaching and School Leadership. (2014). Global trends in professional learning and performance and development.
- Hattie, J. (2012). Visible Learning for Teachers: Maximising Impact on Learning. London and New York: Routledge.



## Report to the Mount Alvernia College Community – 2014

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### From the Business Manager - Paulette Corkery

The College continues to operate on a sound financial basis and I am grateful for the thorough oversight of our operations by the Finance Committee, chaired by Mrs Joan Mackay, and the College Board. In early January the La Verna building was completed and ready to use for the Staff and students return to the College at the beginning of the year. Completion of the Anthony building was the focus for the remainder of the year with the intention of having it ready for occupation for the return of students (including the first intake of Year 7 students) at the commencement of 2015.



It is understood than any building programme in a school is noisy and disruptive and involves a number of challenges. For the full year all staff were temporarily located in buildings at the southern end of the campus. Throughout the building project and much relocation our Maintenance staff has worked intensively to allow the college to continue to operate in a safe and seamless manner. I am very grateful to the College Maintenance team for all they do for the College community. Workplace Health and Safety considerations are constantly monitored especially during this time and the patience and forbearance of students, staff and neighbours is certainly appreciated.

At the commencement of the year our College Accreditation review was finalised and submitted to the Non-State Schools Accreditation Board. The cyclical review occurs every five years and is an opportunity for the college to assess its compliance with administrative and governance arrangements and accreditation criteria. The Non-State Schools accreditation Board confirmed that the college is giving appropriate attention to meeting its compliance responsibilities through the college's policies, procedures and organisational structure.

As with all large educational establishments overall recurrent costs continue to rise. Teacher and Support staff salaries are a major component of our overall costs and these have increased by 2.7% (in line with the Enterprise Agreement) during 2014. Increasing salary payments will continue to be one of the major costs incurred by the school community. Maintenance of buildings and equipment is increasingly expensive as are the costs of utilities, especially air-conditioning sections of the school. The College acknowledges the Capital Grant received from the State Government to assist in building necessary facilities for the entrance of Year 7 students into the College.

Uncertainty in Funding and the cost of our Capital Building work and of other major budget items such as staffing has necessitated an increase in School Fees in 2015. In deciding on the level of school fees,



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the College Board has continued to look at the needs of the 21st century curriculum and all that it entails. We have endeavoured to keep our fees at a reasonable level to enable all to access an education at our college.

### Annual School Fees for 2015

Junior Fees (Years 7 – 10) .....	\$5580
Senior Fees (Year 11 – 12) .....	\$6412
Building Levy (per family) .....	\$350
P&F Levy .....	\$120
Technology Levy (Year 7 – 12).....	\$400
Resource Levy (Year 7 – 12).....	\$100