St Ursula’s College
Toowoomba

Strategic Plan
2011 - 2015
Connecting With Life...
Connecting with Life...
To be a microcosm of the world as we would dream it to be.

St Ursula’s College 2011 and beyond

2010 has seen the completion of two years’ work to define the future direction of St Ursula's College from 2011 and beyond. Pulling together all the strands of information gained from focus groups, surveys and the Directions 15 Committee, it was clear that education at St Ursula’s College gives life through its emphasis on connections and relationships – with God, each other and the environment.

As Angela Merici faced new challenges by looking for new possibilities, so too is the St Ursula's College community called to do things in new ways to ensure the young women in our care are provided with the best education to foster a love of learning for a lifetime of purposeful engagement in the world of the twenty-first century.

Ann Marie Pawsey
Principal

A clear sign of a strong community is the way its members work together to achieve a common goal. What is presented here is an example of a community “connecting with life” in its every aspect in order to further enhance the wonderful educational opportunities offered at St Ursula’s College. I have no doubt that this Strategic Plan to which so many have contributed will take St Ursula's forward into the future. A future where in the tradition of St Angela Merici, the young women who learn and grow in this nurturing and challenging environment will confidently go out and make a difference in our world. They will be empowered to do this because of their ability to connect with life in a positive and meaningful way through strong and committed relationships with God, one another and the environment.

The Australian Ursulines thank Mrs Pawsey, the College Leadership Team, staff and the whole St Ursula's College community for your ongoing commitment to the education of young women. We continue to pray for you as you embark on this exciting journey into the future.

Sr Anne Cougle osu
Ursuline Provincial
Culture Statement

St Ursula’s College, a Catholic educational and residential community in the Ursuline tradition, is dedicated to the education and care of young women.

We strive to create learning opportunities that will encourage students to take responsibility for their own thinking and learning, so that they may become more resourceful and empathetic young women who seek:

- the development of a personal faith and spirituality
- participation and leadership in all facets of today’s and tomorrow’s world.

The challenge for all is to model relationships within and beyond our community based on:

- mutual respect
- tolerance and acceptance
- care for the individual and the environment
- interdependence and collaboration
- service

so that our students, growing in wisdom, justice and integrity will contribute responsibly to their own transformation and that of society.

Connecting With Life...

“Never cease to cultivate this vine that has been entrusted to you.”

Angela Merici, 8th Counsel

The community of St Ursula’s College exists to educate young women to be fully alive.

The contemporary twenty-first century world is one of emerging possibility and opportunity. Nothing exists in isolation in this world. Relationship is at the essence of everything that is. It is an interdependent, interconnected universe.

St Ursula’s College aims to be a microcosm of the world as we would dream it to be - a place of peace, hope and justice; a place which acknowledges our shared humanity; a place which embraces our diversity; a place which recognises its integral part in shaping the future of life.

Education at St Ursula’s College gives life through its emphasis on connections and relationships - with God, each other and the environment.

Connecting with life at St Ursula’s College arises from learning which is inspired by a contemporary interpretation of the Ursuline charism. It is grounded in the story and example of Jesus, the washer of feet. It is motivated by the story and example of Angela Merici, a woman who, “faced with two alternatives, she saw and chose the third.” (Sr Janice Howard osu).
St Ursula’s is a community that is Connecting with Life...

We strive to be a transformative learning community and a hopeful, faith-filled community, through confident innovation, reflection and responsiveness, individuality and interdependence, service and justice.

Confident Innovation

“Act, bestir yourselves, have faith, make efforts, cry aloud to God with all your hearts, then, without any doubt, you will see marvels.”

Angela Merici, Counsels

Angela Merici looked for possibilities. So too are we called to do things in new ways. We do not keep doing things for the sake of doing them. We do them because we recognise their connectedness with our core values. If that connectedness weakens we look for new ways; to find creative solutions; to imagine and enact innovative responses which have integrity and lasting impact.
Reflection and Responsiveness

“And if, according to times and circumstances, the need arises to make fresh rules, do it prudently and with good advice.”

Angela Merici, Last Legacy

Angela knew the strength of prayer and reflection. She valued the quiet times when deep insights are revealed. In our often frantic world, we must make time and space for quiet which connects us intimately to a sacramental way of living. We are called to listen, to think and to critique; to see things in new ways; to seek the inspiration and nourishment required to respond with wisdom and foresight.

Individuality and Interdependence

“I ask you, to take all your daughters into account, having each and every one deeply fixed in your hearts and minds.”

Angela Merici, Second Legacy

“Remain in harmony, united together...be bound one to the other by the bond of charity, helping each other and bearing with each other in Jesus Christ.”

Angela Merici, Last Counsel

Each person is uniquely made in the image and likeness of God. Each person is to be celebrated, nurtured and challenged to be their best and to do their best. It is only in relationship that we come to know ourselves intimately and to understand others empathically. As we become alive to our interconnectedness with all that is, we grow as co-creators of a world of love, justice and peace.

Service and Justice

“Jesus poured some water into a basin and began to wash the disciples' feet...”

John13:5

Serviam calls us to be selflessly committed to the other. This way of being is born of our deep interdependence and impels us to commit ourselves to the alleviation of the suffering of our fellow creatures. Compassion and humility motivate us to take steps to bring about a community and a world alive with the justice and truth of God.
TRANSFORMATIVE LEARNING COMMUNITY

St Ursula’s College is a community of learning. Education of the mind and heart is the focus of teaching. Here we actively foster a love of learning for a lifetime of purposeful engagement in the world of the twenty-first century. Teaching is learner-centred. The potential of each learner is nurtured and challenged to enable full and transformative participation in the world. There is an emphasis on excellent teaching for learning which inspires the growth and transformation of both the individual learner and the learning community of St Ursula’s College itself. The reality of that transformation is evidenced when confident innovation, reflection and responsiveness, individuality and interdependence, service and justice, are the heart of learning at St Ursula’s College. Individuals, St Ursula’s College itself, and the world become more peaceful and just as a result of the transformational learning which takes place here.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

(a) Establishment of an enhanced professional learning community of teachers

- Develop a shared understanding of Professional Learning Community for St Ursula’s College
- Connect professional learning to strategic priorities through the Professional Learning and Development Framework
- Engender shared responsibility for professional learning and accountability
- Collect comprehensive information regarding student and staff learning needs
- Link professional learning to student and staff learning needs
- Provide further opportunities for teachers to work collaboratively eg. cooperative research groups, peer learning, integrated appraisal, mentoring, teaching teams
- Rethink meeting purpose and procedure to incorporate a balance of professional learning
- Plan and link staff professional development and formation days to strategic priorities
- Recruit staff for excellence in teaching and performance with an emphasis on comprehensive induction, formation, development, appraisal and accountability
- Provide resource support for the ongoing development and maintenance of the Professional Learning Community
(b) Establishment of a uniquely St Ursula’s Curriculum Design and Pedagogy

St Ursula’s College takes an integrated holistic approach with a focus on academic rigour and deep disciplinary learning.

Our curriculum is diverse with emphasis on design, creativity and collaboration.

It integrates service and justice, with a particular emphasis on women, environment and sustainability.

- Emphasise learner-focused pedagogical excellence which incorporates the relational and attitudinal dimensions of learning; habits of mind and heart; deep, contextual and integrated knowledge, understanding and assessment
- Develop a literacy and numeracy plan including digital literacy
- Provide for Years 7 - 12 from 2014
- Review and renew curriculum structure based on Years 7 - 9 and Years 10 - 12 or similar
- Review and renew staffing, learning spaces, scheduling, boarding, positions of added responsibility et al in relation to renewed curriculum structure
- Create local, national and global community links and partnerships for transformative learning
(c) Establishment of sustainable resourcing allocation and priorities

Human Resourcing
- Match staffing with emergent needs
- Review and streamline staff roles to optimise utilisation of skills in line with strategic priorities
- Update and renew staff appointment, induction, formation, development, appraisal and accountability processes in line with strategic priorities

Physical Resourcing
- Establish a financial master plan to ensure the ongoing economic viability and growth of the College
- Establish a building master plan incorporating the re-development of the resource centre precinct as an integrated learning hub
- Diversify the range of available learning spaces to incorporate a balance of communal space, flexible space, small spaces and quiet spaces
- Maximise utilisation of physical space
- Provide for Years 7-12 from 2014

ICT
- Establish an ICT master plan which requires that ICTs are embedded across all areas of College function
- Integrate ICTs in Curriculum Design and Pedagogy in line with strategic priorities
- Establish a fully functional intranet
- Expand and update the College website including interactive portal for families
HOPEFUL FAITH-FILLED COMMUNITY

St Ursula’s College is a community of love and hope. It is a welcoming, people-centred place where faith and life are motivated by the example and spirit of Jesus. We strive to act as Jesus would act, to be as Jesus would be. It is a sacramental community where there is care, forgiveness and generosity. It is a place where people are celebrated for their unique giftedness and potential. Each person is known and valued and respected. It is a community with a strong sense of its own identity as a contemporary Ursuline Catholic school. St Ursula’s College is a community which holds a shared understanding of its core transformative purpose evidenced when confident innovation, reflection and responsiveness, individuality and interdependence, service and justice, are at its heart. In these ways the St Ursula’s College community is connecting with life.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

(a) Story

• Know, tell and bring to life the core stories of our community: Jesus, St Ursula, St Angela, the history of St Ursula’s College, the Ursuline order
• Highlight and explicate the core symbols of the community
• Highlight the words of Angela and Jesus as key sources of inspiration for the community
• Ensure that the core stories of the community are a focus of the spiritual and religious formation of staff and students
• Give priority to knowing the story of the other in the development of interpersonal relationships
(b) Celebration

- Happiness, laughter and good humour abound
- Affirm and celebrate the growth, effort, achievements and successes of individuals and groups across an holistic range of areas
- Recognise important milestones
- Maintain annual events such as International Women’s Day and the Day of Change with an emphasis on student responsibility for organisation
- Ensure that celebratory events incorporate an outward focus

(c) Prayer and Theology

- Nurture and form the community as a place of prayer and reflection
- Create times and spaces of quiet
- Explore a variety of living, vibrant, relevant and participative forms of prayer and ritual and encourage shared responsibility for their facilitation
- Emphasise the integral place of faith celebration in the life of the community
- Focus on formation and development of staff in their understanding and responsibilities as employees in a Catholic school
- Provide a variety of retreats and reflective opportunities for staff and students
- Focus on the emerging understandings of eco-theology as a basis for staff spiritual formation and as a foundational approach to the teaching of religion

(d) Leadership

- Enhance and develop a community culture of shared strategic leadership evident in both staff and student leadership
- Review the role, function and processes of the College Leadership Team

Confident innovation... Reflection and responsiveness...
(e) Service

- Strengthen the understanding of what it means to be a Serviam person
- Maintain the focus on the recognition of service as a communal responsibility
- Awards made by the College to have a focus on service
- Investigate and implement an integrated service learning approach in curriculum
- Expand community service opportunities available to staff and students

(f) Community

- Expand and deepen connections with Ursuline communities both locally and globally, for example, staff and student visits and exchanges, Ursuline conferences, pilgrimages and e-connections
- Embed Ursuline connections in curriculum
- Continue to develop the mission immersion/encounter program with an emphasis on strengthening relationships to further inter-cultural understanding
- Expand the welcome and hospitality offered to families and friends of St Ursula’s College
- Provide further support and assistance to families as partner educators

(g) Relationships

- Identify the factors and circumstances which inhibit the development of healthy relationships
- Educate for personal and communal resilience
- Develop a deep and shared understanding of the integral part that relationships play in learning
- Nurture a culture of openness and reflection focused on the development of respectful relationships
- Explicitly make the connection between the interdependence at the heart of eco-theology and the imperative to create sustainable connections among people, God and all of creation
Implementing the Strategic Plan

The Strategic Plan will be implemented in accordance with the following guiding principles:

1. Overseen by the Board of St Ursula’s College, Toowoomba
2. Managed by the St Ursula’s College Leadership Team and remains the responsibility of all staff
3. Realised through a collaborative approach involving staff, students and parents
4. Implemented according to annual priorities
5. Progressively assessed and reported annually to the school community
6. Adequately resourced

Strategic Plan Review

A review of the Strategic Plan will be undertaken in collaboration with all stakeholders, no later than 2015.

Acknowledgements

St Ursula’s College, Toowoomba would like to acknowledge and thank all of the stakeholders who contributed to the development of the College’s Strategic Plan 2011 - 2015 by participating in the consultative forums (including Directions 15), by sharing stories and completing questionnaires, and by participating in facilitated discussions including focus groups. These stakeholders include the College Board, the Australian Ursulines, the College Leadership Team, staff, students (including past students) and families. The College would also like to thank Dr Leoni Degenhardt for her contribution.