

2011 ANNUAL REPORT TO THE SCHOOL COMMUNITY

Damascus College Ballarat Inc.
1412 Geelong Road, Mt Clear VIC 3350
Principal: Mr Matthew Byrne

REGISTERED SCHOOL NUMBER: 0265

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Contact Details

ADDRESS	1412 Geelong Road Mt Clear VIC 3350
PRINCIPAL	Mr Matthew Byrne
SCHOOL GOVERNORS	Fr Adrian McInerney Sr Veronica Lawson
SCHOOL BOARD CHAIR	Mr Martin Ryan
TELEPHONE	(03) 5337 2222
EMAIL	principal@damascus.vic.edu.au
WEBSITE	www.damascus.vic.edu.au

Our College Vision

MISSION and VISION STATEMENTS 2009 - 2015

Our Mission

Damascus College Ballarat strives to live the spirit of Jesus as reflected in the Gospel, providing quality learning opportunities for all students in a Catholic co-educational community.

Our Vision

Damascus College Ballarat is a dynamic Christ-centred learning community which values each member. The College offers learning opportunities which inspire and challenge students to reach their potential and contribute confidently to the global community.

Our Values

At Damascus College Ballarat we value:

- our founding traditions and Mercy heritage
- a quality learning environment which enables students to achieve success and enhance their wellbeing
- a community of compassion, justice, pastoral care and responsible stewardship of our environment
- collaborative leadership
- quality resources that meet the needs of our students
- partnerships with the wider Catholic community, the local Ballarat community and other educational institutions.

College Overview

The ongoing Damascus tradition is a proud one. This is a tradition that recognises the Sisters of Mercy, the Christian Brothers and the Priests and Parishes of Ballarat. All of these people have been and continue to be great educators in a Catholic Context of the young men and women of Greater Ballarat.

2011 was the year whereby the College achieved a longstanding vision, as the school consolidated to one campus and offered for the first time in its history catholic secondary co-education for the young people of Ballarat in a Year 7 to 12 single-campus context. This had been a strategic vision of the College since 2003. Our achievements throughout 2011 are framed by our response in a contemporary and catholic way to the future needs of the families of our community.

In this 17th year of operation we celebrate that we are a contemporary Catholic educational community. Our college is set in a beautiful setting with remarkable views and 22 Hectare/52 acres of bushland to enable a great learning environment free from external distractions. Damascus' preparedness to embrace change, forming and transforming to meet the needs of the young people of this region, has been the hallmark of this College.

Damascus College is a secondary school where a family with children of both genders can be educated together. In Catholic education this was unprecedented in Ballarat and Damascus College has become a College where Christian family values are reinforced and developed, where hopefully, our young people come to know and appreciate our Loving God.

This school community is one that responds to the learning needs of the individual and has a record for looking out for those in need.

We commenced the 2011 College year with 1025 students and 130 staff. We welcomed 197 new Year 7's through to 138 Year 12's.

Students in the senior levels selected from 3 senior certificates, 30 VCE subjects, 135 students undertook courses from 20 different Vocational certificates and 6 students were involved in school based apprenticeships.

Across the College in 2011 we fully implemented a pastoral and learning support structure informed by Canadian practices to facilitate effective learning and teaching. Students continue to be a part of the strong House system that recognises our foundations being a part of McAuley, O'Collins, Xavier or Rice Houses.

By the completion of 2011 the College had invested nearly 9 million dollars in infrastructure and buildings at our beautiful campus to support the consolidation. The year commenced with the use of new facilities for improved student outcomes. These facilities included state of the art Science, Materials Technology – Wood & Metal, Visual Arts, Staff and Performing Arts facilities to enable us to operate on one campus. Throughout 2011 planning continued and construction commenced for a new learning facility to house students of Year 9. This facility includes eight general purpose learning areas, a performing arts classroom, a music classroom and a chapel.

In the future we want to bring all classrooms up to the quality of these facilities, further develop our recreational spaces around the campus and explore the possibility of trade training spaces.

Our learning and teaching is second to none. Damascus students move into society into the careers of their choice, confident in their own skin, and able to contribute to a better Australia. This is testament to the contemporary learning opportunities and the commitment of the staff team at the College. Their willingness to enter into the change process throughout 2011 has been a reflection of their professionalism.

Throughout 2011 we have asked the students, families and staff of the College to venture into something new as we have consolidated as a secondary coeducational College striving for excellence and developing a greater knowledge and understanding of God's loving presence. This is a characteristic of the education we strive for each day. As part of seeking new learning, we ask students to go to new places, to work together and to know that they are supported by a loving God and by people who care.

2011 College Theme

To Live by the Light of Christ is the College theme and motto. Throughout 2011 we revisited what it is to be a people who draw on Christian values as a central tenant for living. The most reverend Bishop Peter Connors led us in the opening school Mass at the start of the 2011 College year and he reflected extensively on what it means to live by the light of Christ as a member of Damascus College. Bishop Peter said "God wants us to be the mirrors who reflect the light of Christ into all places where there is ignorance, violence, discrimination and pain. Let us promise and pledge ourselves to make Jesus Christ the centre of our attention and the model for the way we live our lives here at Damascus College." Revisiting our College motto allowed all associated with our community to grow in their understanding of our college motto. We thank Sr Anne McMillan for her contribution to the image that brought our theme to life throughout the year.



Principal's Report

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT TO THE BOARD

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING MAY 2012

It is with great pleasure and pride that I present this Principals' Report to the Annual General Meeting of the Board of Damascus College Ballarat Inc.

2011 has been a year of remarkable change for the Damascus College community as the College operated for the first time as a single campus College at this beautiful Mt Clear site.

I wish to open by thanking the Board and the Governors for the faith that you continue to entrust in me by granting me the privilege to lead this community. It is an opportunity which I find rewarding every day through the chance I have to touch the hearts and minds of the young men and women of this College and influence their future directions. It is a stewardship responsibility that I accept as my Christian vocation as an educational leader.

I would also like to thank Sr Veronica Lawson and Fr Adrian McInerney for their ongoing guidance and support, particularly as I have settled into the role of sole principalship. I want to recognise the Governors, the Board Chair, Mr Martin Ryan and Deputy Chair, Mrs Maureen MacPhail for the spiritual guidance, leadership and educational support they have offered throughout 2011 and continue to offer today.

I thank all the members of the Board for the affirmation and encouragement I have received over this past year. I am appreciative of the time and effort given to the College by you all both formally and informally.

This year was a historical year in the life of the College. It was the first time Damascus College operated as a single campus school on this magnificent site at Mt Clear. It has been a year that has been rich in rewards bearing the fruits of hard work and planning by the entire College community. On Monday the seventh of February, 2011 we commenced this exciting new phase with 1025 students and 130 staff. We welcomed 197 new Year 7's through to 138 Yr 12's. We commenced as Damascus College – one school, on one campus! It was an exciting day and one that has been a vision of the Board and former and current leaders of the College community for a long time.

The year began with Teacher Advisor (TA) groups operating vertically from Year 7 to 12 for the first time in the College's history and with all families meeting with their TA at the start of the year. This was a significant change for both staff and students and has allowed all community members to know a broader cross section of the College community. The Teacher Advisor program has reinforced the educational partnership between a student, their family and Damascus College and has allowed regular conversations about learning and pastoral care to take place. 2011 was the first time the structure was fully functional across the College.

The consolidation to Mt Clear required the significant development of facilities for us to function on this site. To start the year, new Art, Wood and Metal rooms were constructed. The former staff facility was converted into two additional Science rooms and a new staff work and recreation area was also developed. Twelve relocatable classrooms were moved on site and infrastructure was put in place to bring these

facilities into the life of the College. These facilities were officially opened by Bishop Peter on Monday 6th June 2011 and it was a time of great celebration within our community.

As 2011 progressed under the guidance of the board, plans were further developed and refined for stage three of the College's development. The decision of the board was to incorporate an additional classroom space to create an eighth general learning area. The philosophy behind these spaces has been to generate opportunities for flexible learning for students through classrooms that can be opened up or closed down to create shared learning environments.

A sacred space or chapel has been the vision of the board to enable a tangible symbol of our Catholic identity and a place for prayer and liturgy. This space has been incorporated into this new building and will provide for class masses or liturgies, but can also open up to provide for year level masses as well.

Throughout 2011 we also began our planning for stage four of the College's development, being the refurbishment of the Year 7 & 8 classrooms, while the infrastructure was in place from stage 3 to allow for the decanting of students. Work also took place on the infrastructure required to support extra buses for the additional 400 students within the College grounds.

Over the course of 2011 the College undertook a full scale review of the performance and operation of the College in line with the School Improvement Framework (SIF). The methodology of the review aligned the Damascus College Strategic Plan 2009-2015 with the Diocese of Ballarat School Improvement Framework and the review was led by members of the College Leadership Team with specific portfolios within their leadership. The Leadership Team members established individual working parties to lead the review and staff members volunteered to be a part of each individual working party.

Professional Development on the SIF and the Insight SRC data that informed the review was provided by the secondary consultant (and board member) Bill Slatter, from the Catholic Education Office. The working parties then undertook their own analysis and liaised with the broader staff group to collate their own achievements and areas for development.

The outcomes of the review were independently verified and audited by an external reviewer Mrs Pamela Burton on behalf of the Catholic Education Office and the findings of this review have been tabled for the board and are informing the future strategic direction of the College. Significant areas of development to inform coming years are in the areas of Learning and Teaching and Catholic School Culture. The process of review was a significant task within the 2011 year and one that occurred at an appropriate time within my principalship and the next stage of the life of the College.

The promotion and development of the College has been an important strategic outcome of the College over the past few years. The prudent financial management of Paul Jans enabled the creation of this position throughout 2011 and led to the appointment of Corrina Dicheria as Development Officer from August 2011. The benefit of Corrina's appointment was immediately measurable through increased media coverage in both electronic and print media and this role has been instrumental in raising the positive public image of the College. Corrina also successfully sourced in

the latter half of 2011 significant funding for improved school retention rates and solar energy within the College.

Performing Arts remains a strength of our College community. There were two exceptional student productions throughout the year. The eleventh staging of *The Final Hours* took place in the lead up to Easter and it was a great celebration of what it means to be a Catholic school. To see young people immerse themselves voluntarily over the holidays in the representation of Jesus' final hours on this earth was a reflection of our Catholic identity reaching across the broader College community. We also opened our refurbished Auditorium on the opening night of the College production, *Beach*. It was a wonderful evening and a great way to showcase the dramatic and technological features of this facility. Student performances and the teamwork of the entire community to support this production were wonderful.

Both personally and professionally it was a great privilege to be able to walk in the footsteps of Catherine McAuley, the founder of the Sisters of Mercy, in Dublin, Ireland in May of this year and I am indebted to the College and the Sisters of Mercy for allowing me that opportunity.

Over eight days I worked with other people in Mercy ministries learning more about what Catherine stood for and how her work translates into the 21st century. Catherine McAuley was a woman who encountered enormous personal tragedy throughout her life. She was fortunate to have a sound education and knew the benefits that this provided. Catherine recognised the poverty of her time and felt called by God to do something about it.

Catherine's work continued in the eleven students and four staff who ventured to East Timor as representatives of our College for the first time in June 2011 and have come back with new experiences of what it means to be a part of a global community. As a community we are very proud of these eleven young people for their ambassadorial role. They worked hard to raise funds for the people of East Timor and they personally faced new and challenging situations away from the comforts that we enjoy here in Australia. The benefits of this program for these students have been enormous and the opportunity for this experience is being created for another group of students in 2012.

While students were travelling to East Timor for the first time, a team of students ventured to Malaysia as part of the Indonesian Language Program. It was exciting to hear of the rich learning opportunities that were gained from an in-country immersion. LOTE is an important part of our curriculum offering and empowers our young people to understand the culture of our near neighbour.

Catherine's work in following Jesus' example to care for the vulnerable was embraced by the board and the work of the finance committee was instituted in the second half of 2011 as we prepared to roll out the family fee for 2012. This fee provides real relief to families who have more than 2 children enrolled in the College at a particular time. By design it is intended to encourage a family's participation in co-education and provide some relief from the high cost of secondary education. Alongside the family fee has been the passing on of increased funding through the federal initiative to support families who receive the Educational Maintenance Allowance (EMA). Families who receive this payment will have their fee commitment reduced for the duration of the time that they receive the EMA. These initiatives of the board are in direct response to

the financial needs of the families in our community. I thank Paul Jans and the members of the finance team for the enormous work they have done in this area.

There were many student achievements within sport across the College too. Our junior girls' football team continued their dominance of the BAS competition. Our senior running team represented the College well over the entire season. 2011 was the first year that the College has ventured into clay target shooting and the College achieved a team placement and individual winner in their first outing. Our senior girls' basketball team competed successfully in the local competition and then went onto Bendigo to represent the College at the National Championships. The most important successes in sport of course were the individuals who put themselves into new and challenging situations to develop their skills, fitness and team cohesiveness. It has been wonderful to witness the student participation in the College carnivals and the enthusiasm they evoked throughout the year.

Academically, students have continued to flourish with a rounded education. We are working to try and raise the performance of students within the VCE, but Damascus students graduate with a skill set that enables them to move confidently into life beyond school. The work within classrooms is the core business of the College. Here students and teachers work together to develop the knowledge, skills and capabilities of the students of the College. Teachers have had an increased exposure to what the data says about the children in their classroom and in many cases teachers have been challenged by the diversity of the ability of the students that they teach. Teaching is a challenging profession and it is important that I acknowledge those who drive the core purpose of our College and thank the teaching staff for the wonderful work that they do. I also thank our wonderful team of support staff alongside the teaching staff who enable the College to run so smoothly

Throughout the year there were so many different events within the College. Bishop Peter Connors celebrated his golden jubilee in his priestly ministry and as a community we acknowledged his wonderful leadership. Our Damascus Day celebrations were again a highlight of our College's Catholic identity with newly ordained priest John Corrigan celebrating Mass for us. Fr John was the first Damascus student to be ordained to the priesthood in the Catholic Church and our community was well represented at his ordination. 2011 was also an important year for the Sisters of Mercy who recreated themselves after 130 years of service to the Ballarat community. While their contribution to Damascus College will continue, their governance structures have changed and as of the 12th of December the Sisters of Mercy Ballarat East became the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea. The contribution of the Sisters to the Damascus community, our founding Colleges and the greater Ballarat region has been remarkable over this 130 year period and I thank them for their ongoing support and leadership, most notably our wonderful Deputy Principal, Sr Marie Davey, board member, Sr Elizabeth Dowling and Governor Sr Veronica Lawson.

In closing I must acknowledge the exceptional work of the College Leadership team in their work to bring the College to one campus. Paul Jans as Business Manager worked tirelessly to enable facilities to be ready on the first day of 2011. This came at the expense of his own Summer break and the constancy of the work over a two year period and Paul's vision for a quality educational facility is evident in our buildings and grounds today. Tony Haintz, Karolina Yeats, Karen Simpkin, Gerard Macklin, Corrina Dichiera and Rod Mathews have been the people who have given students, their

families and staff the confidence to move into the unknown and take on new and challenging experiences. Sr Marie has been and continues to be a living witness to the work of Catherine McAuley in our community and we all benefit from her enormous contribution.

I thank Sr Veronica Lawson and former board Chair Maureen MacPhail for their wonderful work within the community. I also thank retiring Board members Ann Lacey and Bernard Bradbury for the wonderful contribution they have made to the life and culture of Damascus College Ballarat.

I welcome our new Governor Sr Berneice Loch and look forward to working with her in the future.

2011 has been an historical year for the life of the College with younger students populating these grounds for the first time. I thank the board for the support and wisdom that they continue to offer me as I work to grow Damascus as a wonderful learning community.

College Board Report

Our Mission

Damascus College Ballarat strives to live the spirit of Jesus as reflected in the Gospel, providing quality learning opportunities for all students in a Catholic co-educational community.

During the past year the Damascus College Board has worked hard to continue to support and guide the College in a direction that enables it to most fully reflect the articulated Mission of the College. The work of the Board has been guided and directed by the 2009-2015 Strategic Plan. The goals expressed in the five aspects of the Strategic Plan, Catholic School Culture, School Community, Leadership and Management, Student Wellbeing and Learning and Teaching have provided direction by which the Board and the Sub-committees of the Board have invested their energies into over this last year.

The Damascus College Board is very grateful to the many members of the immediate school community and wider school community who give of their time and expertise as members of the Sub-Committees. The Sub-Committees play a very important role in supporting the Board, particularly in the area of Policy formation. Congratulations and thankyou to those of the College community who serve the College so well on these Sub-Committees.

The work and support of the Co-Governors of Damascus College, Fr Adrian McInerney and Sr Veronica Lawson RSM, need to be acknowledged here, as their steady leadership and wise counsel has been very much appreciated and served the College impeccably well. It is appropriate here too, to particularly recognise the significant contribution Sr Veronica Lawson RSM has made over the many years she has been associated with Damascus College, especially in most recent years as Co-Governor.

The Damascus College Board would like to also congratulate the work of the College Principal, Mr Matthew Byrne; much has been achieved in his initial period of College Principal. The Damascus College Community is moving into a very exciting period of its history and the Board is very confident that Mr Byrne manifests the qualities and capacities to lead Damascus College, capably and confidently during this time. The Board is also very grateful for the work done by Sr Marie Davey and other members of the College Leadership Team in their support of Mr Byrne.

Business Manager, Paul Jans has continued to develop and establish effective processes and procedures, to ensure the College remains in a healthy financial situation. The Board is very mindful and appreciative of the work done by Paul, that enables the College to be effectively resourced so that it can be all that it needs to be in the current educational context. Paul, with the help of the Finance Sub-Committee has provided excellent advice to the Board so that the Board can confidently approve of financial practices that will ensure that Damascus College remains a College that is affordable and accessible to those parents and guardians in the Ballarat District whom seek a Catholic Education for their children. It is these sound financial practices that will also guarantee a quality education that is life-giving and enduring, beyond the actual years spent by the students at the College.

This year we have had the appointment of Ms Corrina Dichiera as the Development Officer for the College. This is a new and exciting appointment that is already bearing fruit in the high interest in enrolments and the frequent positive coverage the College has received in the local media. We thank Corrina for her work and wish her well in her new and important role.

One of the most significant and exciting happenings this year is the building of Stage 3 of the College Capital works plan. The whole College community has enjoyed watching this project grow and develop and we look forward to its completion. Stage 3 will provide some amazing flexible learning environments which support the school in its desire to provide learning opportunities that meet the needs of our emerging young adults. Also, within Stage 3 there will be a College Chapel, the inclusion of this space reflects the vision and desires of the community to be a College that continues to remember and celebrate its rich Catholic Tradition by providing a unique and distinct place for this to be more formally expressed.

In my first year as Chairperson I have had the privilege to be present at many of the liturgical celebrations that are integral to the life of the College. I congratulate the students, teachers and the work of Mr Tony Haintz and his team, in their endeavours to enable these celebrations to be contextually relevant whilst remaining true to the teachings of scripture and of the Traditions of the Catholic Church.

In 2011 Damascus College undertook a review facilitated by the Catholic Education Office of Ballarat. The recommendations from this review will be instrumental in supporting the school in its endeavour, reflect on its practices and begin to move to change structures and behaviours which inhibit the College's capacity to be as effective as it would wish to be. The Board has welcomed this review and fully supports the College in its work to seek to address the stated recommendations.

The Board has enjoyed input from Mr Byrne, and Mr Yandell on matters pertaining to the direction the College is seeking to move to in regard to teaching and learning. The Board would like to recognise the hard work of the teaching staff that provides an extensive range of learning experiences for the students of Damascus College. The Board would also like to congratulate them on their efforts to embrace change, strive for excellence and advocate for those who need particular support.

In conclusion I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge and thank Mrs Maureen MacPhail for the outstanding contribution she has made in her time as a member of the Damascus College Board. Maureen has served in many Executive roles and worked tirelessly in these roles to achieve the best outcomes for the College. I would also like to acknowledge the work of other departing Board members Mr Bernard Bradbury and Mrs Ann Lacey. Bernard is a much loved member of the College community and is a long serving Board Member, Ann too has made a significant contribution to the life of the College Board and on behalf of the whole Damascus College community I wish them well.

The Damascus College Board looks forward to a new year and we thank God for all that we are blessed with and for all that has been achieved in the last year.

The following section of this report tables the Leadership Team's response to the strategic goals developed in the Damascus College Strategic Plan 2009-2015 specifically for 2011.

CATHOLIC SCHOOL CULTURE

Goals & Intended Outcomes and Achievements

Goal 1.1: to foster relationships based on respect, responsibility, honesty, truth

Actions

- To provide professional development in the area of human relationships

Achievements

On Monday 18th July, the staff spent the day reflecting on being fully human, from a Catholic perspective. Sr. Frances Baker led the staff through the teachings of the Catholic Church on human sexuality to help unpack the complexities of Church Law and how it informs the educational experience. Our Catholic faith is our point of difference and it is important that we continue to deepen our understanding of our faith tradition. Damascus was the first secondary school in the Diocese to take part in this professional development and the outcomes of the day across the diocese will hopefully enable our school to develop resources to better address challenging questions as they arise from our young people. The intention is that the colleges of the diocese can develop curriculum responses to educating for sexuality. Our religious education coordinator, Mr. Tony Haintz, is a part of the contact group keeping abreast of these developments.

Goal 1.2: to encourage active participation in the life, prayer and ritual of the Catholic Church.

Actions

- To create a prayer space in the building program for 2011.

Achievements

Throughout Semester one of 2011 the Principal, Deputy Principal and Business Manager met with the architects on the possible chapel space and how it would serve the College community both as an intimate space for prayer and class liturgies, but also as a versatile space that could be opened up and used for year level liturgies. Sr Anne McMillan, the diocesan liturgical advisor was invited in to provide feedback on the space and this led a process of discernment to ascertain the core purpose of the space. It was determined that the space be used as a chapel space and that a team of people contribute to the design. The centrality of this space to the life of the College was determined as an important way of recognising our identity as a faith community.

Strong symbolism of the College's catholic identity was planned for the space and the presence of the blessed sacrament as an opportunity for worship for the active faith community and education for all on the faith tradition of the college Community. A large Christian cross on the exterior of the building will also reinforce that this is a place of significance to our identity within the College.

Goal 1.3: To ensure that our College heritage and traditions are valued.

Actions

- Prepare Documentation for the School Improvement Framework Review
- To provide in-service opportunities for key staff members about our College heritage and traditions
- To use the College Logo to identify the College as a Catholic Community

Achievements

The School Improvement Framework (SIF) required that a group of interested staff led by the Religious Education Coordinator review the current strategic approaches of the College in relation to Catholic School Culture. The methodology included a data review of the Insight SRC data in this area together with the anecdotal experiences of teachers. Information collected in the 2010 Review of Religious Education was also drawn upon. The committee led a staff meeting that presented a summation of the College's strategies in recent years. It went on to present some of the SIF data in the area of Catholic School Culture and proposed a hypothetical addressing the ethos of a school like Damascus College. The group prepared a report with recommendations that were fed in the strategic framework for the review. This was a valuable process that has led to significant proposals for school improvement in the next stage of the life of the College.

Damascus College staff are exposed to a wealth of opportunities to grow in their knowledge and understanding of the heritage and traditions of the community. The Development Officer attended a Mercy induction program over two days and the College Principal attended the Mercy program in Dublin. The College Business Manager and Liturgy Coordinator both attended the Mercy conference in Perth.

The use of the College Logo has developed significantly in 2011. In Late October the installation of the illuminated sign facing the College entrance on Geelong Road was developed with the assistance of Rob Young signs. It now lights the night sky for traffic entering the College with the most distinctive Christian symbol in the Damascus style. Where possible translucent film has been used with elements of the College Logo to identify areas within the College. This has been a feature of the development in the new auditorium and staffroom as well as in the Mercy Administration wing. Over the Summer the College logo has also become the central focus of the paved courtyard area.

Investigation of the use of the logo on internal directional signage, on the wall of the Arts Building facing the Administration car park has also taken place. Other plans include incorporating the key words "Catholic", "Social Justice" and "Compassion" on the courtyard balustrade in association with the logo.

Goal 1.4: To ensure policies and programs reflect Gospel values, especially social justice.

Actions

- Promulgate the Catholic School Culture Policy
- Promulgate the Religious Education Policy

- Conduct and review an East Timor Immersion experience to visit our sister school Santa Maria

Achievements

During 2010 – 11 the Board subcommittee for Catholic School Culture worked on a policy for Catholic School culture and then Religious Education. The committee included the Principal, the Religious Education Coordinator, the Liturgy Coordinator, the representative of the Diocesan Religious Education Centre Team, a Catholic Primary School Principal, teachers and Board Members. Guided by the Awakenings Core document the committee deliberated for many months before preparing these policies that were adopted by the board.

The College Leadership Team determined that the Catholic School Culture Policy that was developed throughout 2011 needed to be formally introduced and understood by all staff. It was determined that the best time to do this was the commencement of the school year and the policy was promulgated as the source of reflection for all staff at the opening staff meeting for 2012. This was led by the College principal.

The religious education policy has informed the work of the teachers with in the Religious Education Domain and this policy has been promulgated and used within these meetings.

Over fourteen months of thinking, making plans, refining plans, creating presentations, researching, making contacts, writing reports, speaking publicly, fundraising, interviewing, welcoming guests, joining committees, attending functions, wearing tais, designing posters, praying and worrying, on June 26th, the Damascus College East Timor Immersion program became a reality for 11 enthusiastic Year 11 students and 4 equally enthusiastic staff. Our first and major destination was our sister school; Santa Maria, Ainaro. Our goals included to learn about the Catholic approach to social justice, to spend time with the people in Ainaro and to become immersed in their community and their culture.

Before we left the group raised \$11,000; funds to make a difference in East Timor. Santa Maria received a major donation for redevelopment of toilet blocks and other facilities. We also visited and made a donation to Ballarat East Mercy Sister, Maryanne Dwyer who lives at Alieu supporting young poverty stricken girls through education. Funds were also donated to the Canossian Sisters in Ainaro, and the Carmelite Sisters in Dili and, equipment generously donated from various groups in Ballarat was delivered to the kindergarten, the hospital and towards a national mathematics education project.

It was tough at times, the road between Dili and Ainaro is challenging with our local drivers dodging the collapsed edges of the road! During only one night in Ainaro, were both electricity and water on at the same time. Those who attended learnt to cope with limited sewerage, intermittent running water and the need to walk everywhere! At the same time participants came away with a kernel of an idea of what it would be like to be sick and have little access to a doctor, or to have aspirations to go to university and virtually no money to do it.

Timor L'Este was an extraordinary experience for this group of sixteen and seventeen year olds and already some are very keen to return and work there in their gap year.

As a group project it has forged further links between the community of Ballarat and the community of Ainaro and we look forward to the immersion project continuing into the future.

This is the fruit of the group of hard working enthusiasts who will be remembered as the first immersion participants.

The first immersion team teachers met on 10th August 2011 to discuss the future of the relationship that has been established with our sister school.

The meeting was a wide ranging discussion of the possibilities for the future of the relationship and came up with the following recommendation to continue the experience in 2012. This and four other recommendations were adopted by the College Leadership Team.

Learning & Teaching

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal 2.1: to ensure that the Gospel values permeate all learning and teaching experiences.

Actions

- Facilitate staff PD opportunities in current understanding of our Mercy Tradition

Achievements

Throughout 2011 College Principal, Matthew Byrne attended *Catherine's Story, Our Story* at Catherine McAuley's house at Baggot Street in Dublin, Ireland. This experience gave Matt the opportunity to grow in his understanding and commitment as a person of Mercy to help lead the community which is directly linked with this important element the Damascus story. Corrina Dicheria who commenced in August 2011 as Development Officer attended a program of induction to Mercy in Queenscliff over two days. All new staff to the College participate in an induction program which includes the *Circle of Mercy* to help develop their understanding of the ethos of the College in which they work. Staff are actively encouraged to support students who attend the *Seeds of Mercy* social justice activities and a number of different staff attended and participated in these programs. Together with this, the College actively supported 130 year celebration of the Sisters of Mercy of Ballarat East and was active in supporting the sisters as they migrated to become part of the Institute of the Sisters of Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea on the 18th December 2011.

Goal 2.2: to create independent thinkers with enthusiasm for learning.

Actions

- Work on improving VCE outcomes
- Review Inter-disciplinary strand of VELs in light of AusVELs.

Achievements

In March Peter Congdon of KMetrics lead all Year 12 teachers through an analysis of their VCE results for 2010. He worked with domain teams and the focus was on understanding the reports so that, in future, staff would have the capability to do this themselves. The review allowed each teacher to consider areas of strength and weakness and to consider how they could improve their teaching and enhance results. All staff attending gave very positive feedback to these sessions. It is planned that all VCE teachers should be analysing future results. To allow this to happen the VCAA reports will be printed as soon as possible and distributed to teachers – in August this was done the day of the Unit 3 results.

In 2011 the school held formal practice exams during the Term 3 holidays. All Unit 3/ 4 students were expected to sit papers in all their subject areas, both to ensure that they had an appreciation of the amount of preparation they still needed to do, and to allow them to experience VCE conditions. An official VCE supervisor was employed and teachers volunteered their time to help out. Over 80% of students attended these exams and found the experience very helpful.

The delayed publication of AusVELS and its imminent implementation has meant that the review of the interdisciplinary strand was not appropriate in 2011 and will be carried over to 2012.

Goal 2.3: to contribute to the development of the student as a whole person.

Actions

- Review camp program - Review to be undertaken to look at overall plan, progression of skills and links to the curriculum

Achievements

There has been some initial discussion of how curriculum can be linked into the camp program however a full review did not take place. A future direction could be to explicitly link the interpersonal learning goals from AusVELS into the programme and how to report on it through the camp programme. The lack of clarity around the AusVELS and the slow rate of release of information on the National Curriculum did not assist the progression of this goal. The current arrangement for the Year 8 camp has operated over two weeks and an investigation to consolidate it to a single week has been investigated and could be implemented in 2013.

Goal 2.4: to work collaboratively with individuals, families and the wider community to enhance learning outcomes.

Actions

- Develop a consistent approach to homework across domains

Achievements

The introduction of the new homework program for Years 7 and 8 was very successful. The program was designed to develop students' time-management and organisational skills. It divided homework into 3 types – tasks that are expected to be completed each week, a domain specific extended task each fortnight and short pieces of subject specific homework. Although initially developing the tasks and maintaining the process were time-consuming, teachers, students and parents came to understand the process and needed less guidance.

An information night was introduced for incoming Year 11 students. Although the attendance was small, the feedback from this event was very positive. The aim of the evening was to make clear expectations of senior school to parents and students.

Goal 2.5: to challenge staff and students to strive for excellence.

Actions

- Review Damascus College formal ceremonies

Achievements

In Term 4 of 2011 a committee was established to review all awards and currently this continues to meet regularly. The membership of the committee includes Development Officer Corrina Dicheria, Learning and Teaching Coordinator, Nick Yandell, Religious Education Coordinator, Tony Haintz, Librarian, Loretta Kaval, Awards and Achievement evening Coordinators Jennifer Montgomery and Ann Kane, Sports Coordinator Matthew Rea, Reports administrator Erin Marshall and teachers, Deb Larsen and Hilary Gregson. The committee has sought feedback from staff and has

established a series of recommendations early in 2012 that will be adopted for the 2012 academic year.

Goal 2.6: to facilitate individual pathways that enable student success.

Actions

- To implement the TA program across the school and use it to set students goals and help them make better informed choices.
- To improve information available to students about the course options available to them
- Revise process for exiting students

Achievements

The commencement of 2011 with the College on one campus enabled the full introduction of vertical Teacher Advisor Groups (TAGs) from Year 7-12. This was the first time Year 11 and 12 students had been a part of the program and it was the first experience of students working together pastorally. It was determined to be the best way to genuinely express a Yr 7-12 College and allow students to build relationships across multiple year levels. Interviews were held five times over the course of the year. Goals were set by the students at these interviews and reviewed in the next. TA interviews in Terms 2 and 3 addressed subject selection and helped students to focus on choosing their most appropriate pathways. With many staff new to helping students with subject selections some time at staff meetings was set aside to inform staff about the pathways available to students. In addition the Learning and Teaching Coordinator, VCE Coordinator and Post-Compulsory Pathways Coordinator held optional sessions for staff requiring more help or information about subject selection and pathways.

There is still some work to be done to develop self-reflection tools in students so that goal setting can become an even more effective tool.

The previous course handbook format for students in Years 9-12 was a large pdf document outlining details of the units offered at Damascus. This document was updated to an online version accessed via the school web page with drop-down lists of units for each domain. The advantages of this were:

1. Faster access than the slow-to-download pdf
2. More user-friendly for the current IT generation
3. Easier to update and correct than the pdf

Setting up this format was very time-consuming. It was not possible to complete the Year 9 and Year 10 sections in 2011 and the previous format was retained. The Pathway Choice information for these years was set up as separate, smaller pdf documents, downloadable from the website. These proved unexpectedly successful as students were seen to print them out and carry them around discussing their choices. For this reason these will not change next year.

There is still work to be done in enhancing the information about the units.

The Pathways group worked on a revised exit form. This has been sent to the Wellbeing Team for further discussion and the development of processes to support the exit process.

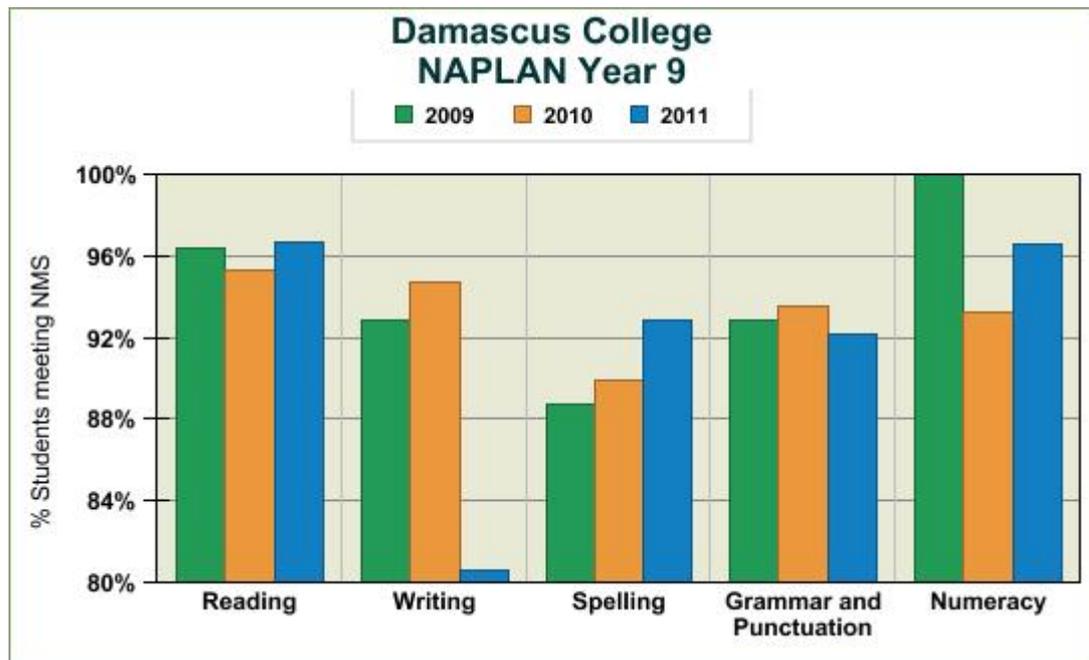
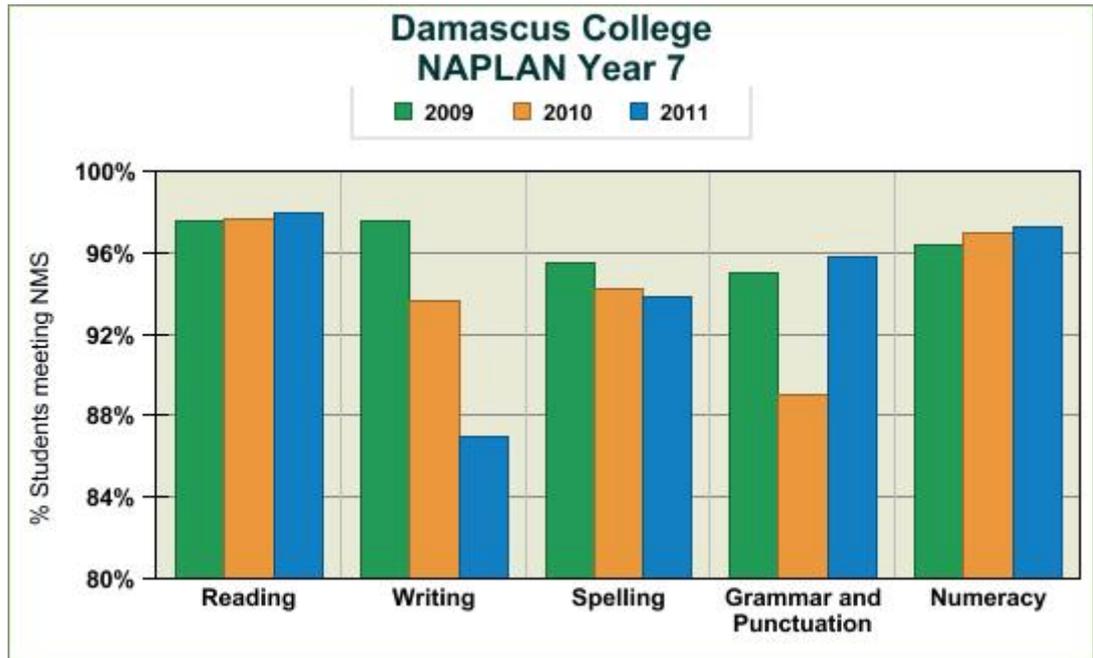
Achievements

PROPORTION OF STUDENTS MEETING THE MINIMUM STANDARDS IN YEARS 7 & 9					
NAPLAN TESTS	2009	2010	2009–2010	2011	2010–2011
YEAR 7 READING	97.5%	97.6%	+0.1 %	97.9%	0.3%
YEAR 7 WRITING	97.5%	93.6%	-3.9 %	87%	-6.6%
YEAR 7 SPELLING	95.5%	94.2%	-1.3 %	93.8%	-0.4%
YEAR 7 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	95%	89%	-6%	95.8%	6.8%
YEAR 7 NUMERACY	96.4%	97%	+0.6 %	97.3%	0.3%
YEAR 9 READING	96.4%	95.3%	-1.1 %	96.7%	0.3%
YEAR 9 WRITING	92.8%	94.7%	+1.9%	80.6%	-6.6%
YEAR 9 SPELLING	88.7%	89.9%	+1.2%	92.8%	-0.4%
YEAR 9 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	92.8%	93.5%	+0.7%	92.2%	6.8%
YEAR 9 NUMERACY	100%	93.2%	-6.8%	96.6%	0.3%

YEARS 9-12 STUDENT RETENTION RATE	66.84 %
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MEDIAN NAPLAN RESULTS FOR YEAR 9	
YEAR 9 READING	96.7%
YEAR 9 WRITING	80.6%
YEAR 9 SPELLING	92.8%
YEAR 9 GRAMMAR & PUNCTUATION	92.2%
YEAR 9 NUMERACY	96.6%

SENIOR SECONDARY OUTCOMES	
VCE MEDIAN SCORE	27
VCE COMPLETION RATE	99.0%
VCAL COMPLETION RATE	97%
POST-SCHOOL DESTINATIONS	
TERTIARY STUDY	38%
TAFE / VET	14%
APPRENTICESHIP / TRAINEESHIP	6%
DEFERRED	13%
EMPLOYMENT	22%



Student Wellbeing

Goals & Intended Outcomes and Achievements

Goal 3.1: to provide a pastoral care system at Damascus College that will be well-resourced, responsive to student need and built on a model of Mercy and Restorative Justice.

Actions

- To become a MindMatters accredited school

Achievements

School Coordinators, Karen Simpkin, Rod Mathews and Gerard Macklin attended MindMatters PD in February regarding accreditation. They also met with the regional coordinator to seek assistance. From this PD they reported back to the Wellbeing Team and College Leadership team and formulated a plan for 2012.

This plan includes;

- Seek assistance from the College IT staff to set up the online survey of students, staff & parents
- Conduct the survey during the beginning of Term 2
- Analyse the data

The process of becoming a mindmatters accredited school is still in progress.

Goal 3.2: to develop student leadership and participation at all levels.

Actions

- To implement and review the STRIDE program

Achievements

In Semester 2, 2010 Rebecca Petrie was appointed to the role of Stride Coordinator to develop a program of peer mentoring and leadership to support the move to one campus. Staff training took place with Rebecca, Karen Goonan and Keran Mewett undergoing the staff training for this program. Students from Years 9 and 10 volunteered to be leaders in the subsequent year and Karen and Rebecca ran the training for them. From these volunteers 20 student leaders were chosen to guide groups. Rebecca facilitated throughout 2011 the peer mentoring sessions and conducted a review of its worth which was presented to the Student Wellbeing Team. A survey was completed as part of the review with both Year 7 students and student mentors contributing. Year 7 student results were very positive about the program – Did you enjoy participating in Peer Support this year? Strongly Agree/Agree was 69%

Mentors were also surveyed. Did you enjoy your experiences as a mentor this year? Strongly Agree and Agree was 95%

Both surveys were reviewed by the Wellbeing Team. It was agreed that the results demonstrated that the program had been very successful for all students and was a vital aspect of the transition program for Year 7 students. As a result of the survey the program will continue in 2012.

Rebecca went on Maternity leave in Term 4 and Matthew Allan was appointed to the position of Stride Coordinator.

In 2012 it will be important to include a survey of both staff and parents. Current and future data needs to be centrally stored on College data banks.

Goal 3.3: to provide a safe and welcoming physical environment.

Actions

- Create a contemporary classroom environment to support engaging learning within the College.
- Create additional specialist facilities for Performing Arts
- To continue to develop the grounds to improve the College ammentity

Achievements

Throughout 2010 and into 2011 the College worked with Law's architects to develop the Stage Three buildings to support the College learning program. Eight General Purpose Learning Areas (GPLA) were degined that are flexible in their use. These rooms have been designed to provide breakout opportunities and team teaching experiences. They maintain a strong visual connection and allow for improved group work and support student engagement. The rooms are light, climate controlled and invigorating.

This facility is built adjacent to Building Three which houses the existing Performing Arts program and auditorium. The new facility incorporates a large music classroom space, instrumental rooms, recording studio and drama studio that provides scope for dance into the future. An undercover lunch and recess area is also available recreationally for students. This area is to come online in Term 2 of 2012.

Works to improve the College grounds continue with additional seating for students located around the College, garden beds around the staff room and St Paul's technical wing are designed to improve the grounds, and the students' experience.

Goal 3.4: to provide opportunities for participation in activities that support family and student wellbeing.

Actions

- Engage guest speakers for the College community

Achievements

Through Leslie Jackson of the Ballarat & District Division of General Practice Inc, Damascus College was able to host Dr Michael Carr Gregg. Dr Carr Gregg is a media commentator and adolescent psychologist and he addressed the five greatest challenges for parents. Dr Carr Gregg spoke of the challenges of social media, the importance of sleep, risks for adolescent wellbeing, effective boundary setting and communication. The event was widely publicised and was supported by the CEO, Beyond Blue and the College. Approximately 400 people attended which made it a very successful event in the life of the College.

STUDENT ATTENDANCE RATE

93.6%

STUDENT SATISFACTION

The following activities would strongly suggest there is a high level of satisfaction among most students on the operation of the school. The SRC Insight data suggests that this is an area where more work would benefit;

- Involvement in extra curricular activities – debating, Performing Arts, Da Vinci Decathlon, Mind Matters, Camps, etc.
- Involvement in the “House” system across all year levels
- Excellent support for social justice activities
- Support of the Student Leadership structure in the College for School Leadership
- SRC Insight Data indicates that students feel safe at school

Leadership & Management

Goals & Intended Outcomes

Goal 4.1: to encourage all staff to share leadership in a supportive and transparent educational environment.

Actions

- Identify forms of staff professional development related to current understandings of leadership

Achievements

To support the process of improving teaching and learning coming out of the College review, a professional development session for Domain Team Leaders was run by Anne Doody. Anne is the Secondary Curriculum Consultant who works with the Catholic Education Office. She focussed on the importance of leadership rather than management and began a discussion of ways that Domain Team Leaders can be as effective as possible in enhancing their learning teams. Feedback was gained from the Domain leaders in ways that they could be supported to undertake their role.

Goal 4.2: to ensure that leadership at all levels in the College is active and supportive.

Actions

- Develop an appropriate protocol for written communication from the College that ensures staff are familiar with the protocol. For the purposes of this goal *written communication* refers only to external correspondence (letters and email) from all college members.
- Establish a Clear communication plan
- Role clarity of Leadership positions
- Review of the POL structure for 2013
- Review student leadership

Achievements

With the appointment of the Development Officer came the opportunity to establish clearer parameters around how communication is presented within and from the College. Corrina has been working to streamline communication procedures, for both internal and external communication and is in the process of developing a Communications Plan for the College.

In the second half of Yr 11 to address a perceived overlap between the work of House Leaders and School Coordinators a process was instigated to provide greater clarity in 2012 where school coordinators work more closely with staff and House Leaders assume all student management and pastoral issues.

The decision was taken to extend the existing leadership positions for a further 12 month period until the end of 2012. To enable a full and thorough investigation of the leadership structures to support Damascus as a College on a single campus a brief was constructed and tenders sought from consultants willing to work with the College on the development of a future leadership structure. Helen Goode and John Marks of Goode Consulting were the successful candidates. They began a process in Term 4 of collecting information on the existing structure and future possibilities by conducting interviews with relevant stakeholders. They presented their preliminary findings prior to the completion of the 2011 year.

A formal review of student leadership did not take place in 2011.

Goal 4.3: to provide programs that promote and affirm staff and student achievements

Actions

- Create formal processes which affirm staff/student achievements

Achievements

The review of the Awards and Achievements structure as per Goal 5.5 above support the strategic action here.

Goal 4.4: to develop a mentor and modelling program for leadership in the College.

Actions

- To improve professional learning and feedback.
- Strengthen the professional learning community's capabilities to deliver a dynamic contemporary curriculum.
- Build a culture of staff accountability to ensure student progress is improved, understood, tracked and evaluated.

Achievements

The College review identified accountability, appraisal and feedback as key strategies to improve learning and teaching across the College. These elements have been important components in the development of the brief for the leadership structure for the future to ensure that the College has the capacity to lead improvement in teacher performance.

Goal 4.5: to develop appropriate management and Governance structures.

Actions

Establish clear links between the Board & Strategic Planning Group

- Review the Damascus College Ballarat Inc constitution on behalf of the College Board
- Board sub-committees meeting regularly

Achievements

Board member and lawyer Brett Bryant looked at the constitution on behalf of the board and recommended that the constitution be fully examined by the board. The decision of the Sisters of Mercy of Ballarat East to enter the Institute of the Sisters of

Mercy of Australia and Papua New Guinea on December 18th 2011 requires a thorough review of the constitution in light of this. The decision to look at the constitution was deferred by the Board until 2012.

The subcommittees of the Board continue to provide a valuable interface between the strategic and operational elements of the College with subcommittees being chaired by members of the Board. The membership of each Damascus College Board Subcommittee for 2011 was:

<p><u>Catholic School Culture</u> Maureen MacPhail (chair) Bernard Bradbury Sr Liz Dowling Martin Ryan Fr Gerry Prunty Tony Haintz Matt Byrne Geoff Martin Mollie Cleary Brendan Maher Susan Mroczkowski</p>	<p><u>School Community</u> Ann Lacey(chair) Kathy Wood Margaret Chubb Kim Quinlan Gary Coulson Tony Haintz Gerard Macklin Yvette Nesire-McNeil Vicki Rowe Karen Simpkin Corrina Dichiera (August onwards)</p>	<p><u>Learning and Teaching</u> Kathy Wood (chair) Stephen Carey Marnie Cooper Gail Petrie Karolina Yeats Sr Marie Davey Carmel Russell Leon Beaton April Anstis</p>
<p><u>Student Wellbeing</u> Vin Dillon (chair) Joseph Cahir Jamie Tobin Gaye Carrigan Tracey O’Keefe Gerard Macklin Karen Simpkin Rebecca Petrie Fran McCarty</p>	<p><u>Leadership and Management</u> Peter Morris (chair) Vin Dillon Annette Foley Joe Cahir Sr Marie Davey Rod Mathews Karolina Yeats Alan Valpied Ian Walker</p>	<p><u>Finance</u> Bill Slatter (chair) Brett Bryant Brian Goble Paul Jans Matthew Byrne Maureen MacPhail Justin Marson</p>

The Principal met monthly with the Governors and Board executive on matters pertaining to College management, leadership and structures. This meeting usually took place a week prior to the board meeting.

Achievements

TEACHING STAFF ATTENDANCE RATE	91.9%
STAFF RETENTION RATE	87.36%

TEACHER QUALIFICATIONS	
DOCTORATE	%
MASTERS	17.28%
GRADUATE	43.21%
CERTIFICATE GRADUATE	1.23%
DEGREE BACHELOR	30.86%
DIPLOMA ADVANCED	2.47%
NO QUALIFICATIONS LISTED	4.95%

EXPENDITURE AND TEACHER PARTICIPATION IN PROFESSIONAL LEARNING	
NUMBER OF TEACHERS WHO PARTICIPATED IN PL	85
AVERAGE EXPENDITURE PER TEACHER FOR PL	\$2207.66

TEACHER SATISFACTION
<p>The following activities would strongly suggest there is a high level of satisfaction among staff on the operation of the school:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Willingness to participate in development activities and working parties to support the move to one campus • Commitment to curriculum development in all areas • Preparedness to engage with students in extra curricula activities – Sport, Performing Arts, Liturgical activities, Competitions, extension activities • Strong support for staff collegial activities – morning teas, celebrations, social activities

College Community

Goals & Intended Outcomes and Achievements

Goal 5.1: to promote the mission of the Church through building closer links between the College and parishes and parish schools.

Actions

- Visit Catholic Primary School Principals
- Invite Central Zone Catholic Primary Principals Network to meet at College
- Transition Co-ordinator develops transition program
- Offer annual transition visits to all feeder Catholic Primary Schools
- Community building between Damascus and Emmaus

Achievements

Report:

The Principal and Development Officer commenced visits to the Catholic feeder primary school principals in 2011. This initiative was welcomed by primary principals. The College has also extended an invitation to the Central Zone Primary Principals Network to meet at the College in 2012. The Damascus Transition Co-ordinator has developed the College's transition program which includes both visits for Grade 5 students to Damascus College as well as visits by the Transition Co-ordinator to schools with Grade 6 students enrolled at Damascus in the following year. In addition, an invitation for annual transition visits to the College for Grade 5 students has now been extended to all the Catholic feeder primary schools. There was also an increase in interaction between the Damascus College and Emmaus Catholic Primary School communities.

Goal 5.2: to become an environmentally sustainable College.

Actions

- Develop a Sustainability Policy
- Commit to staff time release for sustainability
- Apply for funding for solar panels
- Undertake Energy Audit
- Investigate College wide recycling program

Achievements

In 2011, the College developed a Sustainability Policy through the School Community sub-committee. This policy was accepted by the Board. In response to this policy, the College has allocated time release in the form of three periods per fortnight for a teacher to develop sustainability initiatives for the College in 2012.

In addition, the College applied for funding through the National Solar Schools Program for a 10kW roof mounted solar system. This funding was received and the installation

will take place in the first half of 2012. The College also undertook an Energy Audit through Central Victorian Solar Cities, a federal government initiative.

The Energy Audit assessed the College's annual electricity consumption as well as energy usage habits and made recommendations regarding ways to reduce energy consumption.

The College also investigated the cost of a recycling program to include paper, cardboard, plastic, glass and aluminium. This will be further investigated in 2012 by the Sustainability Committee.

Goal 5.3: to actively engage parents in the College community.

Actions

- TA and subject teacher interviews
- Meet the teacher BBQ
- Increase parent attendance at official school functions

Achievements

In 2011, parents were offered six opportunities to meet with either Teacher Advisors or subject teachers through the formal interview process. Parents of Year 7 students were also invited to a BBQ at the College in February to meet the teachers. Parents were invited to attend official functions such as College masses, Year 12 assembly and graduation dinner, year level information nights, subject selection evenings and sporting days. Parents are invited to participate in the College via a number of ways such as coaching sporting teams and preparation for school productions. Parents were also invited to sit on the board sub-committees and to participate in the School Review process.

Goal 5.4: to build a College community which gives a voice to all its members and is welcoming to visitors.

Actions

- Undertake school review and obtain feedback from staff, students and parents as part of the review.
- To support ongoing involvement of parents through the board sub-committees.

Achievements

In 2010, feedback from staff, students and parents was gathered via Insight SRC to inform the 2011 school review process. Working parties were established to investigate the data and in many cases other data was collected or sourced. The audit process involved feedback from all stakeholders as to the accuracy of the findings of the review process. The school review found that the College is at an important point in its evolution as it moves to address key learning and teaching innovations that will benefit from community involvement and feedback. Community partnerships have been strengthened by several strategies such as the TA program and the Board sub-committees. Each of these initiatives has given parents meaningful involvement in their children's learning and in the life of the College.

Goal 5.5: to increase commitment to and participation in College community events.

There was no specific strategy implemented in 2011 in relation to commitment and participation in College events, however the ongoing practice of inviting parents and other community members to events continued.

Goal 5.6: to promote Damascus College in the wider community as the school of 'first choice'.

Actions

- Appoint Development Officer
- Increase awareness of the College throughout the Ballarat community

Achievements

In 2011, the College appointed a Development Officer. The mandate of this position is to promote the College as a school of first choice to the wider Ballarat community. Since the appointment of the Development Officer, the College has enjoyed an increased media presence in the Ballarat media. The school has also actively promoted the Information Evenings and Open Mornings and the College more generally through other advertising and feature articles. The November 2011 Information Evening saw over 100 families visit the College.

As outlined in Goal 2.1 the visits to feeder Catholic Primary Schools has been with the strategic intention of increasing Primary School Principal's awareness of the offerings of Damascus College.

The College has also dedicated time and energy to developing and implementing a College marketing and communications plan, via the role of the Development Officer. Work has also been undertaken in regards to defining the College "brand".

PARENT SATISFACTION

The following activities would strongly suggest there is a high level of satisfaction among parents on the operation of the school:

Parents:

- Attendance at "Meet the Teachers" evenings at the beginning of the year
- Attendance at information sessions for new enrolments
- Participation with their sons/daughters in Parent/Student/Teacher interviews
- Willingness to communicate with staff to enhance student behaviour and outcomes
- Insight SRC Data
- Involvement of parents in sub-committees of the Damascus College Ballarat Board

Financial Performance

REPORTING FRAMEWORK	\$
Recurrent income	
School fees	3,619,488.00
Other fee income	25,720
Private income	500,999
State government recurrent grants	2,147,786
Australian government recurrent grants	7,260,089
Total recurrent income	13,554,082
Recurrent Expenditure	
Salaries; allowances and related expenses	9,381,185
Non salary expenses	3,673,037
Total recurrent expenditure	13,054,222
Capital income and expenditure	
Government capital grants	776,141
Capital fees and levies	327,200
Other capital income	
Total capital income	1,103,341
Total capital expenditure	3,121,902
Loans (includes refundable enrolment deposits and recurrent, capital and bridging loans)	
Total opening balance	3,613,540
Total closing balance	4,946,532

*Note that the information provided above does not include the following items:
 System levies charged to individual schools, intra-systemic transfers and diocesan supplementary capital fund (SCF) supported borrowings for primary schools. The information provided is not comparable with other educational sectors. The Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) is in the process of reviewing the Financial Questionnaire (FQ) during 2010 that may ultimately change the method of reporting these exclusions. This VRQA template is not comparable to the ACARA school-level income reporting requirements which are to be reported on the MySchool website later this year. ACARA school level reporting requirements will require system level income from Government grants and some private income to be allocated by school. This will be a small adjustment in relation to the total level of school resources. At this stage, recurrent income from Government sources, school generated income and capital expenditure are to be reported by schools. Additionally when assessing the private income of the school include both recurrent and capital school fees.*

Future Directions

The College review of 2011 has provided impetus for many areas of improvement within the College's strategic direction, high within those priorities is a commitment to improve student engagement through enhanced learning and teaching. Equally high within the priorities is the continued focus on building the profile and understanding of our Catholic Identity. These areas are important considerations for the leadership team when addressing the 2012 strategic planning. Maintaining the high levels of student care and wellbeing will be important in bringing these about.