

PILGRIM LEARNING COMMUNITY

Context:

Pilgrim Learning Community, as part of the Network for Christian Formation, seeks to inform and deepen the faith of lay members of this Synod. Pilgrim has focused upon biblical and theological education in the period since last Synod and has also supported and networked with a number of other initiatives. Pilgrim staff have advocated for the *Together on the way, enriching community* process as well as participating in Synod projects such as the Review of the ministry of Pastor and Assembly projects relating to its membership of the Ministerial Education Commission (MEC).

Responses to our Priority Directions since last Synod	Working towards our Priority Directions in the future
<i>Enabling a demonstrated commitment to the shared call and vision</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrim staff have participated in the development and editing of a series of bible studies for the observance of the 35th anniversary of the Uniting Church in Australia • Working 'on the ground', as staff have been, our view is that the uptake of the <i>Together on the way, enriching community</i> process is 'patchy' across congregations, presbyteries and even within congregations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrim will seek to incorporate more elements of the <i>Together on the way, enriching community</i> process into its educational programs to assist participants to further understand and commit to discipleship and mission.
<i>Promoting a discipline prayer and spirituality</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrim has addressed corporate prayer in the context of its educational programs particularly focused upon public worship. • Pilgrim has undertaken initial research around the development of a Prayer Resource as indicated in the <i>Together on the way, enriching community</i> recommendations • A Presbytery Prayer Retreat has been conducted. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrim is exploring the relevance of offering Prayer Retreat Leader training for interested persons within the Synod.
<i>Developing sustainable mission oriented organisations</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pilgrim has been involved in a range of meetings and workshops in relation to the development of the Synod Support Services concept • Pilgrim has actively participated in the Board of Christian Formation strategic review and planning process and is looking to the outcomes of this process as Trinity Theological College and Pilgrim are amalgamated to form a new entity focusing on education for all in the Synod. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In these change processes, Pilgrim will advocate for whole of Synod mechanisms to foster a more critically informed laity who have a deepened understanding of and a deepened faithful response to the gospel.

Facilitating renewal of leadership for the mission of the Church

- This is the major area of impact for Pilgrim in terms of its philosophy and its programs:
- As part of the Network for Christian Formation, Pilgrim owes a debt to Presbytery personnel, Trinity and Synod staff for their willingness to partner with us in the education programs developed and implemented in the period 2008 to the current day.
- It is clear that the initial, widespread need for Lay Preacher education programs has been met and this level of need is now reduced to maintenance levels.
- It is also clear that, within our congregations, there are members seeking further education in biblical and theological (particularly UCA perspectives) topics who do not wish to study towards Lay Preacher accreditation. The profile of our membership, and our experience suggests, that we have many who are capable of further study and challenge to deepen their faithful response to God's mission in the world.
- Previously, the size and remoteness of this Synod; conflicting time demands; and many other reasons have prevented members from accessing quality face to face programs that foster understanding and a deepened faith. Now, through internet learning, a very large number of programs are available on home computers.

- Whilst Pilgrim will continue to offer the courses currently available there will be a broadening of the base of educational programs offered:
- Pilgrim will expand its course offerings to reflect that *Together on the way, enriching community* vision with a focus upon:- biblical and theological studies for lay people, training for prayer retreat leadership, relational leadership programs for UCA leaders, and worship preparation and leadership in a UCA context.
- Pilgrim will address remoteness and isolation issues by gradually providing online learning for people who cannot attend face to face programs. These programs will not seek to compete with the range of programs available through the internet. Their focus will be upon providing resources and courses that are aligned with the UCA perspective and ethos

Engaging in opportunities for intentional, open community connections and partnership

- Pilgrim advocates engagement in community and ecumenical partnerships as part of its learning programs.

Key achievements/initiatives:

- Despite a complete turnover in staffing during 2012, Pilgrim continues to maintain high quality programs with intention to expand these offerings progressively during 2013 and 2014.
- Pilgrim staff are currently engaged in developing online courses and resources for use by the church.

- Pilgrim is networking nationally amongst the other Synods and is jointly working towards a national approach to Lay Preacher education.
- Pilgrim has been actively involved in conversations with Synod in relation to a range of ministry initiatives (Pastor, Period of Discernment, CALD communities) and how these may be best supported.

Challenges/risks as we progress:

Pilgrim staffing (full time Director, 0.6 part time Christian Education Lecturer, and Pilgrim Administrator 0.6) is minimal and the expansion of course offerings is not without its stress upon staff time and resourcing.

The amalgamation of Trinity and Pilgrim into a new educational entity is an exciting prospect. However a repeat of this Synod's history, in which lay education has been denuded, must be avoided.

Recommendations/issues to be addressed:

There are many talented and gifted educational leaders in the church in various roles at Synod, Presbytery and Congregational contexts. For many their focus is 'maintenance' - keeping the church going. How do we liberate them to authentically inhabit the teaching/learning role and lead us all to be a learning church focused on mission?

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TRINITY THEOLOGICAL COLLEGE

Context:

The College has continued through various processes of transition since the last Synod. The development of the Affiliation with ACU continues; the Affiliation was formally renewed at the beginning of 2012 for a further three years. Fine-tuning of the block of TTC-sponsored units in the ACU BTh continues, and will be further developed as part of a review of the BTh which will be conducted in the second half of 2013 (TTC is represented on the Review Committee). The process for having TTC-sponsored units in the ACU Masters programme has proved slower than hoped, but TTC faculty are now involved in teaching fully on-line units in the that programme.

In the middle of 2012 Rev Dr Neil Sims retired from full-time ministry and therefore concluded his placement at TTC after 16 years on the TTC Faculty. In anticipation of Neil's retirement a newly-named position, Director of Studies in Ministry, Mission and Leadership was developed by the BCF and advertised. Dr Aaron Ghiloni was appointed to the position, commencing in July 2013. This new position includes a specific mandate to develop teaching and research in Leadership. It also entails an expanded brief for developing the College's Field Education programme.

Malcolm Coombes, Jason LeCureux and Geoff Thompson have continued in their roles as Directors of Studies in, respectively, New Testament, Old Testament, and Systematic Theology. During the reporting period the College has been well served by sessional and occasional lecturers: Peter Lockhart; Wendi Sargeant, Lyn Burden, Di Bos, David MacGregor; Paul Walton, Don Whebell. Additionally, many ministers and members of the Uniting Church have contributed to the College programme as leaders/facilitators of Short Courses, Field Education Supervisors and members of Lay Consultation Teams. Rev Gerda Olafsen has continued to serve as the College Chaplain. The Librarian, Mrs Alethea Hubley, continues her oversight and development of the library with the aid of the Assistant Librarian, Vanessa Edwards. Alice Foo continues to provide outstanding administrative support to the Principal and Faculty.

During the reporting period 10 candidates (8 MOW; 2 Deacons) have received Certificates of Completion of Studies; one candidate (Deacon) resigned and one (MOW) transferred to another synod; the candidature of another (MOW) was terminated by the Presbytery. One Deacon Candidate transferred from Deacon to MOW. During that same period 8 candidates (7 MOW; 1 Deacon) have entered the College. At the time of writing there are 11 candidates engaged in formation (10 MOW and 1 Deacon), 1 (MOW) is on Leave of Absence. Two ministers have been referred to the College for academic studies by the Reception of Ministers Committee. Many other members of the Uniting Church, including those engaged in the POD, access the College programme either through formal academic study or the various Short Courses and Intensives open to the wider church.

Responses to our Vision since last Synod	Working towards our Vision in the future
<i>Theologically informed, creative and visionary in its leadership.</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of the integrated formation programme with clarification of formation goals and evaluation of their attainment • Incorporation of 'Leadership' into PD of new Director of Ministry, Mission and Leadership • Development of new academic unit in Leadership • Systematic programme of college conversations learning from and reflecting theologically with the leaders of the various parts of the UCA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing development and evaluation of current responses
<i>Working for Christian Unity</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Renewal of Affiliation with ACU and continued development of relationship with ACU Faculty. • TTC Faculty teaching in ACU Masters (fully on-line) units • Faculty involved in organisation and presentation at ANZATS (Australian and New Zealand Association of Theological Schools) national conference • Faculty involved in leadership of Brisbane Chapter of ANZATS fostering links between six theological colleges in Brisbane 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Exploring closer relationship with ACU Faculty and through possible combined Staff Retreat Days • Continued exploration of possible co-teaching of BTh units between TTC and ACU Faculty.
<i>Organised for mission</i>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development of Field Education programme intentionally seeking opportunities in pioneering ministries. • Creation of Faculty position in Apologetics and Evangelism 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Creative integration of Apologetics and Evangelism resources into the Formation programme and the development of this Faculty position as a resource for the whole church.

Key achievements/initiatives:

In response to a number of the current candidates already being in placement as Pastors and having already completed significant amounts of their academic formation by the time they have been accepted as candidates, the college has developed ways of appropriately adjusting formation requirements. Indications are that this scenario will become more rather than less likely and will be monitored carefully.

As a trial, and in full consultation with the relevant Presbytery, the College admitted two people to one semester of the Formation programme whilst they were still engaged in the POD and prior to their acceptance as candidates. This was undertaken at the students' own risk and implied nothing about their likely acceptance or otherwise as candidates. Upon their acceptance as candidates, this period of formation was credited to their required period of candidature.

In response to Priority Group D's report to the previous meeting of Synod, the College introduced a new academic unit on Preaching as a compulsory component of the Formation programme. Regular preaching by candidates at College chapel has also been introduced.

The library is expanding its uptake of e-books and e-journals thus making the library more accessible to the whole Queensland synod (Membership of the library is open to all members of the UCA).

Challenges/risks as we progress:

Presenting less as challenges, and more as opportunities, the College faces continuing transition with the departure of the current Principal and his replacement in that role by Malcolm Coombes. Further transition will include the appointment of new Faculty in the second half of 2013 to the vacant position in Systematic Theology and the new appointment in Apologetics and Evangelism. With these appointments there will have been an almost complete change in Faculty personnel in a period of three years. This is an exciting opportunity for the College and the Synod as new people and new ideas build on the College's existing foundations.

Through the Board TTC has engaged in conversations concerning the re-structuring of TTC and PLC. The opportunities presented through this for a more integrated approach to theological education in the Synod will see the present work of the College become even more accessible to the whole of the Queensland Synod.

Recommendations/issues to be addressed:

In due course the new Assembly Working Group on Education for Ministry will begin its work, replacing the present MEC and its national oversight of theological education. The exact implications of this development for theological education in the Synod are not yet known, but when they are they will need to be engaged by the College.

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