

# Ministry Council: Periodic External Review Follow-up Report

## St Augustine's College

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## Senior Reviewer's Follow-up Report to the May 2017 Periodic External Review

### Introduction

I was pleased to meet Principal Alan Gregory again, following the Periodic External Review in May 2017. A schedule of responses to the PER recommendations had been prepared and all relevant documents were made available to me via Moodle. The response demonstrates a considerable amount of work by the whole college including at the levels of governance.

The recommendations of the PER report are noted in **bold**; updates based on responses from St Augustine's College and discussed at our meeting are in regular type; followed in *italics* by the Senior Reviewer's concluding assessment of the implementation of each recommendation.

### Recommendation I

**The reviewers recommend that St Augustine's College initiate discussions with each of their partner dioceses**

- i. **to attain clarity about the requirements of each diocese for Reader and LLM training and the nature of the relationship between the College and the dioceses; and**
- ii. **to encourage their partner dioceses to make the partnerships more evident in their advertising.**

Prior to the PER St Augustine's College staff had met with their partner dioceses to discuss their requirements for Reader and LLM training. Further drafting and discussion has led to the signing of a service level agreement with each diocese which details the revised two-year program and the mutual responsibilities involved. There is now a common method of funding, although this is at a break-even level, with nothing for the college to invest in future development. The requirements of the college from the dioceses are now similar, resulting in a coherent approach during training for those in training for these ministries. Further enhancement of the Reader and LLM pathway is planned with a review of curriculum in the future which will again address the question of what are the essential requirements for Reader and LLM training.

Following the PER report, a number of new initiatives have been undertaken to raise the profile of St Augustine's within the dioceses:

- an 'honorary fellows' program that provides the college with a group of influential ambassadors in the Southeast;
- enlarging the list of those who receive college promotional material to include suffragans, area bishops, and archdeacons;
- the workshop and short course program are now advertised throughout the dioceses, as well as in number of parish churches;

- a link to our website is now available on sponsoring dioceses' websites, although one still refers to the older body SEITE;
- holding 'Theological Education Sundays' in parishes;
- a regular Newsletter, distributed to diocesan offices, as well as alumni, etc.

The effectiveness of these initiatives will be reviewed over the next 12 months to improve the information that appears on diocesan websites and work will be undertaken with the new 'Friends of St Augustine' association to find additional avenues for publicity and recruitment.

*Recommendation implemented as fully as possible, with some areas showing further development beyond what was asked, no further action.*

## **Recommendation 2**

**That the core staff consider how home parish ministers can be better briefed and mentored as they support student formation, encouraging awareness of and engagement with the resources provided by the College.**

The handbooks for Ministry Facilitators (OMs) and Supervising Ministers (LLMs) have now been revised, extended, and clarified and were made available to the Senior Reviewer. The annual briefing and induction meetings have received a thorough reworking and this has resulted in positive feedback. Staff observed that the time that the meeting gave for Training Incumbents to share good practice was highly valued. The presentation PowerPoint was also made available and had the appearance of being both thorough and clear. The Tutor for Mission has begun a program of visiting placement parishes and maintaining contact with their clergy. Those ministers unable to attend the annual meetings are contacted and given an opportunity to ask questions and review presentation materials.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action.*

## **Recommendation 3**

**We recommend that the new Council of Reference should include representation from staff of the TEI in addition to the Principal as well as a student(s) so that the internal voice of the TEI is heard.**

The new governance structure, agreed by Council in June 2018, provides for representation as recommended. The structure is now operational with a new chair of the Board of Trustees.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action.*

## **Recommendation 4**

**We recommend**

- i. **that additional experience of business management is sought when appointing new trustees; and**

- ii. **that there should be an expectation that trustees would occasionally attend teaching days and part of the residential weekends as an aspect of their training and engagement in the workings of the TEI.**

The Board of Management (effectively the Executive Board in new structure) has agreed to both these recommendations. New trustees and members of the Council of Reference will be nominated and elected or appointed by December 2018. The Principal will present and discuss proposals for the suggested involvement of both trustees and members of the Council of Reference at the Autumn meetings of the new Executive Board and the Council of Reference. A date is being sought for the latter where full attendance can reasonably be expected and the question 'how will you familiarise yourself with the college' will be explored. A new treasurer, with financial and fundraising expertise is being actively sought. Proposals are being made to the student representatives to ensure a high level of consultation between representatives and the student body. An annual, anonymous questionnaire will also seek student opinion on a wide range of aspects of college life, ranging from the quality of food and accommodation at residential weekends to the quality of supervision and teaching and the meeting of marking deadlines.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

## **Recommendation 5**

### **We recommend that**

- i. **a section is added to the business plan describing the potential competition to the TEI and factors that could impact on future student numbers of the TEI**
- ii. **the marketing strategy shows a list of measurable actions related to the recruitment particularly of OM and Reader students.**
- iii. **a SWOT analysis be included within the Business Plan that addresses financial risks to the TEI.**

The business plan is currently under revision and, with the suggested additions, will be submitted to the trustees at the beginning of the Autumn term 2018. The issue of competition also appears on the risk register.

A marketing group has been brought together by the Principal and reports to the Board of Trustees. A formal strategy paper will be received by the Trustees in late 2018. However, since the PER, the content and form of our Open Evenings and In Residence events has been revised; the college has started to invite prospective students to major college events such as the Residential Week symposium and staff and students have participated in more diocesan vocational events. Student presence has been found to be particularly valuable. From conversations with prospective students, the initiatives appear fruitful. During 2017-18, a record number of OM enquiries was received, while independent applications continued to increase. For the coming year, meetings with Assistant Diocesan Directors of Ordinands have been set up for the first time, it having been discovered that vocational guidance at this level is not always accurate as regards the college's programs. Reader recruitment is undertaken by the dioceses, but the college has offered to help, both with publicising Reader ministry and meeting with Reader candidates.

SWOT analyses, both for the area of finance and for the area of recruitment have been undertaken, and the results were shared with me.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

### **Recommendation 6**

**We recommend that**

- i. the risks indicated in the Risk Register are prioritised through an assessment of the likelihood and severity of each risk. This may be quantified.**
- ii. given the critical role of student recruitment on the financial viability of the TEI, there should be a statement of the level of risk associated with this and associated mitigations.**
- iii. potential changes in funding for students should be identified as risks and need to be mitigated against in the business plan.**

The Risk Register has now revised in compliance with the above and was presented to the Board of Management in June 2018 and also made available to me.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

### **Recommendation 7**

**We recommend**

- i. that St Augustine's put some thought into how the diversity and generosity of associate lecturers might be more evident to students to provide an even wider base of those who are modelling respectful diversity and theological reflection**

The college has enlisted the help of Bishop Karowei (Woolwich) to help identify BME scholars interested in teaching as associates. Beyond that, staff and trustees have committed to a continuing effort in this area.

- ii. that the intention to call regular bi-annual meetings of these tutors and a training day is followed through, making attendance at most meetings an integral part of being recognised as an associate lecturer.**

This was introduced in current academic year. There have been two meeting so far which have included a discussion on an ethos for teaching and marking. Tutors are now clearer about how to address changes in the curriculum within modules with the convening tutor and about how to develop an ethos where the academic is seen as part of ministerial formation.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

### **Recommendation 8**

**We recommend**

- i. whilst recognising that not all of these variables are within the control of the college, that thought is put into how the commendable recent changes to Reader training might be built upon (particularly with a view to national changes and development of**

**LLM roles) in a way that reflects the sense of generous, respectful, rooted community that we experienced in the OM formational pathways;**

It seemed to the staff and Principal that this was best tackled in conversation with the dioceses, so over the next year, the relevant discussions with Directors of Reader Training will be initiated. A new induction day engages the topic of 'unconscious bias'. While this mostly concerns ethnicity, gender, etc., it is also an opportunity to discuss differences of program within the college and the attitudes that attend them. In particular, this has given a new sensitivity to the way students place themselves in the classroom, choose their huddling companions during breaks, and speak freely in discussion. Along these lines, in 2018-19, practices of inclusion will be discussed with the associate tutors and simple strategies will be agreed to ensure that all students are properly brought into the learning community of the classroom.

The college is to be commended for its 'Covenant for Conversation', discussed by students at the onset of their training, to enhance inclusion and respect for difference at all levels of college life. I have asked that this is made more widely available by publication on the St Augustine's web-site.

- ii. **that a communications policy is developed to ensure that students not involved in residential weekends receive all essential information and communication in order that they are included within the wider community and that they are encouraged, more effectively, to access this.**

This recommendation refers to a complaint raised by Chichester LLM students, some of whom did not undertake a residential weekend. That program arrangement no longer applies and all LLM students now attend residential weekends. Throughout the college, all materials are available to all who need them.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

## **Recommendation 9**

### **We recommend**

- i. **that a single document is provided as a placement handbook for students and placement supervisors, including expectations and expected opportunities that will enable the students to make the most of feedback offered.**

The placement handbook is in its final stages and will be issued in October 2018. A late draft was made available to me.

- ii. **that a review of the worship policy takes place to enable students' traditions and experience to be better represented and celebrated by all.**

This is now complete and a set program of tradition variations implemented. The Principal reports that this has 'resulted in much more imaginative and less nervous worship planning'.

- iii. **that a system of offering students clearer and more robust feedback on worship they have led in a college setting is developed.**

The college now has a system whereby members of the teaching staff oversee a half-term of worship and offer feedback each week to those who led the service, as well as a general feedback session at the end of their duty. This system is made clear to students, through the worship handbook and rotas.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

### **Recommendation 10**

**We recommend that St Augustine's creates a comparable method of mapping formation criteria for LLM and OM candidates. OM criteria are differently mapped resulting in the appearance of a more robust process. This may simply be an issue of documentation which could be improved if the Reader mapping document mirrored that for OM candidates.**

This has not yet been completed but is planned for completion before end of 2018 and the Principal has agreed to send a copy to me.

*Implementation of recommendation planned, no further action*

### **Recommendation 11**

**We recommend that the reflections on the new tutorial group policy which were communicated to us in a meeting with core staff are built upon. This would involve adding in one or two personal meetings with all students each year and seeking an evaluation by staff part way through the year and at the end of the 2017/18 academic year.**

The college is now compliant with this recommendation.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

### **Recommendation 12**

**We recommend that St Augustine's should review the provision of library and electronic resources to ensure this is effective for students, specifically exploring whether alternative arrangements are possible for the Southwark library.**

In August 2018, the Southwark collection moved from the Cathedral to Trinity House. The library is now available to students six days a week rather than for 6 hours. This brings the Southwark resources much more into line with the main library at West Malling. The latter continues to be re-catalogued and a fund-raising program has been initiated for the continuing development of both collections.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

### **Recommendation 13**

**We recommend that St Augustine's should take a more proactive approach to setting assignment deadlines and to monitoring the return of feedback to ensure that, wherever reasonably possible, turnaround times are met.**

Assignment deadlines are now discussed at teaching team meetings, checking for known obstacles that could impede timely marking. The Principal reports that this year has seen a marked improvement in this and, if a marking deadline cannot be met, students are informed in advance (see below). In the light of the formation of the new Council of Reference and the presence of students on this, concerns of students in reference to marking are more easily heard.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

#### **Recommendation 14**

**We recommend that St Augustine's should focus on clearly communicating to students (a) the dates when they can expect to receive feedback on each assignment (e.g., by writing those dates into the module timetable); (b) how the feedback on one assignment might relate (or not relate) to the preparation of the next assignment; and (c) when any deadline is going to be missed, provide clear information about the reasons why and communicate a new date by which the feedback will be received.**

Part b. of this recommendation had been addressed in the meetings with associate tutors, a. is now on Moodle and c. also addressed, when necessary, through Moodle.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

#### **Recommendation 15**

**We recommend that St Augustine's should keep the overall workload and the hours for each individual module under review, to ensure that overall expectations are reasonable, and information about the load for each module accurate.**

This has been raised, with both core and associate tutors, noting the need to keep bibliographical and preparatory reading expectations reasonable and to avoid overcomplicating assignments. The college has also supported our external examiner's decision to press Durham for less complex and more realistic learning outcomes for individual modules.

*Recommendation fully implemented, no further action*

**The Rev'd Lesley Bentley, Senior Reviewer**

**18<sup>th</sup> October 2018**