



PRINCIPAL'S REPORT

TO THE

SCHOOL COMMUNITY

FOR THE

2010

ACADEMIC YEAR

COVENANT COLLEGE, TUGGERANONG, A.C.T. ASSOCIATION INC.

PRINCIPAL'S REPORT to the COLLEGE COMMUNITY for the 2010 ACADEMIC YEAR

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Covenant College's Annual Report for the 2010 academic year.

Our theme in 2010 was *Building Up*. The Term Verse to Remember for each term was:

Term 1: *"But you, dear friends, building yourselves up on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Spirit, keep yourselves in the love of God looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life."* (Jude 1:20-21)

Term 2: *"But those who wait on the LORD shall renew their strength; they shall mount up with wings like eagles, they shall run and not be weary, they shall walk and not faint."* (Isaiah 40:31)

Term 3: *"Let no corrupt word proceed out of your mouth, but what is good for necessary edification, that it may impart grace to the hearers."* (Ephesians 4:29)

Term 4: *"His divine power has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious promises, that through these you may be partakers of the divine nature."* (2 Peter 1: 3-4b)

2010 was a year that gladdened the heart of the College community as we saw God answer our prayers for an increase in student numbers. While challenges always remain for our College community to work to deliver a truly Christian education built on, and delivered within, a Christian world and life view, we were mightily blessed physically, financially and spiritually by our gracious God. We certainly had many opportunities to testify to God's goodness.

The following report highlights 'major' activities that happened in the College. These activities plus 'minor' events (not noted here) were reported to the College community via *the Communicator*, the College website and student assemblies during the year. I am thankful to the various members of our dedicated College community and the wider community who contributed so selflessly during the year. Certainly we give praise to our wonderful God for His provision for us as we desire to see children grow up in His ways for His glory.

COUNCIL

In 2010, while Mrs Lyn Coleman took a well-earned sabbatical after many years of faithful service, we were pleased to announce the addition of two new members, Mrs Joanne Elliott and Mr David Houghton.

The Chairman's report gives a clear outline of the work faithfully carried out by Council and its Committees on behalf of the Association. Mr Jeff Buckpitt has worked tirelessly as Chairman, keeping members focussed on completing the many and varied agenda items. This policy-making body of the College ministry has sought to work for the good of our parents and their children to the glory of our Lord and Saviour. Please remember them in your prayers as they labour in the Lord's Name. Council have been most supportive of me in my role of Principal and for that I am most grateful.

Committees

Please pray for those who serve us so generously with their time and talents on various committees. We would be pleased to welcome others to join in the important committee stage of Council's work. It is both satisfying and a way to keep well informed of what is happening in the College.

STAFF

God continues to bless the College with committed teaching and non-teaching staff – all of whom are ably gifted Christian men and women. As always, we are thankful for God's provision of staff to help fulfil the aims of the Association in the classroom and the maintenance of a safe and caring learning environment.

In 2010 Covenant College employed 20 (15.0 FTE) members of staff. The dedication of the 15 members of our teaching staff was evident in that staff absences represented less than 1.4% of total days worked.

All teaching staff members were deemed qualified for their positions, satisfying the current registration staffing requirements of the ACT Department of Education. The varying qualifications of our staff include Masters Degrees in Art and Business, Bachelors Degrees in Education, Art and Science and Graduate Diplomas in Education.

After resigning at the end of 2009, Mr Greg Brien returned to continue his work as Chaplain. We also welcomed back Miss Briony Kaczmarek for the first semester before we again farewelled her as she went to work in Uganda at the Sonrise Childrens School and Orphanage. With her departure, Mr Brien again graced the classrooms for the second semester and Mrs Helen Crow also helped fill the gap.

Mr Jared Wormald (Science, PDHPE/Sport, Outdoor Education), was farewelled as he moved to Sydney with his family at year's end.

Despite the mid-year changes, and the compositing of some classes, teachers were again able to concentrate on their areas of knowledge and expertise thereby helping to fulfil the aims of the Association in the classroom. As always, we are thankful for God's provision of staff who serve at the College.

Professional Development Weeks

January (25, 27-29):

- Rev Barry James (CRCA – Canberra), Rev Des Daniels (Brindabella Baptist) led staff in the devotions over the four days.
- The local Fire brigade presented two sessions on "*Fire Safety*".
- Mr Jeff Buckpitt presented a session on "*Risk Management*".
- Ms Kellie Britnall of ACMA was the keynote speaker and presented four sessions on "*Cybersafety Outreach*".
- A course was presented by Insitec on "*ICT Developments*".
- A first aid CPR refresher course was completed by all staff.
- Mr Jeff Buckpitt addressed Staff on issues facing Council.
- Mr Chris Butler organised a Staff / Council Breakfast.
- In-house orientation was conducted by the Principal and Bursar.

July (12-16):

- Rev Peter Frogley (Bethesda – Ginninderra Christian Church), Rev Peter Gadsby (CRCA – Canberra) led staff in the devotions over the five days.
- Sessions for the week were given over to Curriculum Planning.
- Mr Jeff Buckpitt addressed Staff on issues facing Council.
- Mr Butler organised a Staff / Council Breakfast.
- In-house orientation was conducted by the Principal and Bursar.

Staff devotions have continued each morning and a number of our staff have taken their turn in leading this precious time of fellowship. Staff members continue to remember each other and a number of our families and their needs in prayer each morning.

STUDENTS

Last year the College's enrolments were 139 students at the August census date (including 8 overseas students) which was a small increase over the previous year's enrolments. We value the prayers of our community as we seek God's blessing through the growth of enrolments.

The student average attendance rate was 94.6%. The rate in Infants/Primary was 94.9% and in Secondary 94.2%.

Students with special needs have been well catered for with the mandatory process of SCAN identifying those most in need of assistance. The Study Skills elective option (limited to six students) continues for students needing special help to organise their workload and ensure assignments are completed by the due date. Modified levels of work have been applied to students in a number of subjects. The ESL course developed and implemented for students from overseas has proved beneficial and helped inform the tracking of students in their academic progress. The number of full-time overseas students has reduced during the course of the year. Tracking of all students has been maintained and students with special needs identified and helped.

Student Activities

The annual Foundation Day Service was held with the Rev Barry James from the Canberra Reformed Church, Rivett, speaking to the assembled congregation. His topic was "*Two Ways to Build*".

A three day camp for all Secondary students at Wedderburn Christian Campsite, Wedderburn, NSW (near Campbelltown) was thoroughly enjoyed by all. Students are already looking forward to next year's camp which will most likely be held at a new venue on the coast.

The improved delivery of ICT in the College saw the engagement of local company Insitec to provide industry experts in ICT to help deliver the College's Year 8 and Years 9/10 (elective) Computing courses in 2010. This proved a popular move both among parents and students.

Over \$2,700 was raised for our Care Ministries during 2010. This is important in understanding the Biblical pattern for supporting God's kingdom work. Students participated in Gifts Days and Treats Days which helped raise the funds for distribution of Bibles to countries around the world through the Bible League.

Other important student activities were the:

- Receiving of New Testaments by Year 7 students from a Gideons representative.

- Secondary students helping out in the K/1 classroom;
- the ACT Fire Brigade's annual visit to K/1;
- Infants/Primary students involvement in World Maths Day and National Literacy and Numeracy Day;
- Year 6 excursion to Sydney;
- Year 6 Dinner;
- Year 10 Graduation Dinner; and
- Year 10 Work Experience, participation in College, MPSSA, SSSA and ACT swimming, cross country, and athletics carnivals.

Taylor, Livingstone and Carey houses competed against each other in the annual Swimming, Cross Country and Athletics Carnivals. Livingstone was triumphant in all three carnivals – a first for the House.

Many students in both Primary and Secondary were involved in zone and ACT carnivals throughout the year. Students were also involved in gala days for sports such as soccer, softball, and Oztag and cultural pursuits such as chess, choir and band.

Swimming lessons were held over a two week period in Term 1 for Years K-6. This is an annual event which has excellent outcomes for the students.

Extra-curricular activities in chess, choir, volleyball and football were held at regular periods for interested students. Students were notified of trials for MPSSA and SSSA teams to compete at ACT carnivals/competitions

A number of students excelled in English, Maths, Science, Spelling and Writing competitions conducted by the University of NSW.

Students in the College Concert Band played some wonderful pieces for us throughout the year. They are a most talented group playing with aplomb at the Evening of the Arts, the Spring Fair and the Thanksgiving Evening. The College choir and the Years 9-10 music ensemble also gave us some special performances throughout the year at various College activities.

Footsteps to Fame, a performing arts talent quest, was a new addition to the Music calendar. It was very well received by the College community.

The annual *Evening of the Arts* was held at the CCC auditorium in Monash. Many and varied were the items with individuals, ensemble groups, soloists, choirs, and the College Concert Band all making an appearance. Not to be outdone, staff also made appearances in a couple of staff only items! Those in attendance were appreciative of the calibre of those who participated. Mrs Lyons brought it all together for us – brilliantly organised.

The annual bush dance was held at the Gordon Primary School hall. It was another great evening of fellowship which was thoroughly enjoyed by all.

The Thanksgiving Evening proved a fitting climax to the year, with students, parents, and staff members gathering together to give praise to Almighty God for His provision of all our needs in 2010. We appreciated the messages from Rev. Greg Brien (College Chaplain) and Mr Jeff Buckpitt (Council Chairman). Particular highlights were the items presented by a number of our students under the direction of our Music teacher, Mrs Wendy Lyons and the College Concert Band.

Students were aptly rewarded for work throughout the year with the following awards given out on Thanksgiving Evening: Principal's Award, College Dux, Sportsmanship Award, Director of Studies – Secondary Award, and the Director of Studies – Primary Award. Class awards were also awarded for Christian Character, High Academic Achievement, Academic Improvement, and Sportsmanship.

The 2010 edition of the College yearbook, *Collage*, again proved what an excellent record of College events it is. With much of the work and commentary on events by students, it gives parents a first-hand account of what College life is all about. A special thank to Mrs Coleman for her efforts in compiling this wonderful record.

Houses and leadership came under the spotlight at the end of 2009 with proposed changes discussed and finalised ready for the beginning of 2010. Morning devotions in Secondary were organised along House lines with a head of House appointed to oversee the activities of each House group. House Captains were appointed at a special College assembly with parents in attendance.

Benchmarking

Students in Years 3, 5, 7 & 9 sat the NAPLAN national benchmarking tests in Numeracy, Reading and Writing. The following table compares these results, showing the percentage of our students who scored results at or above the national benchmarks.

From the tables you will note that the College has achieved very good results.

However, as with any statistical analysis, there are many variables that can affect the results and the result of any student in any given year eg. being recently arrived from overseas with minimal English skills; having had a death in the family. League tables, made from such information by the media, do not take into account such variables nor do they attest to the faith-based nature of many schools where the teaching of certain values is of the highest priority. While they may laud a school with one cohort of students, they might just as easily do the opposite with another.

	Reading			Writing		
	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010
Year 3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Year 5	100%	92% (11/12)	100%	100%	100%	100%
Year 7	100%	100%	100%	88% (15/17)	100%	100%
Year 9	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%

	Spelling			Punctuation & Grammar		
	2008	2009	2010	2008	2009	2010
Year 3	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	94% (15/16)
Year 5	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Year 7	94% (16/17)	100%	100%	94% (16/17)	100%	100%
Year 9	100%	100%	100%	100%	93% (14/15)	100%

	Numeracy		
	2008	2009	2010
Year 3	100%	100%	100%
Year 5	100%	92% (11/12)	100%
Year 7	100%	100%	100%
Year 9	100%	100%	100%

While the College has excelled academically, it is not the most important thing. The College's purpose, as stated in our Constitution, "to encourage ... the pursuit and dissemination of true Christian scholarship in all areas of the school's curriculum and interest, so as to establish a truly Christian world view in all disciplines of life," is what matters. 'Our Covenant' adds to this:

- (i) by precept and example, to confront students with the claims of the Lord Jesus Christ so that in God's appointed time, they might come to exhibit the fruits of true repentance and faith in Christ, confessing Him as Lord and Saviour;
- (ii) to train students in the beginning of Christian scholarship and seek to give incentive for their continuing development as Christian scholars;
- (iii) to develop and apply principles that set the Christian ideals of citizenship, godly character and the spirit of reverence, so that personality and sense of responsibility are developed together in the entire life of the scholar; and
- (iv) to this end students will be encouraged to achieve the highest standard consistent with their capabilities in all their activities pursuing excellence for the glory of God."

Might we be ever grateful to our wonderful Heavenly Father for the opportunity He has provided through the College to grow our children in His ways.

PARENTS

A faithful group of parents has met each Tuesday to pray for the needs of the College from 9.00am to 9.45am. Please consider joining us for this vital ministry. There is always room for more. A prayer breakfast was also held each term.

A *Spalding Course for Parents* was held over three evenings in March led by Miss Liberty Venning, the K/1 teacher. It proved most beneficial for the good number in attendance.

Many parents, staff and students were involved in what was a spectacular success – the Spring Fair, which has now become an annual event on the College calendar. Every stall had quality items and good service with little left over. Everyone was encouraged and, with over \$8,000 raised, it was agreed that proceeds of the Fair would be used to buy more resources for the Library.

The Kindergarten Orientation morning was held on Tuesday, 2 November. This proved a worthwhile time for parents and prospective students alike. The follow-up picnic at the end of January near Lake Tuggeranong also helped to cement relationships of parents and students as the new year approached.

Parent/teacher interviews were held in Term 1, Week 6 and Term 3, Week 3. An interim report was forwarded to parents prior to these special evenings. The report proved a helpful basis upon which discussion could take place. Semester reports were distributed to parents at the end of Semesters 1 and 2. The reports are 'plain English' report cards with A – E grades.

Weekly communication with parents is via the *Communicator*. It is distributed through the eldest child each Thursday afternoon. The *Communicator* is available via email to parents who prefer to have it sent in this form. Communication by parents with staff via email is a growing phenomenon and the posting of homework and assignments on the website is greatly appreciated by parents.

GENERAL

With funds from the Australian Government Rev Greg Brien continued to serve as the College Chaplain for two days per week. The benefit of the chaplaincy service is acknowledged by parents, teachers and students. We are thankful for the work Rev Brien carries out amongst us – especially the Chaplain's Breakfasts held each fortnight for different grades.

Surveys

Annual surveys of parents, staff and students (Yrs 3-10) as to their views on the performance of the College in 2010 were again undertaken. My thanks to the Chairman of Council for his work in collating the final statistical information presented below.

Parents

We are very appreciative of the meaningful input by parents and the level of satisfaction with the College expressed by parents. It is worth noting here that responses provided in the parent survey were once again very positive with the highest scores being given to the questions about willingness to recommend the school to other Christian families (average score of 4.81 on a rating scale of 1 to 5) and satisfaction with educational outcomes (4.70).

Staff

Responses to the question "Overall I am satisfied with my employment at the College" showed an overall average rating of 4.77. Areas of greatest strength noted by staff were "College admin staff are friendly and helpful" (4.92) and "the education offered by the College is value for money" (4.92).

Students

In response to the question "I am generally satisfied with my school and the quality of education I receive", the average score was 4.07.

Along with other scores (refer Chairman's report) these results suggest that the College is doing well in meeting most parent, staff and student expectations in providing a Christ centred, high quality education in a safe and caring environment.

An Open Day and Information Evening were held in May, with further information distributed at the Spring Fair in October.

CONCLUSION

2010 was a year of *Building Up* – just what we wanted as our theme suggested. The Council and College executive is looking to build on the positive aspects of the growth we've experienced in 2010 and I pray the changes will prove as exciting for all as I believe they are in anticipation. The Council has led us faithfully with a desire to honour God in all its deliberations and decisions. We look forward with confidence to 2010.

A special thank you must go to my friends and brothers in Christ, Mr Tim James (Bursar), Mr Chris Butler (Director of Studies – Secondary) and Mr Daniel van Bentum (Director of Studies – Primary) for their support and encouragement. Thank you also to the families of staff members for their understanding and support along with Association members, parents, and churches whose help cannot be overstated.

God continues to lead us now in 2011 as we build on the work completed in 2010. I look forward with anticipation to seeing God continue His wonderful blessings on our ministry as we take up the theme for this year, *Following Jesus*.

Yours in Christ

Donald R. Surtees
Principal
22 March 2011