



## **STRATEGIC PLAN 2017-2019**

### **Process**

This Strategic Plan 2017-2019 was developed through a process of consultation with the Eastern College Australia Governance Board, the Eastern College Australia Academic Board, the Dean of Learning, Teaching and Research, the Dean of Academic Administration, the Chief Operations Officer, the SRC, and the Learning, Teaching and Research Committee of the Academic Board. The Plan incorporates responses to the numerous surveys conducted among staff and students.

### **Communication**

The Strategic Plan Goals will be communicated to stakeholders by placement on the Eastern College Australia website. Eastern College faculty, staff and the SRC will receive emailed copies.

## **1 BACKGROUND**

### **1.1 HISTORY**

Tabor College Victoria commenced in 1988 led by Dr Ian Richardson. It operated as a separate entity to Tabor Adelaide but used a common curriculum. The College grew rapidly from approximately 60 students in 1991 to over 500 students in 2005. A non-residential college, students mostly studied part-time and took advantage of evening and weekend classes while they worked. Faculty and staff numbers grew along with library and physical resources. New programs were added as government accreditation was received and in 2005 Tabor Victoria became a Higher Education Provider.

From humble beginnings, Tabor College (Victoria) Inc. has grown into a College that embraces a wide range of Christian traditions and teaches a variety of disciples at Vocational Education Training (VET) and Higher Education levels. The College has matured over time into an organisation that embraces and interprets contemporary cultural and spiritual trends whilst retaining integrity with Christian doctrinal truths.

The College community is vibrant, committed to life-embracing scholarship as an act of worship. It aspires to be creative and influential as thought leaders and practitioners who engage the church, society and the marketplace. Through its teaching and learning activities, the College seeks to empower, transform and equip people for Christian life. In embracing the themes of academic excellence and spiritual relevance, the College seeks to graduate people who are spiritually integrated, resourceful and enterprising. Graduates now serve in a wide range of areas across the world utilising a diversity of skills as they contribute to society and the church.

The College operated in various locations till the end of 1992. In 1993 the College relocated to a one-hectare site in North Ringwood. These premises were leased and the College conducted its operations at this venue for 17 years. Towards the close of 2010, the lease on the North Ringwood property lapsed and the College relocated to Jacksons Road, Mulgrave at the invitation of the then Churches of Christ Theological College (now Stirling College) to share its property and resources. Normal classroom deliveries commenced at the new location in Semester One 2011.

In August 2015, Tabor College Victoria changed its name to Eastern College Australia.

## **1.2 STATEMENT OF FAITH**

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### ***1. The Godhead - Trinity in Unity***

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There is one true eternal God, existing eternally in the three Persons, of the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit; the Maker and Preserver of all things, visible and invisible. He is infinite in power, wisdom and goodness.

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### ***2. The Human Condition***

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People were created by God in His image and were intended to enjoy fellowship with God. Human nature became corrupted by sin. Every human being is a sinner, separated by sin from God. Every sinner deserves God's wrath and damnation and is powerless to save

himself/herself from this deplorable state. No human being can be justified before God by works. There is only one means of salvation and that is through Jesus Christ, by grace through faith. By this means only can human fellowship with God be restored.

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### ***3. God the Father***

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The First Person of the Godhead is God the Father. He is the Father of the Lord Jesus Christ and of all those who believing in Jesus Christ are born again by the Spirit and become members of His family. He is the true Father from whom all fatherhood derives its name.

He is Spirit and to be worshipped in Spirit and in truth. He is omnipresent, omnipotent and omniscient. He is sovereign. He is unchanging. He is love. He is good, merciful, just and faithful.

His love is shown supremely in that he gave his only Son, Jesus Christ, for the redemption of humankind.

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### ***4. Jesus Christ the Son***

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Jesus Christ is the eternal Son of God. He existed before all things. For the salvation of human beings, he became man, the living Word made flesh, the image of the invisible God, a unique person, fully God and fully man.

He lived a sinless life, revealing God and his kingdom to humankind, and was crucified and died, giving his life as an atoning sacrifice for all people. This offering provides full, perfect and sufficient redemption, propitiation and satisfaction for the sins of the whole world, both original and actual. No other sacrifice for sin is necessary or effectual.

He rose again from the dead, and was thus declared with power to be the Son of God. He ascended into heaven to be exalted to the highest place, Lord of all, with a name above all names, supreme over all from which he will one day return visibly in power and great glory to gather his elect for eternal life and to bring judgment on all those who do not obey the gospel.

By his triumphant victory over death, Jesus Christ has destroyed the devil who has power of death, and is able to free all those who are held in bondage through fear of death. Jesus Christ is victorious over and provides deliverance from all the powers of darkness.

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### ***5. The Holy Spirit***

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The Holy Spirit is co-equal and co-eternal with the Father and the Son. He is the Spirit of truth, sent by the Father and the Son to be with believers forever. He reveals the truth about Jesus, convicts of sin and righteousness and judgment, gives new birth to those who repent of their sins and believe in the Lord Jesus Christ. The Holy Spirit effects on-going spiritual changes in human lives, producing spiritual fruit in those who obey Him, and giving spiritual gifts for effective life and ministry. He is the Spirit of mission who leads and empowers believers to witness to Jesus Christ among people of all nations. His supreme task is to bring glory to Jesus.

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### ***6. The Holy Scriptures***

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The Canonical Books of the Old and New Testament, as originally written are the infallible, inerrant and inspired word of God. They explain all that is necessary to salvation and are solely and absolutely authoritative in all matters of Christian faith and praxis. They are to be accepted by faith. They are complete and must not be added to, subtracted from or changed because of tradition or supposed new revelation. Anything that is not in Scripture must not be declared to be believed as an article of faith or be considered to be necessary for salvation.

The Holy Scriptures are to be interpreted with regard to their content and purpose and in reverent obedience to the Holy Spirit as He reveals their true meaning.

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### ***7. Salvation***

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Jesus Christ is the only Saviour. Salvation is by grace through faith. It is a totally unmerited gift of God. No one can earn it. The gospel of Jesus Christ is the power of God for the salvation of those who believe. This salvation is received by genuine repentance of sin and by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It sets a person free from the power, penalty and, ultimately, the presence of sin. It involves being born again by the Holy Spirit, being adopted into the family of God, becoming a new creation, being counted righteous before God by faith, being rescued from the kingdom of darkness and brought into the Kingdom of the Son, being redeemed, regenerated and sanctified and being blessed with every spiritual blessing in Christ. It sets a person free to obey God and to live a holy and upright life for his purposes.

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### **8. The Devil**

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The devil is a real and powerful created spiritual being who sought to destroy Jesus and who seeks to destroy all Christians. He is the god of this world. The death and resurrection of Jesus Christ has stripped the devil of his power, but he continues his evil works tempting, accusing and hindering the people of God. At the final judgment, the devil and all evil spirits will be consigned to eternal torment.

Christians are entitled to exercise the authority of Jesus Christ over the power of the devil.

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### **9. The Church**

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The Church is made up of all true Christians in all denominations throughout the world. It is the Body of which Christ is the Head. The Church exists to worship and serve God. The chief task of the Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ in every nation by the proclamation of the gospel by word and deed. The Church functions through local congregations of believers who gather for worship, prayer, teaching, fellowship, celebrating the Lord's supper and mutual ministry.

The members of the Church are to relate to one another in the love of the Lord, counting others before themselves. The Lord has given ministry gifts to his Church to prepare its members to serve him and to build them up in unity to maturity.

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### **10. The Sacraments**

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Jesus Christ ordained two sacraments, Baptism and the Lord's Supper (Holy Communion).

#### **Baptism**

Baptism symbolises the identification of the believer with Christ in his death, burial and resurrection. It represents the burial of the old nature and the old way of life and the rising to new life in Christ. It indicates separation from the old life and entry into the new life. It symbolises the washing away of sins.

While baptism is an integral part of Christian initiation, it is not essential to salvation.

### **The Lord's Supper**

The Lord's Supper is a sharing by believers of bread and wine in remembrance of Christ's death, presence, victory and promised return in power.

It bears witness to the new covenant between God and humanity, established by the shedding of the blood of Jesus Christ, which brings forgiveness of sins and restores relationship with God.

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### ***11. Christian Unity***

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Unity amongst believers is the will of God. Such unity is to be a testimony to the Lord Jesus Christ and is evidence of the love of God. Where believers dwell together in unity, God's blessing is promised. It is a unity that is to transcend differences of culture, background, experience, denomination, gender and social standing.

Believers are to have a Kingdom orientation, working together to proclaim the Kingdom of God and building one another up in love.

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### ***12. Baptism in the Holy Spirit***

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The term 'baptism in the Holy Spirit' may be used to describe the experience of being 'overwhelmed by', 'immersed in' or 'flooded by' the Holy Spirit which first became reality for believers at Pentecost, when the ascended Jesus poured out the Holy Spirit on his disciples. As then, so today, Jesus is the one who baptises in the Holy Spirit.

Baptism in the Spirit is received by faith and empowers the believer for witness to Jesus Christ. It is a free gift of God available to every believer. It does not depend on spiritual maturity.

The book of Acts suggests that the normal initial evidence of baptism in the Spirit is speaking in tongues. This is closely linked to prophecy, which throughout the Bible is a mark of the Spirit's presence and which characterised the first speaking in tongues at Pentecost in Acts chapter 2.

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### ***13. The Fruit of the Spirit***

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The Holy Spirit changes human lives, producing the fruit listed in Galatians 5: love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control in the life of the believer. These develop increasingly, as the believer obeys the Lord, cooperates with the working of the Holy Spirit within and progresses towards Christian maturity.

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### ***14. The Gifts of the Spirit***

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The grace gifts of the Spirit include, but are not restricted to, the supernatural gifts listed in 1 Corinthians 12: the word of wisdom, the word of knowledge, faith, gifts of healing, miraculous powers, prophecy, distinguishing between spirits, speaking in different kinds of tongues and the interpretation of tongues.

These are gifts, given and distributed by the Spirit as He wills. They are not earned or deserved. They are to be exercised in the church today in the context of Christian love for mutual upbuilding and for the common good.

## **2. MISSION, VISION AND VALUES**

### **2.1 Mission**

Eastern College Australia provides teaching, training and research from a Christian worldview that contributes to the church and the flourishing of humanity through the lives of its graduates

### **2.2 Vision**

Eastern College Australia will be recognised for university-quality education from a Christian worldview.

### **2.3 Values**

#### **Faith**

Eastern College is committed to Christ-centred, biblically-based, character-forming and gift-affirming faith expressed in vocational living, supportive community, service to others and connection to the church

#### **Reason**

Eastern College is committed to the pursuit of knowledge and truth that integrates theory and practice and values academic excellence, the importance of the mind and life-long learning.

#### **Justice**

Eastern College is committed to act justly in all human relationships, to exercise responsible care and stewardship of God's creation, and to seek the just transformation of our world.

### **3. GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES**

Eastern College Australia graduates will:

- Know and understand the Christian faith and Christian worldview and the role of the church in the world.
- Possess applicable knowledge and competencies in their chosen field at their level of study.
- Contribute to society as spiritually integrated, ethical, justice-seeking, innovative and creative individuals.

### **4. ENVIRONMENTAL SITUATION**

Eastern College Australia has undergone a number of changes in the past three years, many of which impact upon the context of the 2017-2019 strategic plan. Changes in leadership in many areas, the phasing out of key courses and the introduction of a number of new courses have been major factors in the shaping of the college for the future.

The Higher Education sector in Australia continues to undergo challenges as universities and NUHEPs find their place in an increasingly global, demand-driven, and competitive sector that has potential for disruption. The new HESF that will be implemented in 2017 offer stability and credibility to the sector that has withstood the recent scandals that have plagued the VET sector. Much of this stability is thanks to the regulator – TEQSA.

As Eastern College Australia moves into the coming three years it will continue to face the task of raising the profile of Christian Higher Education in Australia. A welcome addition to this task has been the formation of the Australian Christian Higher Education Alliance of which Eastern is a member. This group of multi-disciplinary Christian NUHEPs has the potential to consolidate and move forward the cause of Christian higher education in this nation.

Eastern College's vision for a truly multi-disciplinary expression of the Christian worldview in a range of vocations is the heart of the 2017-2019 Strategic Plan. This Plan seeks to ensure Eastern offers high quality courses delivered by highly qualified faculty in an academic educational setting that meets all HESF standards.

Christian higher education is still in its formative stages in Australia and, as such, will require nurturing and resourcing to bring it to maturity. In order to enable growth and maturity, Eastern plans to form partnerships with industry and other colleges to ensure the goals for the next three years are met.

## 5. GOALS (2017-2019)

In the next three years Eastern College Australia will:

1. Maintain excellence in learning, teaching and research among students and teaching staff.
  - a. Provide appropriate professional development and research opportunities for teaching staff to enhance competence in their discipline in and learning and teaching.
  - b. Ensure graduates are intellectually and vocationally equipped in their chosen discipline.
  - c. Ensure a Christian/biblical worldview is integrated into the structure and delivery of all courses.
  - d. Provide diverse and flexible learning communities, sound pedagogical approaches and effective means of student engagement.
  - e. Provide courses in multiple disciplines from certificate to master level.
  - f. Provide a supportive student experience
2. Maintain a spiritually-vital community with strong Christian values.
3. Ensure high quality systems of governance, administration and operations in an environment of continuous quality assurance and innovation.
4. Establish and maintain financial sustainability and stability to assure College goals are achieved.
5. Ensure readiness to seek Self-Accrediting Authority.

## 6. OPERATIONAL PLAN

<b>1. MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF.</b>				
<b>1.1 Provide appropriate professional development and research opportunities for teaching staff to enhance competence in their discipline and in learning and teaching.</b>				
		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>1.1.1</b>	Required undertaking of professional development in discipline each year	Ongoing	Dean of Faculty	Calendar
<b>1.1.2</b>	Required undertaking of professional development in aspect of learning and teaching each year	Ongoing	Dean of Faculty	Calendar
<b>1.1.3</b>	Peer review of teaching	Annual	Dir L & T	Review Reports to Academic Board
<b>1.1.4</b>	Permanent teaching staff publish at least annually	Ongoing	Dean of Faculty	Publication reports
<b>1.1.5</b>	Periodic Faculty Research seminars	Ongoing	Dir Research	Calendar
<b>1.1.6</b>	Pursue possibilities of faculty secondment or joint teaching with appropriate institutions	Dec 2018	Dir L & T	Report to Board

**1. MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF.**

**1.2 Ensure graduates are intellectually and vocationally equipped in their chosen discipline.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>1.2.1</b>	Practicum placements required for vocationally-aligned courses	Feb 2019	Course Coordinators	Unit Guides
<b>1.2.2</b>	Benchmarking of courses against accrediting body standards	Dec 2018	Dir L & T	Course accreditation
<b>1.2.3</b>	Expand engagement with industry	Ongoing	Course Coordinators	Reports of interaction
<b>1.2.4</b>	Engage with industry, including co-design where appropriate, to ensure continuing relevance of course and unit content	Ongoing	Course Coordinators	Industry accreditation/evaluation

**1. MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF.**

**1.3 Ensure a Christian/biblical worldview is integrated into the structure and delivery of all courses.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>1.3.1</b>	Orientation of new teaching staff includes workshop on integration of Christian worldview	Ongoing	Dir L & T	Orientation assessment
<b>1.3.2</b>	Annual seminar for all teaching staff on Christian worldview integration	Ongoing	Dir L & T	Calendar
<b>1.3.3</b>	Attendance at ACHEA Conference	Aug 2017	Principal	Calendar
<b>1.3.4</b>	Grad Cert Arts unit – Christian Philosophy of Education delivered	Feb 2017	Dir L & T	Unit completion
<b>1.3.5</b>	Courses structured to engage with Christian theorists and to integrate A Christian worldview in each area	Dec 2017	Course Coordinators	Course structure

**1. MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF.**

**1.4 Provide diverse and flexible learning communities, sound pedagogical approaches and effective means of student engagement.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>1.4.1</b>	Flexible Timetabling	Ongoing (Oct)	Dean Ac Ad	Timetable
<b>1.4.2</b>	Implement effective means of student engagement in a blended or online mode	Ongoing	Dir L & T Dean Faculty	Student Surveys Moodle info
<b>1.4.3</b>	Provide Professional Development to teaching staff on sound pedagogical approaches for adult education	Ongoing	Dir L & T Dean Faculty	Calendar
<b>1.4.4</b>	Provide Professional Development to teaching staff on effective student engagement	Ongoing	Dir L & T Dean Faculty	Calendar
<b>1.4.5</b>	Explore possibilities for student engagement in overseas exposure internships or student exchanges or study abroad options	Dec 2017 and ongoing	Dir L & T Principal	Report to Academic Board
<b>1.4.6</b>	Include research methods, analysis and activities across courses.	Ongoing	Course Coordinators	Unit Guides
<b>1.4.7</b>	Obtain CRICOS accreditation for International Students	Dec 2017	COO Dean Ac Admin	Accreditation

**1. MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF.**

**1.5 Provide courses in multiple disciplines from certificate to master level.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>1.5.1</b>	VET – Cert IV Youth Work launched	Feb 2017	VET Coordinator	First cohort
<b>1.5.2</b>	Master of Teaching commenced	July 2017	Course Coordinator	TEQSA accreditation First cohort
<b>1.5.3</b>	Major in Community Development developed	Dec 2017	Course Coordinator	Implementation
<b>1.5.4</b>	Master of Education commenced	Feb 2018	Course Coordinator	TEQSA accreditation First cohort
<b>1.5.5</b>	BA reaccredited	Sept 2018	Course Development Committee	TEQSA accreditation
<b>1.5.6</b>	Bachelor of Applied Social Sciences commenced	Feb 2019	Dean Ac Admin	TEQSA accreditation
<b>1.5.7</b>	Master of Applied Social Sciences accreditation commenced	Feb 2019	Course Development Committee	TEQSA accreditation First cohort
<b>1.5.8</b>	Explore options for doctoral studies	2019	Course Development Committee	

## 1. MAINTAIN EXCELLENCE IN LEARNING, TEACHING AND RESEARCH AMONG STUDENTS AND TEACHING STAFF.

### 1.6 Provide a supportive student experience

		Completed by	Responsible	Measured by
1.6.1	Student Support Officer employed	Feb 2018	Principal	Employment
1.6.2	Promote and encourage the Student Representative Council in its activities	Ongoing from Feb 2017	SRC President	Calendar
1.6.3	Establish links between more-experienced and newer students	Ongoing from Feb 2017	Principal	First –year Student Survey
1.6.4	Provide discipline-specific networking and support	Ongoing	Dir L & T IT	Student Survey
1.6.5	Provision of opportunities for student social and spiritual interaction	Ongoing	Principal	Calendar
1.6.7	Raise profile of students and student achievements	Ongoing	Social Media director	Number of posts
1.6.8	Encourage regular student-faculty interaction	Ongoing	Faculty	Faculty reporting

**2. MAINTAIN A SPIRITUALLY-VITAL COMMUNITY WITH STRONG CHRISTIAN VALUES.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>2.1</b>	Employment of teaching staff with Christian faith and values	Ongoing	Principal	Student feedback Annual Appraisals
<b>2.2</b>	Employment of administrative staff with Christian faith and values	Ongoing	COO	Annual Appraisals
<b>2.3</b>	Weekly Gatherings with speakers	Ongoing	Principal	Attendance Student Feedback
<b>2.4</b>	Weekly staff Prayer, staff meeting prayer	Ongoing	Principal	Regular Staff Attendance
<b>2.5</b>	Devotions in all classes, including online	Ongoing	Dir. Learning & Teaching Dean of Faculty	Student Class Surveys
<b>2.6</b>	Occasional guest speakers on Christian faith issues	Ongoing	Principal Dean of Faculty	Annual Calendar
<b>2.7</b>	Posting of College Values	Jan 2017	Principal COO	Implementation on website, campus
<b>2.7</b>	Regular Staff Retreats	Ongoing	Principal	Annual Calendar
<b>2.8</b>	Undertake steps outlined in Seminary Stewardship Alliance Covenant	Ongoing	Principal	Annual Review

**3. ENSURE HIGH QUALITY SYSTEMS OF GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION AND OPERATIONS IN AN ENVIRONMENT OF CONTINUOUS QUALITY ASSURANCE AND INNOVATION.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>3.1</b>	Regular external Corporate Governance Board Reviews (every 5 years)	Dec 2017	Board Chair	Favourable Report
<b>3.2</b>	Regular external Academic Governance Board Reviews (every 3 years)	Dec 2017	Board Chair Principal	Favourable Report
<b>3.3</b>	Student participation in decision making	Ongoing	Principal	Participation statistics
<b>3.4</b>	Annual compliance check of all governance, operational and administrative functions	Dec 2017 Dec 2018 Dec 2019	Board Chair Principal Dean Ac Admin COO	All areas compliant with regulations
<b>3.5</b>	Continuous cycle of review of policies and procedures	Ongoing	Governance Board Academic Board COO Dean Ac Admin	Policy Portal updates
<b>3.6</b>	Continuing membership of peak bodies	Ongoing	COO Dean Ac Admin	Ongoing membership
<b>3.7</b>	Participation in Benchmarking	Ongoing	Dean Ac Admin	Benchmarking reports

**4. ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY AND STABILITY TO ASSURE COLLEGE GOALS ARE ACHIEVED.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>4.1</b>	Form a business partnership with another College	Jan 2017	Governance Board	Signed MOU
<b>4.2</b>	Annual evaluation of financial sustainability of current and proposed courses	Annual Review	COO, SLG, LTR	Course Business Plans Annual Budget
<b>4.3</b>	Increase donor capacity	Ongoing	Principal Governance Board	Increase in donations
<b>4.4</b>	Employ creative and innovative effective marketing strategies	Ongoing	Principal Dir. of Marketing	Increased Student Enrolments
<b>4.5</b>	Awareness of environmental and regulatory changes	Ongoing	Principal COO Dean Ac Admin Dean Faculty	Strategic Plan Reviews

**5. ENSURE READINESS TO SEEK SELF-ACCREDITING AUTHORITY.**

		<b>Completed by</b>	<b>Responsible</b>	<b>Measured by</b>
<b>5.1</b>	Ensure Course Co-ordinators are aware of and carrying out responsibilities and duties including Course Review reporting and staffing units	Dec 2017	Dean Ac Admin	Readiness to apply for SAA
<b>5.2</b>	Creation of a co-ordinator handbook	Dec 2017	Dean Ac Admin	Readiness to apply for SAA
<b>5.3</b>	Ensure all Policies and Procedures are SAA-ready	Dec 2019	Dean Ac Admin COO Academic Board Governance Board	Readiness to apply for SAA
<b>5.4</b>	Ensure governance and management structures are SAA-ready via external review	Dec 2019	Board Chair Principal	Readiness to apply for SAA
<b>5.5</b>	Continuous review of all aspects of compliance to HESF standards	Ongoing	Dean Ac Admin COO Academic Board Governance Board	Readiness to apply for SAA