



ACT
Government

Education and Training

EXTERNAL VALIDATION REPORT 2015

for

UNIVERSITY OF CANBERRA
SENIOR SECONDARY COLLEGE
LAKE GINNINDERRA

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Introduction: Overview of the Validation process

As part of the Territory's school improvement approach, public schools and colleges in the Australian Capital Territory are required to participate in an External Validation process every four years. This document captures the findings of the panel during this cycle of validation.

In broad terms, the panel sought to determine, through evaluation and validation, the extent to which the school is meeting its agreements, achieving its priorities, and addressing its challenges: in the context of a continuously improving educational environment.

External Validation was conducted over three days and involved a wide variety of data gathering approaches including observations, interviews and documentation. This approach provided evidence for the panel to consider against the nine inter-related domains in the National School Improvement Tool that informed our commendations and recommendations.

Section A: School context

Lake Ginninderra College opened in 1987 and became the University of Canberra Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra (UCSSC Lake Ginninderra) in 2011). The college is located in Belconnen, Canberra. Partnered with the University of Canberra (UC), the college caters for a diverse range of young people including high achieving academic students, elite sports people with national and international competition programs, international private students, students in college and industry based vocational programs and those with special needs. The Index of Community Socio-Educational Advantage (ICSEA) is a measure that enables meaningful comparisons to be made across schools. It has been developed specifically for the My School website and measures key factors that correlate with educational outcomes. The college has remained steady over the life of the plan and in 2014 it was 1077.

Over the life of the plan UCSSC Lake Ginninderra has experienced significant fluctuations in enrolment from a peak in 2010 of 758 students to a low in 2012 of 428 students. This decline can largely be attributed to the opening of Gungahlin College in 2011. Since 2013, enrolments have gradually begun to increase such that in 2015 the total enrolments were 609 including Connect10 students. Student cohorts comprise English as an Additional Language or Dialect (EALD) students, 18 Aboriginal and Torres Strait students, 17 students with Individual Learning Plans (ILPs), 101 in Elite Sports, 42 students in National Sports programs, 12 students in Connect10 and seven international students.

The rise in overall enrolments from 2012 to 2015 can in part be attributed to the number of students in the elite sports program. These students were both ACT in origin and students from all states of Australia. The college identifies that the number of students requiring ILPs has increased between 2011 and 2014 requiring additional resources.

Staff profile changes resulted from the enrolment decline in 2011 and 2012 and subsequent change in school category from a category 5+ to a category 4++. A deliberate choice to maintain traditional college breadth of curriculum required the college to acquire staff flexible in teaching areas; some teachers have had classes in as many as four subject areas.

The leadership group of the college has changed gradually between 2011 and 2014. This has a consequential impact on staffing levels. There has been a reduction of one School Leader B (SLB or deputy) since 2011 when the school changed school category, again due to the reduction in enrolments. The number of School Leader Cs (SLC or Executive) is now 6.6. One SLC with responsibility for Mathematics was new in 2014. An Executive Teacher Professional Practice (ETPP) commenced in 2014, however in 2015 this position was discontinued. The Business Manager position was upgraded to a Senior Officer Grade C (SOG C) in 2013. The position of Information Technology Officer (ITO) was upgraded to an IT02 in 2014 after a period of time without a permanent ITO.

All faculty areas have experienced some change in membership over the life of the plan with a combination of contract and permanent staff employed. There has been an explicit agenda to develop the profile of the college staff by employing new teachers including new educators. The teacher librarian position has been filled by contract since 2012.

The college has multiple partnerships with external organisations, including the AIS, schools and colleges within the Belconnen Network, including the Trade Skills Centre and with the University of Canberra.

Section B: School performance

Statistics from the Board of Senior Secondary Studies (BSSS) Annual Summary Certification for 2011 to 2014 show that the percentage of cohort awarded an ACT Year 12 Certificate has increased steadily. The 2011 to 2014 growth trend was in line with the Education and Training Directorate's (the Directorate) Strategic Plan intent to reduce the proportion of year 12 students who do not achieve the ACT Year 12 Certificate.

The proportion of students achieving an ATAR in a school-based program has increased between 2011 and 2014. The proportion of those ATARs above 65 (published cut-off ATAR for entry to the University of Canberra) has increased to 80% in 2014. The median ATAR was 71.45.

The school had an attendance rate of 81% for year 12 students and 85% for year 11 students in 2014. Attendance rates for both year groups have remained in this range since 2011. The panel considers the college could consider a target of 90% promoted by the Directorate and notes the college has included targets concerning attendance in the 2015 AOP.

During the period 2011 to 2014 all students receiving inclusion support from the ETD were provided with an ILP in consultation with the student and their family, achieving the 2015 target of 100% set by the Directorate. The graduation rate for year 12 students on an ILP over 2011 to 2014 is 48.3% (calculated from school data). This is below the graduation rate for the year 12 cohort as a whole. The program has been led by an identified Disability Education Coordinator (DECO) since 2013. Five of eight year 12 students on an ILP graduated in 2014 (62.5%) with a Year 12 Certificate. The panel notes this represents rapid improvement in a short time for an at risk group of students.

Indigenous students have been small in number compared to the total year 12 cohort. The achievement of an ACT Year 12 Certificate has averaged approximately 60% of this cohort in the period 2011 to 2014. The college took action to improve this figure including connecting students with the Australian Indigenous Mentoring Experience (AIME) in 2014 and successful application for tutorial assistance funding in 2015. Data on the impact of these initiatives is not yet available.

The Connect10 program has maintained steady enrolments. The staffing resources allocated by the Directorate have been directed towards improving literacy and numeracy to a standard sufficient to achieve a Year 10 Certificate. C10 students are sometimes taught by mainstream teachers in addition to their C10 teachers allowing them to access a mainstream curriculum. The panel noted that the success of the program rests on the quality of the teaching and learning and the emphasis placed on pastoral care. The majority of the students in the program achieved a Year 10 Certificate from 2011 - 2014.

In 2014 the college had established partnerships with three national sports federations including Football Federation Australia (FFA), and the governing bodies of Basketball and Volleyball. The partnership with the FFA resulted in the college accepting year 10 students into the college who in 2014 received Year 10 Certificates.

Stakeholder perception data from 2011-2014 provides evidence that the college is well regarded in the community. Parents reported that community partnerships are valued and are satisfied with their child's education at the college. They also reported at a high level that the college works with them to support their child's learning.

On all measures in 2014 student satisfaction was similar to that reported in other colleges. Students reported that the college celebrates their achievements and that they can talk to their teachers about their learning.

Staff satisfaction over the life of the plan was variable and correlates with a reduction in school size and the associated strains that were placed on the college. Over the final two years of the plan there has been a noticeable improvement in staff satisfaction levels.

Student perceptions of teachers and teaching have been measured at the end of each semester by conducting an online survey in each class. Participation in the survey is generally high in both 'T' and 'A' accredited units. Over the life of the plan students have responded positively indicating that teachers took time to answer their questions; teachers were well organised; there was enough information about the assessment in each unit; and that they understood how their work was marked.

The number of funded professional learning events per teacher has been between 1.4 and 2.4 events per year and teachers attended between three and four days per year between 2011 and 2014.

Community participation is strong at the college with between 2000 - 3500 volunteer hours being recorded each year of the plan. The outdoor education program attracts significant volunteer hours in the context of the college's partnership with UC. Many of these volunteer hours are by former students of the college. Former students also volunteer to assist on the NZ and Global classroom excursions.

Evidence cited and its validation

Staff, student and parent interviews

Classroom observations

Staffroom visits

Draft TMT Partnership Agreement V2 20 Feb 2015

MOU ACT ETD and AIS 2013 UCSSCLG Draft Version 7 23 1 2013

Third Party Agreement - Lake Ginninderra and Canberra High Outdoor Recreation

BRTSC Network MOU Dec 2013

UC SSC Lake Ginninderra Longitudinal Satisfaction Survey Data 2009-2014

BSSS Summary of certification LGNC-2011 -2014.

Section C: School improvement planning and implementation

In its Strategic Plan 2012 - 2015, UCSSC Lake Ginninderra identified three priorities for improvement.

Priority Areas

Strategic Priority 1: Improve student learning outcomes

Strategic Priority 2: Develop educational and community partnerships

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen student engagement and well-being

The panel found that the priorities were closely linked to the recommendations of the 2011 External Validation Report and to Directorate goals and initiatives. The priorities were determined by the school leadership team. There has been no alteration to the priorities during the life of the plan. Annual Operating Plans (AOP) were developed in consultation with staff - at an executive conference in 2013 and an executive planning day in 2015. In 2013 and 2014 strategic priorities formed the basis for professional pathways plan goals for teaching staff. The Principal takes responsibility for collating all views into a coherent AOP for each year.

Achievements

Strategic Priority 1: Improve student learning outcomes

The key improvement strategies identified in the plan for this priority were:

- Develop staff capacity in the identification of individual learning and curriculum needs of students
- Improve support for teachers to progress pedagogical practice
- Enhance high quality, innovative and flexible curriculum
- Advance rigorous and shared academic expectations and practices.

The panel noted the extensive 'Student Consideration' spreadsheet attests to the number of students identified requiring learning support, adjustment, and consideration in assessment. The compilation and access to this by all staff has increased awareness of the need for reasonable adjustment by staff for student learning. The panel interviewed students in the sporting programs who confirmed the support provided for assessment adjustment due to periods of absence from the college for national and international competition.

The panel found evidence of professional learning in building in all staff capacity in the identification of individual learning and curriculum needs of students. This includes the extensive development of reasonable adjustment, three targeted whole staff PL provisions delivered in 2013 (Student Services), 2014 (DECO) and 2015 (UC).

The key claim for improving support for teachers to progress pedagogical practice was mentoring for pre-service teachers: Masters of Teaching program, Graduate Diploma of Education, Bachelor of Education. The panel noted that some annual professional discussion (APDs) goals were aligned to the strategic priorities. The panel considers this to be an area for future improvement.

The College has responded to student voice by introducing two new courses. In addition teachers from every faculty have participated in writing new courses for use in colleges across

the ACT – Type 2 courses. The panel noted that staff have developed curriculum aligned to the Australian Curriculum ready for implementation in the phase 1 subjects in 2016. The college has established and implemented a year 9/10 program for the FFA students to facilitate younger members of the squad to be on the same campus. The panel noted the range of access for students to flexible learning opportunities available, through Connect10, Elite Sports and the National Sports programs, and UC Connect.

The college embarked on a Bring Your Own Device (BYOD) program at the commencement of 2015 in addition to implementing Google Classroom as the online learning platform across the college. The panel noted this innovation is still in its early implementation phase and will require an explicit agenda of professional learning to ensure use is embedded and understood across the college for both staff and students, so that flexible and innovative learning opportunities are increased for students at UCSSC Lake Ginninderra.

The panel noted that an ITO2 had been employed at that level due to their ability to conduct professional learning for teaching staff and also leading peer to peer mentoring via existing familiarity with the Google environment.

The percentage of year 12 cohort receiving a Year 12 Certificate has increased by 17 percentage points since 2011 from 70% to 87%. The percentage of students achieving an ATAR above 65 has increased over the life of the plan from 61% to 80% to 87%. The panel noted that whilst the vocational course enrolments have increased over the last three years from a decline in 2012 the number of vocational certificates awarded in place of a statement of attainment has decreased. College staff indicated that the ability of students to participate in Structured Workplace Learning (SWL) may be a barrier to certificate completion.

The panel noted the college did meet its targets for increased staff, student and parent responses in all system surveys identified in the 2014 plan.

Strategic Priority 2: Develop educational and community partnerships

The key improvement strategies identified in the plan for this priority were:

- increased range and participation rates in partnership activities
- enhance ongoing partnerships building cooperative and productive relationships
- establish new relevant partnerships
- foster the college as a Learning and Development School.

Partnerships were established with Timber Metals Training, Outdoor Leadership and Mentoring Program and the AIS by July 2011 and continue currently. A new local partnership with the Canberra International Sports and Aquatic Centre (CISAC) assists student access to reduced rate membership. The significant partnership with UC was established in 2011 through a Deed of Agreement with ETD. This partnership has assisted in the delivery of certification in furniture making and outdoor recreation as well as access to UC facilities for staff and students, and staff access to financial resources/deals available to UC staff. Through the recently agreed Third Party Agreement with Belconnen Regional Trades Skills Centre (BRTSC) and development of facilities to support vocational education and training, UCSSC Lake Ginninderra now has on scope:

- Cert I Automotive Vocational Preparation (AUR10112) & Cert II (AUR20712); pathways to Cert III Automotive Light Vehicle Mechanical Technology (AUR30612)
- Pathways to Cert II LMF 20309 & Cert III Furniture Making LMF30302
- Cert I Engineering MEM10105
- Pathways to Catering Operations Cert III SIT31013
- additional contributing competencies through SWL/ASBAs.

The panel noted the college developed a year 10 program to accommodate FFA Year 10 players to be based at the AIS with their year 11 and year 12 team members. This partnership has allowed for a modified curriculum which allows students to complete their Year 10 Certificate while participating in elite sport.

The panel noted that the Masters of Teaching partnership with the UC in 2014 not only increased the number of pre-service teachers in the college, it also afforded staff the opportunity to upgrade their formal qualifications by scholarship admission to the Masters of Teaching program at the university. The panel noted that two staff of UCSSC Lake Ginninderra commenced the program in 2015 and are expected to graduate in 2016. The panel notes that the college has been flexibly able to deal with changes in the MTeach program by the university and accommodated the research based second year with two groups completing research programs.

The panel noted that the percentage of Tertiary Entrance Score (TES) receivers above the published UC cut off increased from 61.4% in 2012 to 80.2% in 2014, and the percentage above the ANU published cut off was 29.5% in 2012, 45.6% in 2013 and 30.8% in 2014. Students reported satisfaction with units taught, evidenced in a 70-80% positive response in unit surveys over the life of the plan. The panel noted the college did meet its targets for increased staff, student and parent responses in all system surveys identified in the 2014 plan.

Strategic Priority 3: Strengthen student engagement and well-being

The key improvement strategies identified in the plan for this priority were:

- develop student support services promoting understanding and access
- create a flexible and adaptable suite of extension and extra-curricular opportunities
- strengthen student participation and leadership in school governance
- enrich transition pathways information, through and beyond college.

The panel confirmed the increase in identification of students for special consideration and associated support strategies. Modification or adjustments in learning has significantly increased the student services workload. Promotion by the college to students of assistance available if their assessment is affected by illness, sporting absence or other issues, especially through the UCSSC Lake Ginninderra College app has also impacted on this workload. The panel noted that parents are particularly grateful of the work being done by student services, especially as a 'one stop shop', and encourages the college to explore broadening provision of pastoral care to more actively promote Support Group (SG) teachers as first point of contact.

The panel noted a range of extension and extra-curricular opportunities including:

- the annual Arts night
- visual exhibitions at a range of community venues such as College Express at the Belconnen Arts Centre
- two drama productions per year that involve many students
- the implementation of study hall model of assistance for students has had a more limited impact, attendance being concentrated around assessment due dates.
- student participation in Relay for Life to raise money for the ACT Cancer Council.
- carnival event to raise money for the Year 12 Formal
- *Dare to Donate.*

The latter three compliment the college's recent focus on positive psychology and the 'curriculum of giving'. The panel considers that the range of extension and extra-curricular opportunities significantly contribute to the creation of a positive college culture and provides opportunities to build student connection, belonging and pride.

Student representation on the Board provides a vehicle for student voice on issues of governance, including curriculum, finance and policy. Students confirmed the approachability of staff around issues, including the principal but indicated there was limited opportunity for them to have a voice on broader 'college specific' issues that affect them. The panel encourages the college to consider ways of soliciting student voice in more regular formal and informal forums.

The panel noted that the college focused its efforts on enriching transition pathways into, through and beyond college, especially for students identified as eligible for or receiving Inclusion Support. This effort has had a flow on effect that students with other needs feel supported in their transition into college, evidenced through discussion with parents and students. One of the MTeach research programs published to the college focussed on the transition process and provided a range of researched evidence based suggestions for transition.

Further, a trial between UC and the college in 2013 identified students with predicted ATAR in a low range who were then provided the opportunity to participate in the UC Connect program during semester 2. Normally these students would have had to wait until they had graduated with a low ATAR to be offered a place in the program. Ten students received a university offer as a result of the trial enabling them to commence a university course.

The decision to change the school timetable in 2012 has had an impact on the educational experience of Australian School-based Apprenticeship (ASbA) students. The timetable allows a three day program for up to four classes giving flexibility in completing school requirements. The panel encourages the college to develop an integrated transition program for year 10 into year 11 into college to ensure course counselling more accurately reflects student ability and capacity. This will involve establishing some data sets about the effectiveness of the course counselling. Making this information available to all staff prior to the end of term 1 can reduce the impact of course changes.

Student's responses to 'I can talk to my teachers about my concerns' rose to 74% in 2014 from 65% in 2012, mirroring a reported shift in culture and greater empathy from staff to students. The panel noted the college met its targets for increased student and parent responses in all system surveys identified in this priority over 2013 and 2104.

Reflections

The college provided reflection comments under the headings of **school performance, planning for school improvement, sustaining the improvements made** and **leading and managing school improvement**.

The panel recognised that the Strategic Plan developed in 2012 was an extensive consultation with parents, students and staff. Building on the collective development and planning of the Strategic Plan and the 2012 and 2013 AOP's, the 2014 and 2015 AOP's were led effectively by having a more principal directed model at the centre of all discussions and planning which lead to the actions in those AOP's. The executive conference in 2013 supported the development of the 2014 AOP. Similarly, the executive conference at the beginning of 2015 contributed to the development of the 2015 AOP. While still establishing appropriate and focused actions for school improvement, an amalgamation of the two models will allow broader college wide ownership and accountability for the actions, particularly in regards to ongoing consultation with the Board and P&C.

The panel noted the employing of MTeach researchers on projects directed by the Principal had already provided valuable research about transition, an area highlighted by the panel as an area for development. The success of this activity and its extension into a second project with another research group illustrates that the college is committed to this improvement agenda.

The college is encouraged to develop a strategic plan that is future focused and will provide direction in improving educational outcomes for all students over the life of the plan. Concurrently, the college will need to identify suitable targets that can demonstrate improvements over time. The new School Administration System (SAS) currently in development may in time assist with suitable data sources. Nevertheless, the college is encouraged to identify and develop their own process data to effectively evaluate school improvement strategies.

The panel suggests that the school continue to systematically collect and interrogate available evidence to determine future improvement. Key initiatives and programs can be continually

improved if regularly evaluated for their effectiveness in producing desired improvements in student learning and performance. There is significant capacity within the college now to undertake this exercise. The panel noted there is acknowledgement in the college's reflections of future opportunities to do this, particularly with reference to transitions and maximising student learning outcomes. The panel also noted that the college has been proactive in succession planning for key programs and has configured its staff in a way which could allow collaboration for lifting educational achievement through an explicit collaboration or mentoring program.

Evidence cited and its validation

2013 Executive Conference notes

ASBR 2011 - 2014

AOP 2011 - 2014 with School Plan and 2011 Validation report

2014 Leadership Meeting minutes

2014 Professional pathways samples

2014 Staff Meeting minutes

Staff, student and parent interviews.

Section D: National tools self-evaluation results

National School Improvement Tool (NSIT)

In 2015 the college undertook a process of self-assessment against the NSIT via a consensus approach undertaken by a cross section of the school community. The selected groups were asked to respond to one or more domains of the tool where they felt that they had knowledge or confidence to do so. A consensus was achieved after collating responses. The selected ratings were the 'best fit' of the rating and evidence listed.

The panel found a good level of agreement with the findings of the college's self-assessment.

Within the **explicit improvement agenda** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The Principal and other school leaders articulate a shared commitment to improvement, but the school improvement priorities and process was not well understood across the school community.*
- *Members of the college's management team are committed to finding ways to improve on current student outcomes.*

Over the course of the current Strategic Plan a range of processes have been implemented to define and implement an explicit improvement agenda for the college. Each year the college has developed an Annual Operating Plan in consultation with the college management team. The management team is relied upon to communicate the plan to their relevant faculties. Most teachers interviewed were able to identify and share a strong commitment to the themes of the priorities, but not specific strategies and targets within the plans. The panel cited evidence that the priorities of the plan were often reflected in Professional Pathways goals undertaken by teachers.

Within the **analysis and discussion of data** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *Systematic whole of college tests are used within the English and Mathematics faculties, to guide appropriate course counselling.*
- *An ad hoc approach exists to building staff skills in the analysis, interpretation and use of classroom data.*
- *Software is used for the analysis of school results, but analyses generally do not extend to studies of improvement or growth.*

The analysis of data to identify student growth is problematic in the college context given the dynamic turnover of cohorts on a two year basis. The college systematically receives BSSS published annual data summaries which form the basis of discussion of each school year which form the basis of discussions of each school year about the expectations of the coming year. However the college could use this data as a trigger for in-depth discussions of teaching practices and school processes. System surveys indicated that approximately two thirds of teachers include data as part of learning and teaching.

There is evidence that the college is systematically implementing and analysing diagnostic testing instruments to create learning profiles of students to guide student course selection upon entry to the college.

Within a **culture that promotes learning** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The 'tone' of the school reflects a school wide commitment to purposeful, successful learning.*
- *There are very few obvious behavioural and engagement problems within the college. Behaviour management takes up very little time of school leaders and classroom teachers.*
- *Respectful and caring relationships are reflected in the ways in which staff and students interact in both formal and informal settings.*
- *Staff morale is generally high.*

Through evidence gathered via classroom observations, staff and student interviews, as well as the college's Satisfaction Survey results it is evident that the tone of the school is calm, inclusive and accepting. The college has had access to professional learning around Positive Psychology Strategies by Associate Professor Thomas Nielson. Teachers were able to identify how these concepts are being implemented in a range of courses across the school, and more generally within the giving culture of the school. The 2014 Staff Satisfaction Survey indicated that 100 percent of teachers have positive relationships with their students. Students also reported very positive learning relationships with staff. Many teachers expressed their enthusiasm for the college, and were able to describe positive improvements over the course of the plan relating to the productivity and quality of teacher - teacher and student - teacher relationships.

Within the **targeted use of school resources** domain the panel was able to verify:

- *The principal and other school leaders have introduced programs and strategies to identify and address the needs of students in the college and are sourcing and applying available resources to meet those needs.*
- *The college has developed processes through systematic testing and assessment for identifying student learning needs in Maths and English on entry to the college.*
- *Programs to meet individual learning needs for students with learning difficulties, at-risk students, and elite athletes are prioritised in the school budget.*

The innovative manner in which the college utilises its resources and makes adjustments for elite athletes has a profound impact on the ability of these students to successfully complete senior secondary studies and is a real strength of the college. The college implements systematic assessment of student's Maths and English skills and uses this information to inform course selection and to respond to the needs of individual learners on entry to Year 11.

Over the course of the plan the panel was able to verify an increase in the provision of adjustments following increased student needs and requests for special consideration. The school implements a flexible allocation of both its human resources and physical resources in supporting student with special needs through the provision of study support both in hours and out of hours in the Library and planned use of Learning Support Assistants (LSAs), particularly during assessment periods and this can include support at cluster schools.

Within an **expert teaching team** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The college undertakes professional learning activities although there may not be a coherent documented learning plan in place.*
- *Teachers are open to constructive feedback and provide feedback to colleagues*
- *The college is implementing a formal process for conducting professional discussions with staff.*
- *Attention is paid to strengths and weaknesses in the college-wide team, with strategies in place to recruit staff with particular expertise and to train staff to address particular needs.*

The panel found that over the course of the plan the principal and college leadership team have paid close and active attention to the strengths and weaknesses in the school-wide team and have deliberate strategies in place to recruit staff to address these weaknesses. The resulting change in the staff profile has been significant in adding energy and an innovative mind set within the college's teaching team. The college is actively supporting the training of teachers in the automotive field so that the college can deliver VET certificates in this area. Professional learning activities have also included funding a University of Canberra based program for a teacher to become an in-house expert on mentoring. This teacher has led mentoring sessions for staff in the week prior to school start in each of the last two years.

Staff at the college are active participants in the professional learning provided through the All Colleges Conference at the beginning of each year, with all teachers being able to fulfil the professional learning requirements outlined by the Teacher Quality Institute (TQI). Professional discussions within the college are formally guided by the Professional Pathway Process.

Within the **systematic curriculum delivery** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The college's curriculum plan identifies curriculum, teaching and learning priorities and requirements.*
- *Considerable attention has been given to ensuring 'vertical' alignment of the curriculum so that there is continuity and progression of learning across the Years 11 and 12, with teaching in Year 12 building on and extending the learning from the previous year.*
- *The curriculum plan is being implemented throughout the college and is shared with parents and the wider community through the course information guide and course handbooks, and through regular email communication.*
- *The curriculum plan is the reference against which flexible delivery is designed, assessment tasks are developed and student learning is reported.*

The curriculum programs at the college are clearly documented and aligned to the standards of the Australian Curriculum (Phase 1 subjects) and the requirements of the BSSS. Each course is followed by a unit evaluation as a quality assurance mechanism. There is a systematic approach to making reasonable adjustments to allow students with disabilities and other particular needs fully access and engage with the courses at the college.

Within the **differentiated teaching and learning** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The college provides multiple pathways for students to transition to external studies and post-school options.*
- *Some use is made of differentiated teaching*
- *Regular assessments of student learning are undertaken, but these mostly are summative.*
- *Reports and communication with parents provide guidance on actions they might take to support student learning.*

The teaching and learning offered within the Connect 10 program shows a high degree of differentiation guided by the individual needs of the students within the program. As part of the National Sports Program the college actively and successfully supports students to meet the entry requirements of diverse pathways including programs in the United States college system. The college provides accredited, tertiary and vocational education and training options for students. These options, in-conjunction with the UC Connect program, provide multiple post-college pathways for students at the college.

Differentiated teaching within units is in an emerging stage, though the attention to inclusive education practices is prompting improvement in this area.

Within the **effective pedagogical practices** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *School leaders are explicit about their desire to see effective teaching occur throughout the college but are less clear about what this might look like.*
- *There is clarity about what students are expected to learn, but a lack of balance in teaching methods.*

Within the college there is variety of approaches across the different faculties in the approach and emphasis to developing effective pedagogical practices. The college leadership team regularly discusses current issues in education including research, and share these with teaching staff through the faculty context of the college to inform capacity building in teaching practice. The panel recommends greater attention be given to systematic planning and record keeping of this process.

Within the **college - community partnerships** domain, the panel was able to verify that:

- *The college leadership makes deliberate and strategic use of partnerships with families and community organisations to access intellectual, human and physical resources not available within the school for the purposes of improving student outcomes.*
- *Partnerships have generally been initiated by the senior leadership team and have their support.*
- *There is clear evidence that partnerships are having their intended impact, and that the partnerships are being implemented as intended.*

A strength of the college over the life of the plan has been the range and effectiveness of the community partnerships that have been established and developed. This includes partnerships with the University of Canberra, the AIS and various national sporting organisations including the FFA, has proven to be very effective in support the learning needs, and learning / sport / life balance of students within these programs.

The Third Party Partnership agreement with the UC in the VET space has had a profoundly positive impact on the college. This partnership has not only provided enhanced learning opportunities to students at the college, the benefits of this partnership have flowed into other schools in the ACT through the training and accreditation of qualified outdoor education teachers.

The strong sense of community within the college has motivated college P & C to organise and coordinate the highly successful, after school hours, recreational LakeNite Learning program. This program employs three staff and has averaged more than 400 students per term over the life of the plan.

National Safe Schools Audit Tool

The college was introduced to the National Safe School Audit Tool in 2015 and collected data relating to the tool which was evaluated by the college leadership team.

The college determined that the results of the tool strongly affirmed their commitment to student well-being and the establishment of a safe and support learning environment for students. The panel's observations and interviews with staff and students supported this finding.

One area for improvement identified by staff was in addressing and further promoting a safe school environment includes the collection of data and the creation of an evidence base to support decisions around the behaviour and well-being support programs at the school.

Section E: Commendations and recommendations

Commendations

University of Canberra Senior Secondary College Lake Ginninderra is commended for the following.

1. **Establishing a positive culture within the college.** The students, principal, management team, staff, and school community are to be commended on the development of a positive school culture where student inclusion is at the forefront of interactions within the community. There is an evident feeling and tone of respectful relationships, calmness, safety and personal value and students attest their academic and pastoral needs are being met by staff at the college. The school culture contributes to a school where “every student is everyone’s’ responsibility”.
2. **The structured provision of inclusion support for elite athletes and student that are members of national sporting programs.** The college is to be commended on the programs available to students representing the ACT at elite sporting levels and participating in national sporting programs. The panel was impressed with the support offered by staff to accommodate travel requirements and training schedules for these students. Access to unit content and the ability to submit assignments online through Google Classroom assisted students when they were away from school. Students reported that staff went above and beyond to ensure they had information so that they could make informed choices to apply for entry to international sporting programs and return to mainstream schooling on completion.
3. **The development and implementation of a strong Inclusive Education model at the college.** Students with special needs, elite athletes, members of sporting programs and students needing special consideration are identified and supported to study in mainstream classrooms. The Connect10 program successfully offers students struggling to attend high school an alternative pathway to achieve a Year 10 Certificate that supports their pastoral and academic needs.
4. **The well planned and structured delivery of a broad and enriching curriculum.** The college actively promotes a broad curriculum to enable students to select from a wide range of engaging courses, including accredited, tertiary and vocational pathways. This breadth of curriculum has been maintained in the context of changing enrolments over the life of the plan. Course information and content is available through online Google Classrooms and the variety of communication available at the school ensures that students and parents are able to access information regarding the curriculum and college life.
5. **The development of strategic partnerships with external organisations that add value to student learning.** The college is to be commended on the way it actively seeks partnerships to benefit the needs of students with external organisations such as CISAC, the UC, The AIS and the FFA. The BRTSC will complement the range of partnerships over the life of the next plan. The continuation of the Lake Nite Learning program coordinated by the college P&C for the wider community adds significant value to the college.

Recommendations

The panel recommends UCSSC Lake Ginninderra pay attention to the following opportunities for improvement during the next planning cycle.

1. **Develop a detailed and explicit college improvement agenda.** In order to guide the ongoing success of the college it is recommended that the college develop a more explicit improvement agenda in partnership with all stakeholders. This agenda should express in specific and measurable terms the improvements sought in student performance and include clear targets with accompanying time-lines. Efforts should be made to align professional learning activities with the priorities outlined by the strategic planning process and ensuring expectations are reflected in staff pathways plans.
2. **Enhance systems of collecting and analysing data that provides greater visibility of the effectiveness of college and student performance.** Establish a systematic plan for the collection, analysis and use of student achievement data, as well as ongoing professional learning for teachers and school leaders to develop data literacy skills. Data should be used throughout the college as an evidence base to inform student learner profiles, to identify gaps in student learning, to monitor student performance, and the effectiveness of school programs.
3. **Develop explicit expectations and a shared understanding of high quality effective teaching and learning practices.** Develop shared innovative pedagogical practices taking advantage of the college's BYOD program and ICT infrastructure. Place a high priority on developing evidence based teaching practices that show through research and practice to be highly effective in improving student learning.
4. **Further purposeful and sustainable community partnerships to support vocational education and training programs at the college.** Work with new and existing community partners to create documented plans for monitoring, and reviewing the effectiveness of each partnership. Ensure that partnerships are being successfully implemented to enhance student outcomes so that they are adequately resourced and sustainable, particularly in the area of accessing SWL opportunities for students in order to complete VET certifications.

Record of Validation Process

The following people were members of the external validation panel for the University of Canberra Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra conducted on Monday 27, Tuesday 28 and Wednesday 29 July, 2015.

Name: **Belinda Bartlett**

School: **Alfred Deakin High School**

Name: **Peter Kent**

School: **Gordon Primary School**

Name: **Juliette Major**

School: **St Clare's College**

As chair of the panel I endorse that this is a true and accurate record of the findings from the external validation process.

Name: Belinda Bartlett

Signature:



Date:

14/10/2015

As principal of **University of Canberra Senior Secondary College, Lake Ginninderra** I accept the Validation Report on behalf of the school community.

Name: Martin Watson

Signature:



Date:

14/10/2015

As co-director of Quality Learning Australasia, external lead validators for the conduct of validation process in ACT public schools, I concur that the panel acted within the guidelines set by the ACT Education and Training Directorate.

Name: Dr Jane Kovacs

Signature:



Date:

14/10/2015.