



10 December 2021

Dear Merici Community,

### Dare to Dream

To 'dare' is to call on courage, strength, imagination and strategy. To 'dare' is to be willing to take on the unknown, to embrace change and to shape things for the better. To 'dare' is to be futures focused, positive, agile and active. To 'dare to dream' is to do all of the above as well as to open oneself to awe and wonder.

Jesus dared to dream and hope. He envisaged a wondrous future defined by love and unity.

*"I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one—I in them and you in me—so that they may be brought to complete unity. Then the world will know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me."* John 17:22-23

Pope Francis in *Let Us Dream* responds to the crises our world is facing by calling all to be daring:

"This is a moment to dream big, to rethink our priorities—what we value, what we want, what we seek—and to commit to act in our daily life on what we have dreamed of. What I hear at this moment is similar to what Isaiah hears God saying through him: Come, let us talk this over. Let us dare to dream."

Saint Angela saw that the heartbeat of a daring Jesus is to be found at our core, in those we meet, in every decision we make, in the day-to-day and in all that God has created. She wrote "Do something, get moving, risk new things, stick with it, get on your knees then be ready for great surprises."

We all are indeed blessed that in 2021, a year of new beginnings and immense challenges, that we have the freedom to act and shape our lives, to dream knowing that we are loved unconditionally by God and so are open and ready for "great surprises".

I was enveloped by a great warmth of welcome as I joined Merici College as Principal this year. I feel immensely privileged and proud to be leading such a wonderful community. It is one defined by our school motto, 'Fidelitas' where all are encouraged to act as Pope Francis has demonstrated, with a heightened awareness of the impact our actions have on ourselves, others and creation. Our College seeks to be a "bright candle" that makes a positive difference in our local and global world.

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I have joined a joy-filled and dynamic learning community, intent on building upon the heritage founded by all that have come before us. This heritage works to liberate, empower and motivate young women to use their gifts with confidence, creativity, generosity and in the loving service of others. I am proud to be a member of a learning community that responds to changing circumstances, and a wicked virus, with courage, agility, positivity, resilience and skill.

### **Strategic Plan 2022-2024**

I am driven to nurture Merici College as a school of excellence, the school of choice for families, young women, talented staff and educational leaders in the Canberra region. An important action taken this year towards achieving this goal was our review of the current Strategic Plan (2019-2021) and the development of another that 'stands on the shoulders' of all that has been achieved in the recent past.

I am very proud and thankful to our Merici community for your input and feedback in the review and development of our Strategic Plan. The Strategic Plan for the next 3 years has come together after consultation with our representative Sisters from our Founding Religious Communities, our parent community, our student leadership body, alumni, College Board, staff and my Leadership team. Together, we remain committed to developing young women holistically, so that they become compassionate and active members of our global community: young women who value ethical behaviour, who have a strong yet realistic sense of their own worth, and who are ready to take their place in the world.

The following offers a sense of what has been achieved through this process.

#### **Mission Statement**

Merici College empowers women to love life, have hope, be faithful and build futures more wondrous than they dare to dream.

#### **Vision**

Merici College endeavours to be a vibrant, faithful learning community that fosters excellence, and takes positive action to build a shared global future.

#### **Purpose**

To educate women so that they are empowered to love life, have hope, be faithful and build futures more wondrous than they dare to dream.

#### **Values**

##### *Fidelitas*

We are a faithful community.

"Act, bestir yourselves, have faith and confidence. You will see wonders." (Angela Merici's Counsels)

##### *Integritas*

We are a principled community.

"See how important integrity is. For this reason long for it, search for it, embrace it, hold onto it with all your strength." (Angela Merici's Counsels)

## Communitas

We are an inclusive community.

“Let the quality of our relationships be characterised by goodness, kindness, gentleness and attentiveness to the needs of every person.” (Angela Merici’s Counsels)

## Spes

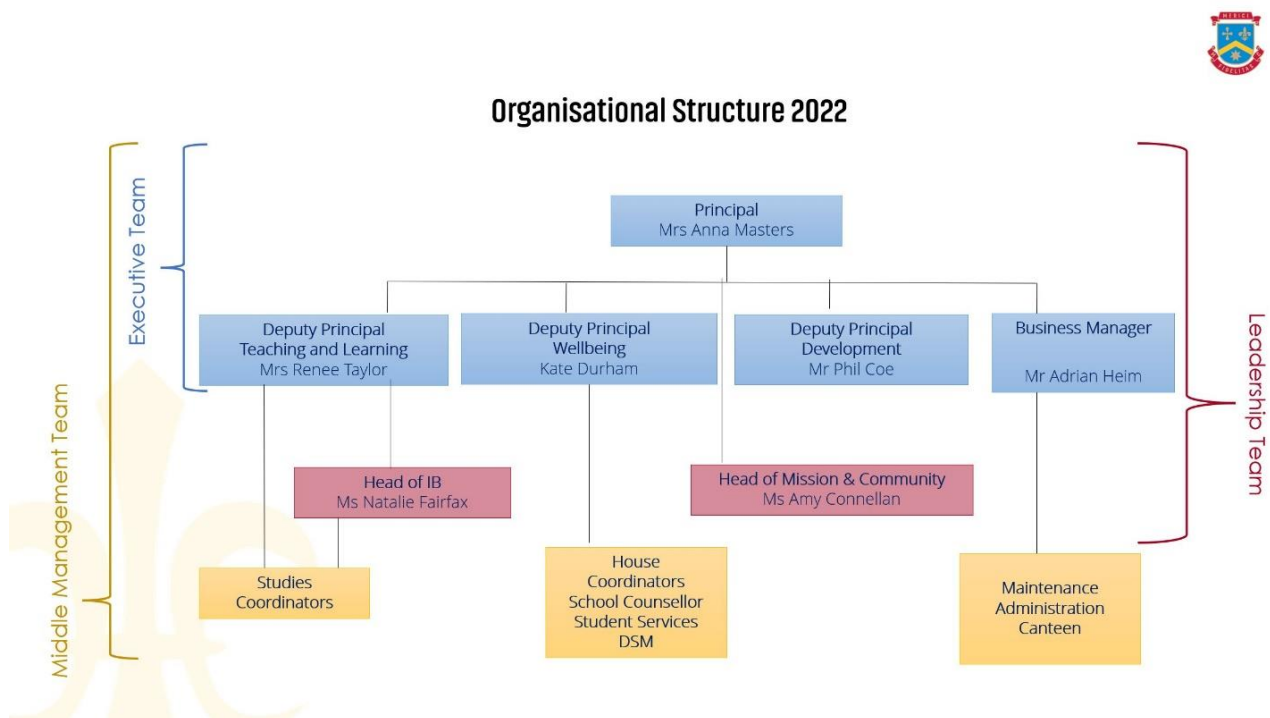
We are a hope-filled community.

“Hold this for certain... Every request you ask of God will certainly be granted.” (Angela Merici’s Counsels)

A full copy of our Strategic Plan can be found [here](#).

## Organisational Structure

We are a College which is evolving and growing and, as such, we have developed a new organisational structure to lead us into a bright future. Please see below organisational chart.



This term has seen a number of services and celebrations for the students in their different year groups. Year 12 students attended a moving Graduation Mass and Awards Ceremony at St Christopher’s Cathedral and we have also had a wonderful celebration with students and their families at the Formal held at the National Museum, it was a magnificent night ending with a rousing rendition of the College Song! We had a moving Advent Mass and High Tea for our Year 10 students, and beautiful Advent Liturgies for our Year 7 – 9 students. This year ended with the celebration of academic achievements for our students in Years 7, 8, 9 and 11. This was the first time that we held our Academic Awards ceremony for these year groups this year, rather than hold off until next year.

To my staff, I thank you for your support and constant care of our students. As several staff are moving to promotional positions, retiring, looking forward to new horizons or moving interstate or retiring, I would like to personally thank you for your professionalism and commitment to educating our young ladies and contributing to the life of Merici College. I wish you an abundance of happiness and peace in all you do in the future.

Thank you to the members of the College Board and especially to the Chair of the Board, Jacqui Keighery for your support, humour, wisdom and your time, which you all give so freely. I am so grateful for the welcome, trust and dedication of the College staff who make my role exciting and do-able! It is with sadness that we farewell Jacqui and Adam Davey from the Board at the end of this year. On behalf of all the Merici College community, I would like to express my sincere thanks and gratitude to both Jacqui and Adam for their commitment to the College, their professionalism, expert advice and guidance

To our parents and carers, I value the partnership we share in educating your daughters and thank you for your support. I appreciated your warm words and encouraging emails. It is very exciting to see an active P&F sub-Committee of the Board already active in the last term of 2021.

We are looking forward to 2022 with the College theme *Serviam*, with building renovations continuing in our Food Technology classrooms and our Chapel, the continued growth of our International Baccalaureate Diploma and Middle Years Programme and many exciting new programs and offerings in the curriculum and extra-curricular area.

For those moving within the ACT or moving interstate or overseas - we hold a strong belief that the education you have received at Merici and the time you have spent here has put you in good stead for whatever path you have chosen. Never be a stranger to us and know that you will always be loved as a member of the Merici College family. If you are leaving our community, can you please contact our Enrolments Officer soon as possible so that we can contact prospective families who would like to join us in 2022 and who are on our waiting lists.

The 2022 school year will begin for Years 7, 11, 12 and new students on Monday, 31 January and for Years 8, 9 and 10 on Tuesday, 1 February. During the week prior to this, staff professional learning, new staff orientation, and staff planning will take place.

In a year of new beginnings, future dreaming, courage, challenge and continued threat from COVID-19, I would like to conclude by sharing, once again, an extract from a beautiful blessing by John O'Donohue.

*A Morning Offering*

May my mind come alive today  
To the invisible geography  
That invites me to new frontiers  
To break the dead shell of yesterdays,  
To risk being disturbed and changed.

May I have the courage today  
To live the life that I would love,  
To postpone my dream no longer,  
But do at last what I came here for  
And waste my heart on fear no more.

With my best wishes for a very happy and safe Christmas and New Year season.

*Anna Masters*

Anna Masters  
Principal