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RESEARCH PLAN

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Seminal Action: Catalysing **a niche research program** that addresses the Excelsia College key research priorities, informs and enriches the curriculum, and complements existing research programs in Australian Universities, thus contributing without redundancy to Australia's overall research output.

Responsible Senior Leader: Director of Research.

Responsible Committee: Research Committee.

A. Introduction

Excelsia College reaffirms the central importance of research to the fulfilment of its academic mission to: "… produce research characterised by exemplary scholarship consistent with a Christian world view, and graduates prepared to lead in a range of professions". In doing so, the College recognises that quality research and research training are integral to the character of universities, and Excelsia is committed to supporting its academic staff and students to achieve this outcome.

Through this Research Plan the College seeks to expand disciplinary, cross-disciplinary and transdisciplinary research, and to encourage collaborative research initiatives across the College and with our Research Partners. Consolidating our research strengths, while lifting the average quality of research across the College's research portfolio, are key themes of the Research Plan. Further, in executing the Research Plan, the College seeks to balance long-term strategic planning for research, with the requirement and desire to be research active in the short term.

B. Partnership with Indiana Wesleyan University

Indiana Wesleyan University (IWU) is a comprehensive Christian university focussing on the liberal arts and professional education. IWU is Indiana's fastest-growing and largest private university. IWU offers more than 80 degree majors, and serves an increasing number of research students, leading most recently to the formation of an Honors College specifically dedicated to graduate research.

In partnership with IWU, Excelsia College aims to become an influential private university in Australia and the Asia-Pacific region. We will achieve this aspiration through delivery on our mission to: "…produce research characterised by exemplary scholarship consistent with a Christian world view…". In pursuit of that mission, Excelsia is already drawing on IWU's substantial research track-record and resources in order to:

(a) invest in building the research infrastructure and momentum of the College;

(b) establish goals, targets and strategies through which we will deliver research of high standard and immediate relevance;

(c) consolidate and extend rigorous standards in research and scholarship;

(d) foster and integrate our disciplinary expertise so as to address important intellectual, social and spiritual issues;

(e) promote respect for, and adherence to, ethical standards in the conduct and reporting of research; and

(f) positively influence our communities through our research and scholarly activities.

We have also developed a formal research relationship with the **NCLS Research Centre at the Australian Catholic University** for ongoing collaborative research, particularly in the areas of spirituality, organisational leadership, and community well-being.

C. Research Vision

Our Research Vision is: "To be a recognised centre of excellence in research, possessing a unique research profile that complements and extends existing research in Australian Higher Education".

This vision assumes the need and desire to continue to foster individual interest-driven research activities, but also to build an institutional research agenda designed to deliver research outcomes that align with our mission, values and strategic directions. This outcome will be achieved not only through the generation of new knowledge, but also by building a culture that respects the intellectual heritage of Christianity, and is committed to the judicious application of all forms of knowledge for the benefit of the wider world. Our research vision also means that we will marshal our research expertise, partnerships, resources and perspectives in order to support the advancement and dissemination of knowledge within and across fields and disciplines, facilitating wherever possible collaborative intra- and inter-institutional research practices.

D. Aim

The specific aim of the Research Plan is to assist the College to:

(a) become a recognised centre of research in priority areas that complement existing research programs in Australian Universities and, in so doing,

(b) establish a unique research profile capable of attracting substantial peer-recognition, sustained staff and student interest, and regular external funding.

This aim implies that the College will systematically facilitate and encourage research and scholarship in order to attract talented students and staff, enrich its courses and programs, contribute to the scholarly community and the wider world, and develop its research profile and reputation. Our success in these areas will depend on our ability to increase the impact of our research, locally, regionally, nationally and internationally; with this impact being measured in terms of the beneficial application of expertise, knowledge, analysis, and discovery to broad arenas of education, commercial and social enterprise activity, public policy and professional practice.

E. Core Principles

We will realise our research vision and achieve our Research Plan aim by:

(a) limiting the number of research fields in which we seek to make a research impact to those most closely aligned to our Mission, Vision and Values;

(b) identifying Priority Research Areas that address salient national and international challenges and complement existing research initiatives;

(c) developing a collaborative and interdisciplinary framework for research and research development that attracts and retains outstanding and aspiring researchers;

(d) strengthening connections between teaching, learning and research across our programs and degrees by building on our current research strengths and shared research interests; and

(e) enhancing public dissemination of our research including its applications in communities, organisations and wider contexts while prioritising research intended for high-impact, peer-refereed journals.

In doing so, Excelsia will seek to fulfil its potential as a University College, engaged across a spectrum of research interests, open to talent from around the world, and attuned to the needs of an interconnected world.

F. Current Research Profile and Activities

Table 1 broadly outlines our current research profile, including designated research leaders, support staff, priority areas, activities, and aligned coursework programs. Relevant links to National Strategic Research Priorities and Fields of Education are also included in Table 1.

G. Structure

Table 2 outlines the key components of our Research Plan including our overall aims, goals and strategies. The goals of the plan are to:

(a) develop a culture of research and scholarship;

(b) consolidate the research curriculum and research in the broader curriculum;

(c) enhance research skills;

(d) support research infrastructure;

(e) build partnerships around research and scholarship; and

(f) drive publication and dissemination of research and scholarship.

Achieving these goals will, over time, enable the college to attract and retain outstanding scholars and researchers; recruit graduate students and post-doctoral fellows; lead undergraduate and postgraduate studies through the dissemination and application of research; provide opportunities for individuals and research teams to develop advanced skills in pure and applied research; and capitalise on our research successes and achievements for the benefit the College and the community.

H. Changing Profile of Research and Scholarship

In response to the implementation of the Research Plan (and see also the Excelsia College five year plan for transition to University status), the College's research profile is expected to change over time as indicated in Table 3 below. Essentially, while seeking to support and maintain the motivation, interests and initiatives of individual academics, Table 3 indicates a substantial change over time in the overall mix of Excelsia's activities in research and scholarship. This transition represents a shift in the College's research/scholarship focus from the largely unplanned research activities of individual academics to the establishment of an intentional College-wide approach to research and scholarship that systematically supports the pursuit of Excelsia's research goals and aspirations.

I. Indicators of Success (Metrics)

Indicators of the success of our Research Plan include increased and increasing:

(a) number of staff holding PhDs;

(b) number of research active staff;

(c) student HDR enrolments and completions;

(d) peer-refereed publications;

(e) number of external grant application successes;

(f) resources and infrastructure available for research (including physical, technological and virtual resources); and

(g) media and community recognition of our research impacts and contributions.

In preparation to become an Australian University, our specific **Year 2020 targets** in each of these areas are:

(a) 100% of full-time academic staff, and 66% of part-time academic staff hold doctorates in their field of teaching or a related area.

(b) 66% of full-time academic staff, and 33% of part-time academic staff are research active according to the stipulations of the College's Research Active policy.

(c) 15 active HDR enrolments, and one cohort of graduating HDR students (in Organisational Leadership).

(d) An average of:
- 5 peer-refereed publications per year over five years for senior academics, principal researchers and discipline leaders;
- 2 peer-refereed publications per year over five years for Heads of Schools/ Programs not included in (a); and
- 1 peer-refereed publication per year over five years for other full-time academic staff.

(e) Three external research grant applications. One external research grant success.

(f) On time delivery of research resources according to Business Plan projections.

(g) An average of 3 media releases per year over five years concerning the College's research profile, activities and outcomes.

Table 1: Current Research Profile

Research Priority Area	Religion, Spirituality and Human Well-being	Theology and Integration	Business and Organisational Leadership	Performance, Creativity and Innovation	Christian Teaching and Teacher Education
Principal Researcher	Dr Maureen Miner Bridges	Dr Peter Davis	TBA	Prof Bridget Aitchison	Prof Martin Dowson
Research Support Staff	Dr Marie-Therese Proctor	Dr Mark Stephens	Dr Maureen Miner Bridges Prof Martin Dowson	Dr Herman Pretorius Dr Peter Atkins	Dr Stephen Fyson
Current Topics and Indicative Interests	• Attachment to God • Spiritual and Psychospiritual Maturity • Psychological Needs and Mental Health • Well-being across the Life-span	• Faith-Life Integration • Christianity, Culture, and Vocation • Contextual, Applied and Analytic Theology • Theology and the Arts • Artist Resilience	• Organisational Leadership • Organisational Psychology • Burnout, Work Engagement and Leadership Sustainability • Ethical Decision Making	• Evaluation in the Creative Arts • Creativity and Cognition • Andragogical Approaches to Performance Studies in Higher Education	• Christian Schooling • Christian Philosophy of Education • Curriculum and Teaching Methods • Teacher Preparation and Teacher Mentoring
Research Activities	• Journal Publications • Book Chapters • Conference Papers/ Presentations • Staff HDR Enrolments/ Completions • Research Units in Coursework Programs • External HDR Supervision	• Conference Papers • Staff HDR Enrolments / Completions • Student Theses / Research Projects • External HDR Supervision	• Journal Publications • Book Chapters • Research Units in Coursework Programs • External HDR Supervision	• Book Chapters • Staff HDR Enrolments / Completions • Research Units in Coursework Programs • Student Theses / Research Projects • External HDR Supervision	• Journal Publications • Book Chapters • Conference Papers/ Presentations • Staff HDR Enrolments/ Completions • Research Units in Coursework Programs • Student Theses/ Research Projects • External HDR Supervision

	• External Research Grant Funding • Editorships and Peer-Reviewing				• External Research Grant Funding • Editorships and Peer-Reviewing
Aligned Postgraduate Coursework Programs	• Master of Counselling		• Master of Arts (Leadership and Applied Ethics) • Master of Business (Research) • PhD (Organisational Leadership)	• Master of Music	• Master of Teaching (Primary) • Master of Teaching (Secondary) • Master of Arts (Religious Education)
Links to National Strategic Research Priorities	*Promoting Population Health and Well-being*		*Lifting Productivity and Economic Growth*		
	Optimise effective delivery of health care and related systems and services	Maximise social and economic participation in society	Maximise Australia's competitive advantage in critical sectors	Identify the means by which Australia can lift productivity and economic growth	Deliver skills for the new economy
ABS Field of Education	Behavioural Science (0903)	Philosophy and Religious Studies (0917)	Business and Management (0803)	Performing Arts (1001)	Teacher Education (0701) Curriculum Studies (0703)
Current Research Partnerships	• University of Tehran • Asian Graduate School of Theology	• Macquarie University • Melbourne University of Divinity	• Australian Catholic University • Indiana Wesleyan University	• University of Southern Queensland • Southern Cross University	• University of Wollongong • University of Western Sydney

Table 2: Research Plan - Aims, Goals and Supporting Strategies

Overall Aims of the Research Plan
(a) To become a recognised centre of research in **priority areas that complement existing research programs** in Australian Universities and, in so doing, (b) Establish a **unique research profile** capable of attracting substantial peer-recognition, sustained staff and student interest, and regular external funding.

Supporting Research Goals and Strategies					
Develop a Culture of Research and Scholarship	*Consolidate the Research Curriculum and Research in the Broader Curriculum*	*Enhance Research Skills*	*Support Research Infrastructure*	*Build Partnerships Around Research and Scholarship*	*Drive Publication and Dissemination of Research and Scholarship*

• All full-time academic staff are expected to:
  o have, or be enrolled in, a HDR
  o publish at least one academic paper per year (if not enrolled in a HDR)
  o attend one academic conference/ seminar/ workshop per year
  o supervise student research if research active (for Principal Supervisors) or be
	• Launch one Doctoral program and one Masters Honours program by 2015
	• Launch two further doctoral programs by 2017
	• Continue to monitor undergraduate and postgraduate research units, projects and assignments to ensure adequate acquisition and demonstration of research skills
	• Formalise research pathways for talented students
	• Ensure that:
		• Centrally oversight all Research Methods and Research Project course units to ensure a high-level of research training for students
		• Invite staff to attend Research Methods and Research Project course units
		• Offer extra-curricular in-house research training for staff and students
		• Sponsor annual writing workshops and retreats
		• Extend and formalise current staff
			• Provide full or part funding for:
			  o HDR fees and expenses
			  o conference attendance
			  o research training events
			• Formalise extended TOR for Research and Research Ethics Committees
			• Extend data capture procedures for research publications
			• Maintain and further populate the College's Research Web Page
			• Purchase data analysis software as
				• Invite staff and external academics to share SoTL and research activities at formal and informal events (including internally organised seminars and conferences) in order to build collegial interest in research and scholarship
				• Coalesce staff teams around shared research agendas
				• Consolidate/ formalise current research partnerships with various universities
					• Establish minimum expected annual research/scholarship outputs for each staff classification level
					• Apply for external research grants
					• Provide training in journal submission and response formats and strategies
					• Identify a range of journals suitable for the publication of staff research in and for the community – regularly briefing the wider community on these applications and impacts through various media and

working towards research active status (for Associate Supervisors) o account for research activities in Performance Reviews o support colleagues' and students' research aspirations o engage in the ongoing Scholarship of Teaching and Learning and the integration of research into teaching practice	o CUOs in all courses contain up-to-date peer-refereed readings and other research-based materials o all academic staff refer to research and scholarship (including their own research and scholarship) in their teaching o students are expected to engage with recent research and scholarship in their course activities and assessments	mentoring arrangements • Launch a biannual interdisciplinary academic conference • Publicise external research training events and workshops (e.g., ACSPRI)	required • Allocate designated research spaces in new premises • Continue to develop research policies, procedures and templates as required	• Extend participation in joint research applications, projects and publications • Continue to develop school-university and business-university partnerships with a research agenda	technological platforms

Table 3: Changing Research Profile

	2014	2017	2020
Organisation of Research and Scholarship			
Research/Scholarship by Individual Academics	●	●	●
Collaborative Research/Scholarship	●	●	●
Formally Organised Research Teams		●	●
Research Centres			●
Scope of Research and Scholarship			
Unidisciplinary Research/Scholarship	●	●	●
Multidisciplinary Research/Scholarship		●	●
Training for Research and Scholarship			
Formal Student Research Training	●	●	●
Formal Staff Research Training		●	●
Funding for Research and Scholarship			
Internally Funded Research/Scholarship	●	●	●
Externally Funded Research/Scholarship		●	●
Dissemination of Research and Scholarship			
Research Web-page	●	●	●
Internal Conferences/Seminars	●	●	●
External Conferences/Seminars	●	●	●
Lower Impact Journal Publications	●	●	●
Higher-Impact Journal Publications		●	●
Community/Media Briefings/Engagement		●	●

- ● = formally in progress; blank = not formally in process