



TEACHING AND LEARNING POLICY

Rationale or Purpose

Villanova College is a Catholic college “striving for excellence in boys’ education as an Augustinian community one in mind and heart on the way towards God”.ⁱ

Villanova College believes that every student has the right to a high quality and inspirational education. Pedagogical excellence is pivotal to high quality learning. Villanova College, in delivering the curriculum in each of its schools, strives to adopt a comprehensive teaching-learning framework based on research informed best practice. The progressive implementation of any such framework is central to pedagogical development at Villanova College.

Education in the Augustinian tradition is concerned with building a firm foundation of knowledge for personal and spiritual life, as well as a basis for professional life. Real education is characterised by a searching for knowledge and understanding that is integrated with personal experience. St Augustine speaks about the teacher within who can test the truth of what is being taught. This teacher is the presence of God within each person. Processes of interior reflection and evaluation are part of this.ⁱⁱ

In the Augustinian model of education, “learning... is to be understood as more than the pursuit of ‘academic excellence’... but more appropriately as the pursuit of wisdom, the capacity to understand one’s self, others, and the world in the light of the Ultimate reality of God”.ⁱⁱⁱ In the Augustinian model, teachers, students and parents form a learning community pursuing goals in a climate of love and friendship, sharing with others what they have or gain, and receiving what God has given or will give to each.^{iv}

At Villanova College, love of learning is founded on the Augustinian values of interiority, search for truth and community. These are known as the “gateway values” because they present points of entry or portals into a rich field of attributes which are hallmarks of Augustinian education.^v These include:^{vi} love of God and one’s neighbour, solidarity with the poor and marginalised, valuing humility, promotion of freedom, actively building and nurturing community, devotion to the common good in a spirit of service, active participation in the sacramental life, participation and shared responsibility, friendship and prayer.

Villanova College strives to adopt a teaching and learning framework that adapts readily to an Augustinian approach to education while also responding to research informed best practice. “For many people in Augustinian schools this is an era of great activity with little time to look within. In our broader community these are times when there is a great deal of confusion, especially concerning values...”^{vii} It is essential that Augustinian values and Augustinian approaches to education continue to be fostered and preserved.

Policy

Teaching and learning approaches are to continue to be informed by research informed best practice and aligned with the Augustinian model of education and Augustinian values and where possible are to be infused with an understanding and appreciation of an authentic Augustinian pedagogy.

Implementation

The Augustinian approach to education and Augustinian values are to continue to be part of the staff, student and parent induction and formation processes on an ongoing basis.

Evaluation and Review

This policy is to be reviewed after three years or earlier to take account of any changes to relevant legislation or regulations or to the College's operations and practices and to ensure it remains appropriate to the changing environment.

Review Date: 20 June 2020.

Endorsement: Approved and endorsed by the College Board on 20 June 2017.

References

Villanova College Vision Statement

Villanova Prospectus

Villanova University, Augustine's Values. Retrieved 4th April, 2009:

<http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm> Augustinian Values, An Essay: 2009.

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<http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm> Augustinian Values, An Essay: 2009.

Villanova Strategic Plan 2014-2018.

Villanova University, Augustine's Values. Retrieved 4th April, 2009:

<http://www.villanova.edu/mission/spirituality/about/values.htm>; Villanova College Curriculum Policy Statement including Curriculum Framework: 2015; Villanova Strategic Plan 2014-2018.

Education An Augustinian Approach: 2001