

KNOX COLLEGE AND SALMOND COLLEGE STRATEGIC PLAN 2024–2029



Introduction

Our vision is for Knox and Salmond Colleges to be world-class residential colleges where students are part of a community that affirms and empowers every resident, expands thought and outlook, encourages service, fosters leadership, and builds supportive friendships.

Ko te toa i a tini, i a mano o te takata.

It is the bravery of a multitude, of thousands of people.

This Ngāi Tahu whakatauākī refers to the strength of collectivity, and testifies to the vibrancy of the living tradition in each of our Colleges. It is attributed to Tū Whakauika & Te Oreorehua.

Our College Communities:

- affirm and empower every resident;
- expand thought and outlook;
- seek to serve;
- foster leadership;
- build friendship

Our Goals

Student Experience

- 1. We aim to provide care for our students in a supportive community that enables all to flourish, to achieve academic success, and to enjoy their student years in a safe and healthy environment.**

To do this we will:

- Provide excellent pastoral care through well-trained staff and the provision of clear pathways for accessing pastoral support when needed.
- Nurture a caring and compassionate approach to student welfare among all staff.
- Keep abreast of current challenges facing young people and develop the capacity to provide support.
- Maintain strong working relationships with the support services provided by the University of Otago, the Otago Polytechnic, and by the wider community and ensure that students have access to these when required.
- Encourage student participation without pressure or discomfort in the social life of the Colleges.
- Encourage and support student initiative in contributing to a vibrant and positive college environment.
- Draw upon the resources of College Fellows and Alumni to provide support and inspiration for students.
- Increase the funds available for scholarship and hardship support.
- Work with whanau, parents, guardians, and care-givers where appropriate to ensure that students are supported through difficult times and to develop strategies for addressing any issues of concern.
- Utilise the annual residents surveys in order to assess performance and identify areas where improvements can be made.

- 2. We aim to provide an environment where residents can pursue their academic goals to the best of their ability.**

To do this we will:

- Provide academic support in accordance with the requirements of the University and Polytechnic and that is responsive to changing student needs and learning styles.
- Provide tutorials, mentoring, referrals, advice, guidance etc.
- Regularly review the academic support in place.

- Encourage applications from students studying a diverse range of courses and at varying levels of tertiary study.
- Recognise the diverse range of academic abilities in the college and provide appropriate support at all levels of need.
- Maintain strong channels of communication with Otago Polytechnic and with the University of Otago in order to maintain a good awareness of student programmes and academic needs.

3. We aim to provide opportunities for participation in a range of activities, including social, sporting, cultural, musical, spiritual, service, sustainability practices, and faith-based pursuits.

To do this we will:

- Encourage and support intercollegiate activities across the two colleges, Salmond and Knox, and in the wider Residential College environment.
- Promote clubs and recreational activities.
- Promote connections with a diverse cultural and socio-economic range of people including wider community groups external to the Colleges.
- Facilitate and support a suitable student leadership structure appropriate for each College.
- Provide regular and varied in-college social events.
- Provide spaces appropriate to a range of student social activity, including quiet spaces for retreat.
- Investigate the building of a new recreational facility to be shared by both Colleges.

4. We will provide appealing, nutritious, sustainable, and plentiful food for the diverse range of resident needs and preferences, and in a cost-effective manner.

To do this we will:

- Innovate – remain current and relevant, and endeavour to keep ahead of food trends.
- Engage with residents and regularly review feedback.
- Maintain flexibility in menu, based on student feedback.

College Ethos

5. We aim to provide opportunities for meaningful engagement with the special character of the Colleges

To do this we will:

- Provide access to regular opportunities for worship that give expression to the Christian foundation of the Colleges while honouring all faiths and those of no faith.
- Provide safe gatherings for respectful discussion, exploration of, and learning about various traditions of faith.
- Organise regular opportunities for service within the wider community
- Provide access to speakers on topics of social justice, theological understanding, care for creation, and transformational living.
- Provide access to chaplaincy services which are respectful of varied traditions of spirituality and faith.

6. We aim to support and encourage equity and diversity across the College communities. We will provide accessible, inclusive, respectful and welcoming environments in which students are supported towards confidently achieving their full potential.

To do this we will:

- Recognise and seek to support a culture of holistic student success for equity groups, including those with a disability/impairment, first in family, LGBTTIQA+, gender diverse, those from a low socio-economic background, migrant/refugee background, and women.
- Value people's differences in culture, belief, experience, knowledge, skills, values, ways of thinking, and worldviews. Our Colleges commit to working together with students to foster meaningful relationships based on dialogue and mutual respect.
- Support the needs and aspirations of Māori and Pacific students, and help them to thrive through the unique college experience.
- Actively recruit students from as wide a pool as possible recognising students' diverse strengths, skills, attributes, and worldviews.
- Provide opportunities for Māori and Pacific students to enter the Colleges in their first year of study.
- Recognise the importance, and contested nature, of space and continue to make progressive changes both to improve the experience of the campus environment by students from Māori/Pacific/equity communities, and to reflect our immediate and South Pacific location.
- Seek to recruit and retain staff from Māori, Pacific, and equity communities.

7. We are committed to honouring Te Tiriti o Waitangi

To do this we will:

- Recognise Māori as tangata whenua and seek to uphold Te Tiriti o Waitangi.
- Provide an environment where taurira Māori feel they belong, can achieve wellbeing and success, and can self-assuredly flourish as Māori.

- Deliver exemplary living and learning environments and spaces that are safe, encouraging places for taura Māori to thrive as Māori learners.
- Integrate te ao Māori and tikanga Māori into our student experience and pastoral services.
- Support ongoing professional development to foster Māori cultural enrichment, intercultural acumen, and ethical conduct for staff, and where appropriate for students.

8. We aim to minimise our environmental footprint.

To do this we will:

- Regularly review the practices and facilities of both Colleges in order to identify and, where possible, implement measurable improvements to the economic, environmental, and social sustainability of all College operations.
- Reduce or remove waste from our processes and systems.
- Minimise and make efficient use of energy (transport, fuel, heating, electricity, etc) and water.
- Improve our supply chains to increase the number of suppliers who are practicing in a sustainable manner (or working to improve their practices.)
- Upgrade, design and build facilities to the best sustainable standards wherever possible.
- Promote biodiversity and regenerative practices.
- Include information on sustainability in staff induction and offer ongoing development in sustainable practices
- Provide educational opportunities and information to residents about practices that reduce individual and collective environmental footprints.
- Encourage residents to engage with activities and community organisations that promote sustainable actions and practices.

Staff

9. We aim to provide an excellent working environment for all staff, and maintain an appropriate staff structure to fulfil the aims set out in this Strategic Plan.

To do this we will:

- Review and maintain effective recruitment practices/processes.
- Develop induction processes and provide staff handbooks.
- Ensure staff workloads are appropriate and manageable.
- Provide regular opportunities for Professional Development.

- Provide support and structures which promote staff wellbeing.
- Provide a comprehensive training programme each year for Residential Leaders and Sub-wardens and ensure that they are well supported in their roles throughout the year.
- Regularly survey staff for a 'vibe-check' of the organisation.
- Encourage staff to use the Employment Assistance Programme provider, Benestar, and to access supervision as required.
- Regularly review staff provision and roles to ensure compliance with the Pastoral Code.
- Provide an appropriate range of policies and processes for addressing staff concerns or complaints.
- Ensure the maintenance of competitive employment conditions and remuneration.
- Implement regular reviews of staffing levels and competencies.
- Provide good quality residential accommodation for all staff who are required to live on or adjacent to campus.
- Maintain effective review of staff residential accommodation to ensure that it is well maintained and fit for purpose.

Stakeholder Engagement

- 10. We aim to proactively cultivate long-term stakeholder engagement and marketing practices to build strong connections with key audiences. This includes raising awareness among and recruiting prospective students, maintaining strong relationships with alumni and key stakeholders, and effectively managing media as the need arises.**

To do this we will:

- Develop a 3-5 year Marketing and Engagement Strategy off the back of the Strategic Plan. This will be aspirational yet achievable and encompass all stakeholders and audiences.
- Communicate effectively with incoming residents in an up-to-date and modern manner, creating excitement and reassurance about their upcoming year as residents of the Colleges.
- Build a strong brand and marketing foundation which can adapt to an ever-changing market.
- Utilise word-of-mouth marketing and social media channels as key tools to recruit prospective residents.

- Fully understand the competitor landscape and all options available to students for accommodation during their time studying at either the University or the Polytechnic.
- Ensure effective communication with the tertiary education sector and other relevant information sources in order to maintain a strong awareness of enrolment trends and demographics.
- Promote the good news stories about the Colleges among all stakeholders, especially prospective students and their parents.
- Support current and former residents to tell positive stories of College life.
- Articulate our points of difference, including special character.
- Send newsletters to alumni at least twice yearly, telling the stories and encouraging financial support for scholarships etc.
- Strengthen Alumni databases.
- Maintain strong relationships with members of the Senior Common Room at Knox College and foster opportunities for Fellows to contribute to the life of the College.
- Maintain a strong working relationship with The Foundation of Knox and Salmond Colleges for the benefit of residents at both Colleges.
- Develop a clear Public Relations and Communications Plan to respond to any news story in a timely and effective manner. This includes maintaining effective relationships with UoO Communications Media Team.
- Support engagement and marketing functions through appropriate resourcing.
- Ensure Knox College is supported to proactively mitigate the enduring legacy of negative publicity.

Finance and Infrastructure

- 11. We aim to provide a high quality residential experience for students at a competitive price while providing for the prudent financial management and long-term sustainability of both Colleges.**

To do this we will:

- Ensure that the annual budgets of the Colleges are sufficient to undertake capital works and required maintenance and to avoid the accrual of delayed maintenance costs.
- Ensure that the annual budgets of the Colleges are sufficient to maintain staffing levels at a level where a high quality service can be delivered to all residents, and that staff are paid competitive market rates.
- Seek to maintain an occupancy rate of at least 98% across both Colleges each year.

- Provide appropriate funding to develop and enhance the reputation of both Colleges and to facilitate effective recruitment strategies.
- Aim to achieve an operating surplus each year as close to \$500,000 as possible, and to build a reserve fund of five million dollars within ten years.
- Maintain the reserve fund to ensure the survival of the colleges should an adverse situation occur, and to allow the colleges to take advantage of any “one-off” opportunities.
- Actively explore and implement strategies to generate new income streams wherever possible.
- Ensure that any borrowing required for the purpose of campus development does not exceed manageable levels.

12. We aim to maintain all buildings and infrastructure of the Colleges to a high standard and ensure that they are fit for purpose for protection of the health, safety, and comfort of all users.

To do this we will:

- Undertake regular reviews of all buildings and infrastructure to ensure that maintenance and improvements are undertaken in a timely and cost-effective manner in accordance with the ten year maintenance plan.
- Maintain onsite staff to provide oversight of the buildings and infrastructure and attend to all maintenance needs as they arise.
- Conduct regular reviews of the buildings and infrastructure of the two Colleges in order to assess the degree to which the facilities provided continue to meet the needs of staff, students, and other users.
- Explore opportunities to enhance the infrastructure of the campus grounds and buildings so that they reflect the cultural diversity of the residential community.
- Strive to ensure that the facilities offered at both Colleges meet or exceed industry standards.
- Maintain and keep under constant review a risk register, campus emergency plan, and health and safety register.
- Regularly review the campus plan and pursue opportunities for further development of the campus infrastructure to meet the needs of current and future students.
- Ensure that appropriate procedures are in place to facilitate the prompt reporting and satisfactory resolution of any damage to property, or hazards associated with College buildings and infrastructure.
- Continue to develop the facilities in both Colleges so that they are culturally inclusive and welcoming.