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Campion's main building



Easter Term at Campion

CAMPION'S BRAG

Catholic Learning in the Liberal Arts

www.campion.edu.au

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Special events at Campion

Last year the College held a successful Faith Formation Seminar attended by over 30 senior students from Catholic schools in Sydney, Melbourne and Brisbane.

Focusing on intellectual and moral formation for young people, the three-day seminar is being held again this year – on **Wednesday-Friday, 9-11 July**.

A second event of importance is the College's Open Day – held as a way of showcasing what the College has to offer. This year it will be held on **Wednesday, 27 August, from 4.00 to 6.00pm**.

Flyers on both these events are enclosed. Some free passes are available.

Enquiries can be directed to Michael Mendieta phone: (02) 9896 9313 or email: m.mendieta@campion.edu.au



Fr John Flader, who will be speaking on 'God and Science' at the Faith Formation Seminar

Australian Leaders Forum in August

A national forum on Catholic leadership, of which Campion College is the major sponsor, is being held in Melbourne on August 1-3 this year.

Named the John Paul II Australian Leaders Forum, this will be the second occasion on which it will take place – the first having been held in Sydney in 2012.

The Forum provides an opportunity over three days for Catholic and other Christian leaders, in various areas of professional and public life, to come together for two main purposes – namely, to gain a greater understanding of the challenges facing Christian belief and life in present-day Australia, and to extend the personal networks which could contribute to a movement of spiritual and moral revitalisation of the culture.

The keynote speaker will be **Dr Helen Alvaré**, a well-known American Catholic writer and speaker on family and life issues. Other speakers will include the former Deputy Prime Minister, Mr Tim Fischer, the President of Campion College, Dr Ryan Messmore, and the foreign affairs journalist, Mr Greg Sheridan.

Further information is available on the Forum's website – www.jp2alf.org.au, or by contacting Philippa Le Feuvre, at info@jp2alf.org.au or on (07) 3832 8260.



Helen Alvaré



Campion's new students with Dr Ryan Messmore (centre) after the Matriculation ceremony

First Impressions

While most Campion students are recent school-leavers or have come from other universities after finding them unsatisfactory, usually for academic or religious reasons, the College also appeals to mature age students.

One student who joined the College this year is Mr Robin Speed, co-founder of a Sydney law firm with more than 40 years' experience as a practitioner and senior consultant. He offered the following observations on coming to Campion from a long-standing professional background.

Campion College is an undiscovered sanctuary for mature age students. Whether you start like me at 70, or 50, the College is a very special place.

You are first impressed with the welcoming attitude: unlike other universities, all the students and staff greet you with a friendly smile and know each other.

The atmosphere is good. The classes are small and the lecturers are personal. Demanding intellectually, but not too. For the students who want to keep their minds active, this is the place. No big university, no being lost in the crowds.

The lecturers are excellent. As good as at the University of Sydney where I studied law. Here they want to teach.

Above all, your class is predominantly young people who have not long left school and who want to be there. You are part of their fun with life, and seriousness with their subjects.

If you want to stay young intellectually and in spirit, Campion is the place to go.



Robin Speed

The Campion community at work

Soon after the start of First Semester, a working bee took place at the College involving both staff and students.

Organised on a Friday, a largely non-teaching day when student and staff time was more flexible, the aim was to refurbish the buildings and grounds and to construct a new fire pit (which was highlighted in a 'Campion's Brag' last December as a place where students

could gather in the evening, particularly during winter).

Some groups picked up sticks and debris while others washed windows, planted flowers and painted the interior of the Dining Hall.

The working bee was a worthwhile community event, engaging the combined efforts of staff and students in enhancing the College campus.



Students planting flowers (left) and washing windows in the main building during the working bee.

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Campion Foundation

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A Champion Education – Foundation for Further Studies

As one of Champion's inaugural academic staff members, **Dr Stephen McInerney** (pictured), Senior Lecturer in Literature, has been directly engaged in educating over 100 students who have now graduated from the College. Here he reflects on how a Champion education has built a foundation for those going on to higher degrees.

Often, in this overly-bureaucratic age, faculty members spend so much time filling out forms, identifying teaching 'outcomes', 'learning objectives', preparing for audits and so much else, we risk losing sight of one of the main purposes of our vocations as teachers and scholars: to form the minds and hearts of our students. The truth is, as necessary as it might be to identify objectives and outcomes of our teaching, the real witnesses to our achievements are our students and graduates themselves, and the real satisfaction for us as faculty is seeing our students grow and flourish in their lives at Champion and beyond.

It is particularly heartening to see our students go on to pursue vocations to the religious life, to make good Christian marriages, and to commence work in a variety of professions, including teaching, medicine and law.

As faculty members, though, we take a particular pride in seeing our students go on to higher degrees at other universities, and excelling in them.

In recent years, we have been delighted to witness former students undertake higher degrees in a range of disciplines, including English Literature, Philosophy, Theology, International Relations and, most recently, in Medieval Studies (combining History, Latin and Literature in particular).

A number of our students have been awarded First Class Honours, or have received Firsts for their Honours theses, and two students – Angela Schumann and Alexander Westenberg – have this year commenced studies for PhDs in English Literature and Philosophy at Monash and UNSW respectively. (Alexander's reflections on his Champion education appear elsewhere on this page.)

Integration of Champion's degree

All these students testify to the fact that Champion has prepared them to excel in their new programs of study. Champion's integrated degree opens students to the

interdependence of the disciplines.

Having studied philosophy and theology in conjunction with literature at Champion, Angela Schumann is particularly well-placed to appreciate the relationship between Shakespeare's plays and Scholastic and Christian Humanist theologies.

Dylan Littler, who is pursuing an honours degree in medieval studies at the University

of Sydney, is likewise well prepared, having studied medieval history, medieval literature, medieval Latin and medieval theology and philosophy at Champion.

There is no program quite like ours.

In this day and age, it is a rare privilege for students to undertake such a program, and a rare honour for those of us who teach it. We thank God for it.

Alexander Westenberg is a Champion graduate (2012) who is the fifth in a family of seven boys, two others of whom have also graduated from the College – Jonathan in 2011 and Thomas in 2013.

They were all home-schooled by their mother, Leonie, one of the pioneers of home-based education in Australia.

Alexander has recently won the Vice-Chancellor's Medal for Arts & Sciences at the University of Notre Dame Australia, and provides these thoughts on the significance of his Champion education in preparing him for post-graduate studies.



Alexander Westenberg with Dr Susanna Rizzo, Champion's Senior Lecturer in History and Polding Lecturer in Classics

After graduating from Champion, I found that the broad education received during my time at the College has served me in a range of scenarios.

Studying the disciplines of History, Philosophy, Theology, Literature, and Latin at Champion has helped me to draw connections between all facets of life, even when others see none.

When I was given the opportunity to attend a two-day Philosophy workshop at ANU, I found that, though I had directly studied less than many of those around me who had only studied Philosophy in their undergraduate degree, I was nevertheless familiar with the topics of everyone else's theses, and able to converse with them freely on all areas.

In addition, the workload at Champion was excellent preparation for the research necessary to study my Honours at Notre Dame. My friends who have studied elsewhere were doing thousand, fifteen hundred word essays, when I was doing two thousand, twenty-five hundred word essays.

I was encouraged always, not to write an essay, but a literary paper, well-reasoned and well-researched.

When I moved from Champion to Honours,

I was already prepared for the research and discipline required for a fifteen thousand word thesis, not to mention the various minor research papers required.

Aside from the academic side of my time at Champion, being involved in the foundation and running of three societies (Fencing, Chess, and Classics), aside from being enormous fun, helped me to be positive and outgoing enough not to be afraid to approach a daunting situation and get involved.

This experience I am now putting to use as one of the four Convenors of the UNSW Faculty of Arts & Social Sciences Postgraduate Conference later this year, which aims to bring together the research students of the various schools within the Faculty.

Because of the wide cultural education I received at Champion, I understand the danger of too great a specialisation.

I hope one day to work in the field of education, preferably tertiary, and I believe my time at Champion College was without doubt the best start I could have had on that journey.

'What did Champion College provide for my children?'

Lesa Meese is a Trustee of Champion's governing body, the Institute Board, and the mother of three graduates. Here she reflects on the decision which she and her husband Tony made in 2006 to send their two oldest daughters, Olivia and Madeleine, to a Catholic Liberal Arts college only newly opened, and later to enrol a third daughter Bridget.

Right: The Meese family – Lesa and Tony Meese (centre at back), next to Bridget (Champion graduate 2011) in green top. Seated at front – Olivia (left) and Madeleine (centre), both graduates in 2008.



Having gleaned the truth about why we are here, where we came from, where we are going, who we are – in short, the purpose of our existence – from my parents, observation of the world around me and the odd wise person who crossed my path, I realised how little I knew, and yet how essential this understanding is to excel and be happy in life, no matter what one did.

My husband Tony and I wanted our children to have this. We wanted them to have a foundational education – superior to the ones we had received – which would furnish them with a world view from which they could catapult into their chosen career and vocational path equipped with everything necessary to succeed well, be content, flourish in life and attain eternal happiness.

We didn't want them to go the way of many people who, though academically brilliant, limp through life like persons with one leg, struggling with uncertainty, doubts, erroneous beliefs and misguided notions, which lead them to disastrous decisions of varying number and gravity, not only for

themselves but for the people they serve in their profession and the society as a whole. With the certainty that being excellent at your job or chosen vocation requires much more than academic 'smarts' – good character formation is more essential – we tried to educate our children in the great Life Truths – aware, alas, that we were really inadequate at doing this, not having studied philosophy, history, literature and theology to any comprehensive degree in our chosen science-based fields (and not being good teachers to boot!)

So, imagine our excitement and delight when first we heard about the imminent opening of a tertiary institution promising to fulfil all our hopes and dreams for our children!

Giving Champion a Go

What did we have to lose in giving it a go – and more enticing, what did we have to gain?

And so, we encouraged, cajoled and supported our first two daughters to go to Champion. (Unfortunately, our oldest had already graduated and commenced his career.)

We were confident that, while there would be teething problems, homesickness and other difficulties, it would be worth it from many angles, not least being that it would be character-building and would teach our children to stand on their own two feet.

We have not been disappointed, and so, our third daughter has since graduated from Champion and our remaining daughters will follow, having not only their parents but now their siblings encouraging them as well.

Champion fulfilled its promise and more. Our children have matured into well-rounded, autonomous adults, better educated than their parents, comprehensively knowledgeable about the world around them, human nature and their Faith.

They have gone on to their chosen careers of medicine and teaching underpinned with the essential tools of knowledge, reasoning and deduction, conviction in their Faith and pursuit of virtue developed at Champion, to strive for excellence, not only in their jobs but in all they do; to serve God and their neighbour to the best of their ability.

Why did I come to Champion?

Two students who have joined the college this year, **Jacob Munday** and **Dominique Matuszek**, explain their reasons for enrolling at Champion and what they have found.



After studying for a semester at another University, I became frustrated with the lack of structure within the degree and found it hard to grasp any solid learning.

The subjects I enrolled in had little connection between them, and really didn't answer the big questions.

In the end, although I was going well academically, I thought that there had to be more than simply turning up to class and passing essays.

Luckily I found Champion College, which has given me the confidence to strive for

a healthy life balance of study, work, sport and worship. This is where I am able to develop myself academically, professionally and spiritually.

The lecturers, College librarian, members of staff and, of course, my fellow students, are all great people. I've been overwhelmed by the friendliness of everybody. The College community is really something unique.

I'm looking forward to the journey ahead!

Jacob Munday, Sydney



My road into Champion was a bit different to others. I was planning to go straight into a nursing degree at the University of Tasmania, but that all changed when my mum organised for Dr Messmore to give a talk down in Hobart.

Dr Messmore talked about Champion and all it had to offer. I found it interesting but didn't consider it because I had already been accepted into nursing. He also mentioned the College's Summer Program each January, which my parents thought would be a great opportunity, so they organised for my brother and I to go along.

At this stage I was set on following my planned path and was a little reluctant to go. However, once I arrived at Champion, that completely changed. I met some awesome people and really enjoyed the introductory lectures.

I started considering Champion as an option, but as I didn't have the points required for the course, I didn't think it was possible. Then at dinner one night, I got talking to one of the staff members and he told me I could get in as a provisional student.

So after summer camp I looked into it. Six weeks later, I arrived as a student, and am now enjoying every minute.

Champion not only has a great degree to prepare you for anything life throws at you, but the people and the environment are amazing!

Dominique Matuszek, Hobart



Champion is most grateful for your generosity.

ALL GIFTS ARE TAX-DEDUCTIBLE.