Catholic College Wodonga
Submission

Does where you live affect whether you go on to further education?
Inquiry into the geographic differences in the rate in which Victorian Students Participate in Higher Education

Statewide snapshot
The statewide snapshot tells us that rural students are less likely to pursue Tertiary Education. 33.9% of rural students in 2006 began tertiary education compared to 52.1% of city students. (Andrew Morton, University of Melbourne, 2007) Even more worrying is the deferral rate. One in 15 city students defer while one in six rural students defer. At Catholic College Wodonga 27% deferred in 2006 and 24% deferred in 2007. Our deferral rate back in 2003 was only 8% but over the last three years it has stabilised around 25%. Despite the fact that we have above average ENTER ranks (about 3%) we are well below the state average for tertiary entrance in the year immediately after school and are uncertain as to how many deferrals take up their places as this data is not yet available to schools.

Factors affecting Tertiary education uptake
Many factors influence a student’s decision to pursue tertiary education
- Socio Economic circumstances of family
- Occupation of parent
- Motivation, feelings about school
- Pathway choice
- Employment market
- ENTER score
- Proximity and access to tertiary education

All the above factors may be influenced by where you live. At Catholic College we are interested in the factors we can actually impact. We want to -
- provide excellent teachers and excellent professional development for them.
- provide breadth and richness in our subject offerings
- ensure good subject choice through effective course counselling
- ensure our students achieve their best ENTER score possible through excellent teaching and subject delivery
- provide excellent pathways counselling
- support transitions from school to education and work
Catholic College Wodonga (CCW) Data

The following data indicates that Catholic College students achieve just above the state average on General Achievement tests (that is aptitude testing). That our study scores are on or just above the state average and that our ENTER scores increase further in value due to the number of scaled up subjects we offer and our students undertake. However our On Track Data reveals that more of our students are deferring which means the link with tertiary education is more tenuous.

The GAT - CCW 2007
GAT - General Achievement Test
- Written Communication 30.58
- Maths/Science/Technology 30.62
- Humanities/Arts/Social Sciences 31.29
State Average is 30 in each area.

Analysis: The GAT data correlates with our Year 7 & 9 AIM data and indicates we have students of just above average aptitude in the academic parameters tested.

Study Scores at CCW
Study scores reflect achievement in the subject
- State average is 30 in each study
- 30 - 31 average study score at CCW
- 8% of study scores are over 40 at CCW

Analysis: Our students achieve on or just above the state average in their raw study scores.

ENTER scores 2007 CCW
Study scores are scaled to reflect the competitiveness of the study before calculating the ENTER - an Entrance Rank for University selection
- 44% of students received an ENTER over 70
- 26.5% received an ENTER over 80
- 15 students an ENTER over 90
- State average ENTER 64.04 for girls and 67.35 CCW girls
- State average ENTER for boys was 61.42 and CCW boys 64.04

Analysis: ENTER scores are on average 3-4 percentage points above the state average. This indicates that we offer a significant number of scaled up studies that contribute to substantial increments in ENTER rank which is calculated after the scaling of subjects.

On Track Data - CCW for 2006 cohort
Where our students went after school (April 2007 surveyed)
The first number is CCW and the bracketed number is the state average.
• University 33% (47%)
• Deferred University 24% (8%)
• TAFE 16% (20%)
• Apprentice 11% (9%)
• Employed 15% or looking for work 1% (16% for both categories)

(62% Response rate for On Track data which is lower than state average of almost 70%)

Analysis: You can see from this data that we have incredibly high deferral rates that then put our students in greater jeopardy in terms of connection to tertiary education. This is a new and increasing trend for our school that did not exist prior to 2004.

What we are doing specifically at Catholic College
• Provided a Senior Study for Year 12 staffed with tutors
• Supported staff to become VCAA Assessors, join professional associations and undertake targeted professional development
• Supplied VCAA VCE Data to Teachers for Professional Reflection
• Facilitated involvement in Student Lectures locally and in Melbourne.
• We allow Year 11 students to accelerate and ensure that most of our graduates complete 6 studies which is the maximum in terms of calculation of the ENTER.
• Encourage past students and their parents to return to Catholic College and share their experiences of the transition to University life.
• Preparing students for part time work in addition to their study.
• Keep raising expectations of our students so they know that they can achieve much greater things.
• Cater for all students to finish Year 12, whichever pathway they take through VCAL and VET studies.

However we cannot bridge the gap alone and need help in system wide areas to support improved tertiary education transitions. We ask the government to consider-

Key Issues and Recommendations

1. Quality teacher provision
Because we live on the Victorian/NSW border teacher provision is a major issue. Teachers in the Albury Wodonga region can earn significantly more pay and much better conditions by driving over the border to Albury (NSW) which has become easier with the new freeway.

Recommend:
• Parity of pay and conditions for Victorian teachers with NSW teachers.

2. **Teacher professional development**
Accessing professional development including VCAA Assessor Panels is made more difficult because rural and regional teachers fund their own travel and accommodation.

**Recommend:**

• Funding support be given to rural and regional teachers to enable them to participate more equitably in VCAA Assessor Panels and professional development opportunities in metropolitan areas.

3. **Deferral rates**

**Recommend:**

• Independent Youth Allowance apply automatically (no earnings qualifications) to rural and regional students so they can make the transition to university the year after year 12 completion instead of working for 12 months to qualify. We also believe that the Independent Youth Allowance be means tested for all students whether they be city or country students.

4. **Accommodation access in Melbourne and other regional areas.**

**Recommend:**

• Colleges and on campus accommodation give priority to rural and regional students. College life supports students to stay at university by providing better social networks and facilities in the transition of regional students.

5. **Financial support**

Youth Allowance does not flow to students until May – 3 or 4 months into their course. Students or parents have to support relocation and costs until then.

**Recommend:**

• Youth Allowance commence in late January when costs of relocation, accommodation, university fees and charges commence.

• Provide tax relief to rural families with students at University especially those burdened with more than one child attending University.

• Free travel cards on metropolitan transport and heavily discounted travel to regional and rural
centres to assist rural students in visiting their families and remain connected with their communities.

6. Social, emotional support on University campuses
Some rural students return home because they don’t enjoy the experience at a City university and feel dislocated physically, socially and emotionally

Recommend:

- Better provision of student services on campuses targeted at rural and regional students.
- The government support better provision of university campuses and courses in rural areas.

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