

Report to General Synod / Te Hīnota Whānui 2024

From Te Kaunihera – Board of Governors, College of St John the Evangelist | Hoani Tapu te Kaikauwhau i te Rongopai

23 February, 2024

John Whitehead, Matanuku Mahuika and Nicola Hoggard Creegan began life as the newly established Te Kaunihera in July 2022. Because of the nature of this appointment, the first challenges faced were around the loss of institutional memory as one Board had been completely replaced by another, and there was almost no handover. Nevertheless, we have met almost every month since that time. At no time during this period, with the exception of the last few months of 2023, did we feel we were operating in a settled environment.

At our first meeting Te Kaunihera was presented with a new partnership agreement between [Laidlaw and St John's College](#) as a fait accompli. It was judged that this agreement would unnecessarily narrow the range of future theological input to the College and our Province, it would require all teaching faculty to sign a statement of faith and would not improve the status of women, one of the requirements of the Review we were charged with implementing.¹ It also included ceding 50% of the ownership of intellectual property of all scholarship produced by SJC teaching faculty, which was unpalatable for all three Tikanga. Te Kaunihera researched this, sought feedback from stakeholders and withdrew from the Agreement uneventfully in February of 2023, albeit with some discontent from some faculty who were no longer going to be able to teach at levels 6 and 7.

Prior to our appointment, some efforts had been made to adopt the [Review recommendations](#). A Women's Leadership Development Group had been started, a part-time Chaplain had been appointed, and an HR consultant had been hired. We thought that a Women's Leadership Development Group, while valuable in some ways, certainly did not give the kind of equality to women that hiring women into teaching positions in the College would achieve. During the latter part of 2022, the Chaplain resigned, and Rev'd Katene Eruera resigned as Manukura; the Academic Director also resigned. Efforts to complete any of the Review recommendations needed to be postponed although we continued to plan for this with the help of Simon Heath, the Consultant in Culture Change hired by the Archbishops.

At that time, however, we began work on addressing students' concerns with life on the College site, including improvement to [wi-fi](#). Students at the time were having to perch in corridors to get broken access and teaching faculty faced difficulty in online delivery. The Trust agreed to commit extra funds towards bringing in fibre, and the situation is much improved. Work towards other significant issues, including health and safety and housing standards and maintenance, remains ongoing.

¹ This is the Independent Review of Culture of St John's Theological College, a significant review of the culture of St John's College commissioned by our Province, led by Miriam Dean KC, and published in August 2021.

Te Kaunihera then initiated the long process of appointing a [new Manukura](#). We received agreement from the Archbishops to go ahead with the search in January 2023; we worked closely with professional recruiter, Julia Stone, who conducted most of the work of advertising in New Zealand and overseas, and the initial interviewing and vetting of the candidates. We interviewed the only two candidates in April and eventually appointed Dr Emily Colgan in May. She started her appointment in August 2023, when she was formally welcomed into the College community with a well-attended Pōwhiri. Most of Te Kaunihera's energies from March to August involved keeping the College operating under the leadership of The Rev'd Dr Frank Smith (Tikanga Polynesia Dean) as we waited for Dr Colgan to start. In December 2022, we appointed The Rev'd Jemma Allen to be interim Tikanga Pākehā Dean, and she had agreed to stay until the end of 2024 (she has subsequently resigned). She was a superb addition to the faculty. We acknowledge the tremendous hard work of the three College Deans, including The Rev'd Te Hira Paenga (Tikanga Māori Dean), in providing stability and support for the College community during a difficult season of transition and change.

From August onwards, Dr Colgan started with all the goodwill of the College community and Te Kaunihera. Dr Colgan began a series of meetings with students, staff and Te Kaunihera (three times) to formulate a new [Strategic Plan](#). This is almost ready to go out to stakeholders. We sincerely hope that this plan will still be taken up by the incoming Manukura, as it represents the best efforts of the College community and Te Kaunihera.

The Rev'd Clare Barrie and Jeremy Hema were both appointed to Te Kaunihera in August 2022. John Whitehead had expressed his intention to leave because of work pressure, and there was a need for more [Board members](#) residing in Auckland. The new appointments helped a great deal with Te Kaunihera's presence on campus.

After a few false starts, we judged that the [Health and Safety situation](#) on campus was complex and serious enough that we needed an external consultant. A revamped H&S Policy was also a recommendation of the Review. Robyn Levinge of Optime Limited (health and safety specialists) was contracted for this purpose; she had previous experience working with the Diocese of Auckland to develop their H&S system. She has met with all the parties involved including the major bodies tasked with H&S and having a duty of care on campus, Te Kaunihera and the SJC Trust Board. She has set up iAudit to log difficulties, issues, or accidents, and also anything considered a psycho-social complaint. All students, staff, and office holders will have access to this system. Alongside this will be an H&S Steering Group, which will meet once a month and will include the Manukura, a representative from the Kinder Library, Tuia, Trinity Methodist College, Te Kaunihera and the St. John's College Trust Board and Trust Management. This is a robust but simple system that will bring the campus up to date with all the requirements of legislation and best practice. It will make all the steps transparent and both bodies will get regular reports from iAudit; there will be the

added benefit that all these parties will meet with one another once a month. Robyn Levinge will chair the Steering Group until our system is working smoothly.

Soon after starting in her role in August 2023, Dr Colgan contracted a new [HR specialist](#). Her initial focus was to review and restructure the College's office staff, which was positively received. She was then tasked with a review of the role of the College Deans as mandated by the Review, and in order that a new permanent Tikanga Pākehā Dean could be appointed.

Also per the Review, we reformulated the [Complaints Process](#) so that it is clear for all members of the College community with a flowchart for all eventualities. The Manukura, HR Consultant, and Tikanga Pākehā Dean have also begun the process of revising the policies of the College – in consultation with Robyn Levinge – many of which were unclear or contradictory. They hope to finish this work before Dr Colgan and The Rev'd Allen leave in April.

Under Dr Colgan's leadership, the College initiated three [searches](#), for an Academic Registrar, a full-time Chaplain (this new role was another key recommendation of the Review) and an Academic Director. Dr Hoggard Creegan and the three Deans were a part of the interviewing panel for the two appointment processes that went to interviews, and we appointed The Rev'd Dr Jekheli Singh as [Chaplain](#) and Kisione Manu as [Registrar](#). We anticipate that the newly created role of Chaplain will strengthen pastoral care within the College community, and bring a new focus to College worship as a key strand of formation.

Another significant task was establishing a [budget](#) for 2024 and applying for funding support from the SJC Trust Board. Dr Colgan and Te Kaunihera were well supported in reviewing the College's finances and planning for 2024 by Robyn McNaughtan, the College Accounts Administrator. As with many organisations, it has been challenging to re-set the budget following the disruption of the pandemic and taking account of the Review recommendations.

Dr Hoggard Creegan also began the process of [clarifying the legal status of SJC](#) and establishing the College as an independent entity – this was another of the Review recommendations. The initial legal research has been done, and a blueprint for completion of this process has been worked out.

[Plans for 2024](#) have included re-advertising for an Academic Director, negotiations with Trinity Methodist College to expand their degree program in partnership with us, and planning for the incorporation of an intensive Māori Language Wānanga into SJC from 2025. We also hoped to work with the SJCTB and Trust Management to improve housing quality and management of maintenance issues, to revise the provisions for scholarships for students in consultation with bishops, to establish positive and mutually supportive relationships with the Kaitiaki, the Dioceses and Hui Amorangi, refresh the College website, and to continue to work towards embedding all of the Review recommendations in the life of

the College. Pursuing these and other challenges will be key for the newly appointed Manukura, The Rev'd Dr Hirini Kaa.

The most important task for 2024, however, is the NZQA EER (External Evaluation and Review) in August. Dr Colgan and acting Academic Director, Dr Tom Noakes-Duncan, have been working in preparation for this EER together with an NZQA consultant since Dr Colgan started in August 2023. The resignation of the previous Academic Director in 2022, however, has meant that there is significant work needed in this area. A Preliminary Scoping Report will be sent to NZQA in April, whereupon the EER monitors will identify areas of focus for a visit in August. Numerous stakeholders (including governance, staff, students, and a variety of individuals within the Church) will be interviewed during this visit. Achieving a Confident or Highly Confident rating on this Review is required for the smooth functioning of the college, for its national and international reputation, and to enable it to continue providing (and increase) its academic offerings in the future. This means that NZQA is a critically important stakeholder for the College. All aspects of College life will be scrutinised: governance, leadership, culture, academic offerings, student engagement and pastoral well-being, systems and policies. This upcoming review is one of the reasons we needed to have a smooth transition to a new Manukura.

In an ideal world, Te Kaunihera would have undertaken a full recruitment process prior to appointing a new Manukura. However, given Dr Colgan's short tenure, and following discussions with the Archbishops, we could see that a further process would be unlikely to uncover more or better candidates for the position than there had been the year before, especially given the requirements in terms of academic qualifications, specific knowledge of the church and Te Ao Māori, and approval of the Kaitiaki. We also knew that the College was not in a position to endure another interregnum period so soon after the disruptions of the last few years, and with an EER looming. For all of these reasons, we considered that The Rev'd Dr Kaa, who was the only other candidate we had interviewed in 2023 alongside Dr Colgan, should be appointed to start when Dr Colgan leaves in May.

Challenges

The challenges we have encountered include the ambivalence of parts of the church about SJC, and the increasing diversity of expectations held in our province about the nature of training and formation for ordained ministry. Only two students from Tikanga Māori and four from Tikanga Polynesia came to the College this year (2024).

With the resignations of Dr Colgan and The Rev'd Jemma Allen the recommendation of the Review that has now been set back is the status of women in the College, although good progress has been made in addressing other recommendations.

We also note the following concerns:

- The independence of Te Kaunihera as Governors of the College was affirmed by General Synod / Te Hīnota Whānui at its 2022 meeting in Nelson, but in practice, pressures from the **larger church** have strongly constrained that independence in hiring and in programme planning.
- We suggest that the relationship between Te Kaunihera and other provincial Boards, including the St John's College Trust Board, needs to be clarified. This includes defining the **respective domains of** and relationship between Te Kaunihera and the Kaitiaki.
- There are aspirations and the resources for the College to be world-class, but that cannot even begin to happen until academic hiring is put in place and there is a good representation of all Tikanga and both men and women on the faculty.
- Unresolved tensions between Boards make progress haphazard and inefficient at best, so a process of bringing all parties together to resolve these would be helpful.
- The relationship between Te Kaunihera and Te Kotahitanga also needs to be re-established on the new basis established by GSTHW 2022, including amending the remaining canonical irregularities.
- There is an urgent need for a multi-year funding process to be established with SJCTB so that the pressure of getting a budget approved is not a lengthy yearly occurrence.
- SJC is particularly vulnerable because it does not have a degree programme. While finding and retaining qualified faculty is a problem, SJC could easily partner with Trinity Methodist College and start to build up a teaching faculty at the College.

Despite the challenges, we all feel it has been a privilege to serve on Te Kaunihera. The present student culture, especially around the expression of Te Ao Māori is inspiring. But the students are discouraged by all the change, as are the staff. They feel powerless and we have included a separate report from students. Students, however, provide some hope for the future of the Church. Te Kaunihera and Dr. Colgan enjoyed the best of working relationships. We are all deeply saddened by her decision to leave. We respect her decision and acknowledge the discouragement that she felt, as we did also, as we navigated the systems of the wider church.

Dr. Nicola Hoggard Creegan (chair)
John Whitehead
Matanuku Mahuika
Clare Barrie
Jeremy Hema

Student Representative Feedback:

The **students have expressed their disappointment** in Dr Emily Colgan's resignation and are concerned that she has not been well supported by the wider church in her role as Manukura. They note that her untimely departure leads to increased instability in the college community, which was only just beginning to rebound from the loss of the

previous Manukura Rev. Katene Eruera and other significant staff changes. They also highlight the further loss of women in leadership including the current Acting Tikanga Pakeha Dean. Over the past few years, they feel that many significant decisions affecting student life have been made with little to no student consultation or communication to explain the processes taking place. This hinders transparency, trust and buy-in from the student body. In response to the current challenges, the students have approached Te Kaunihera for their support of a change to the Cannons allowing for a voting student and faculty representative and are appreciative of our support for this motion. They request that the wider church actively engages, supports and participates in the flourishing of this unique Three Tikanga wānanga with the acknowledgement that the lives formed here are the future of our Church.