



# ST JOHN'S COLLEGE

11 September 2017

## Moving Forward in Faith: New Transformation and Anti-Racism Initiatives at St John's College

The St John's College Council has developed a 25-point plan of action to more actively drive meaningful and lasting transformation initiatives at the school. As promised, we will provide ongoing feedback on our progress throughout the Michaelmas term. Importantly, Transformation and Community Engagement form a pillar of the strategic plan announced in May and the progress made thus far provides a great deal of momentum to this ongoing process. These are some of the initiatives embarked upon by Council, staff and the College community working together throughout the recent school break:

- **The work to establish an Independent Representative Interim Committee (IRIC) to drive transformation has advanced. Council has nominated 10 members and 10 others will come from the students, parents, Old Johannians and staff through a nominations process currently underway. Over 600 email submissions were received from across the school community, each of which has been considered in drafting the final Terms of Reference. The IRIC is expected to start its work later this month.**
- **A succinct, clear and unequivocal charter on racism has been drafted, and is receiving final input from staff and students. Once finalised it will be displayed on the school website. A more extensive anti-discrimination policy and complaints procedure is being drafted by a group of College boys and Sixth Form girls under the guidance of Ms Anné du Plessis.**
- **This month we will conduct an electronic survey of students, staff, parents, Old Johannians (OJs), Council and former Council members, which will cover broad aspects of school life including transformation and governance. The survey will be conducted by an independent survey company and the results will be made available within six weeks.**
- **A "Hearing & Hope" task team has been set up and is in the process of finalising its terms of reference. "Hearing & Hope" will provide an opportunity for current and past Johannians and staff to express their experiences of both prejudice and positive encounters at St John's College. The Anglican Church is leading this venture and will help create a story wall. The Bishop together with members of Council has put together a team of experienced clergymen and councillors to help.**
- **Confidential communication platforms are being created including the StopIT App (for use by pupils to report any bullying, abusive behaviour, substance abuse etc.), and an anti-racism reporting procedure.**
- **We are investigating instituting an additional African language and hope to facilitate the learning of conversational African languages by staff and parents.**
- **We are devising an educational speaker programme for the boys throughout the school (Pre-Prep to College) to address issues of diversity, transformation and bias in compelling, story-telling formats. The first talks will be this term. More comprehensive and formal analysis of the issue of racism as well as migrancy, urbanisation and xenophobia are to be explored in more depth in the curricular programmes of Life Orientation, History, English, and Divinity.**

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### ANGLICAN DIOCESAN COLLEGE OF JOHANNESBURG

Headmaster: Paul Edey BA HDE (Wits) Hons (SA) FDE (RAU) PMD (GIBS)  
Visitor: The Rt Revd Dr Steve Moreo MA (UP) PhD (UP)

- Ongoing pastoral care and counselling is available for boys and girls with two individuals already tasked to provide this care. In addition, training of pastoral counsellors will take place within the existing school structure.
- Ms Busi Khubeka, Prof Sarah Nuttall and Ms Angel Jones have agreed to facilitate parent dialogue evenings. With the theme “My African Story”, parents will be randomly allocated into small groups to share their personal history and experiences.
- Heritage Day will be used to celebrate our African heritage, and St John’s Prep and Pre-Prep will be hosted by Masibambane College in Orange Farm to celebrate being South African. St John’s will also publicly recognise human rights as a community. 21 March is Human Rights Day in South Africa and is the International Day for the Elimination of Racial Discrimination. The closest school day on the calendar will be marked with a dedicated chapel service, prayers, guest speaker and an awareness campaign.
- In the first week of term we began a poster campaign: posters promoting a positive message of the benefits of diversity are displayed around the school. Additional campaigns will be run with posters designed by students of all ages as well as staff.

### **New Council Members**

Council continues to co-opt highly qualified and skilled members. We are delighted to announce the new members who fill two vacancies. **Mr Thulani Khanyile** entered St John’s Prep in 1982, was a School Prefect in 1989, read English Literature and Politics at UCT and has held a number of leadership positions at university, in the Anglican Church and in business. **Prof Tshilidzi Marwala** (Sixth Form, 1990) has a PhD in Engineering from the University of Cambridge and is the newly elected Principal and Vice-Chancellor of the University of Johannesburg. Both of these gentlemen are likely to make a significant contribution to our College.

### **Engaging and leading a process**

We will communicate and engage with all educational stakeholders, and have already had open and constructive meetings with the Anglican Church, Independent Schools Association of South Africa (ISASA) and the Gauteng MEC for Education all of whom are fully appraised and supportive of the initiatives we are undertaking. St John’s has been invited by the MEC and ISASA to present at the Independent Education Summit on 13 September 2017 to highlight our transformation initiatives as a case study for schools nationally.

### **Our commitment – as a school and as individuals**

The elected leadership of St John’s firmly believes racism has no place at the school and is committed to breaking down barriers and advancing racial equity in all areas of St John’s life. We are committed to engaging with all in our community and hearing a diversity of voices as to how we can best make the school a more inclusive and welcoming centre of excellence, and a place where our children can each fulfil their unique potential and fully participate in our school life and heritage. **Perhaps most important is the initiative we take ourselves to speak to each other as individuals, in small groups and at larger gatherings about what may have divided and caused hurt and what we need for healing.**

We are firmly committed to being a school free of prejudice, and this journey to a more inclusive future will continue to be grounded on strong governance structures, excellent teaching and our Christian ethos, where care and respect is shown to everyone - principles every parent subscribed to when they chose to enrol their child at St John’s.

Yours sincerely



**Dr Jon Patricios**  
Chairman of Council