



WA Presbytery Meeting – 16 March 2024 Report on CEDAL Review

Objectives

CEDAL initiated a comprehensive review in September 2022, with the following objectives:

- 1) To address recommendations in the Assembly Consultation Report 2022.
- 2) To address limited and dwindling financial and human resources, and the need for a sustainable model.
- 3) To explore new initiatives, including collaborations with other UCA theological colleges, being guided by relevant Regulations and Presbytery Rules.
- 4) To understand the needs of local churches, and respond to the current context and emerging trends.

It was anticipated that the review would be completed by August 2023, however the review timeline was extended by 6 months to be completed in time to:

- Properly devise any new partnerships or arrangements with other theological colleges or training institutions prior to planning deadlines for the 2024 academic year.
- Develop our strategic direction to coincide with the placements for the revised education coordinator positions
- Report to the March Presbytery Meeting with proposals in 2024.

Review Process

The process of the review included:

Working Groups

The Review Working Group met regularly during the review and reported to CEDAL and PSC through CEDAL minutes and working documents.

Other working groups were set up for particular tasks including,

- review of Perth Theological Hall to understand the history of PTH, interpret the UCA Regulations about the MEB and theological college, review the CEDAL Rules, and establish any proposals and rationale.
- revise the education coordinator position descriptions
- review of CEDAL's subcommittees
- review of CEDAL's structures and CEDAL Rules.

Consultation

Table discussions were held at the WA Presbytery Meeting, in March 2023, to better understand the experiences, needs and concerns of the Presbytery, and thoughts about the creation of a new centre for education and learning,

Follow-up Zoom group forums and individual conversations were held.

Analysis and Synthesis

Context Analysis

The review considered a number of contextual issues

CEDAL held a working day early in the review, reflecting on The Regulations of UCA regarding the functions of Formation, Education and Training, including the Presbytery Rules for CEDAL, CEDAL membership and responsibilities, and the educational philosophy and model (informing revision of the vision and mission). Members were invited to present a passion pitch on an aspect of education of which we need to take notice. A range of topics were presented and enthusiastically discussed.

The changing numbers of candidates in the 4 specified ministries in WA were also discussed.

The ongoing Act 2 Project, which was examining and reflecting on the theological culture of the Uniting Church, and the provision of theological education. Two members attended the National Gathering on Theological Education in December 2023 and found considerable commonalities in the findings of our review with views of representatives from other Synods.

Text analysis

The large amount of text gathered on butcher's paper and recorded from discussions in the consultation process was analysed

The following themes emerged, aligning with Assembly recommendations:

- need for more accessible opportunities (affordable, inclusive);
- need for more creative and flexible modes of delivery (online, independent learning, experiential learning, intensives);
- more use of online platforms (Uniting Learning) and other media (Zoom, YouTube);
- less siloed approach to formation and training;
- more plans and education programs for lay leadership / people and for continuing education;
- explore and develop collaborations / partnerships with other UCA colleges and education institutions.

The following themes were further developed from the Presbytery Consultation and have informed the two proposals to Presbytery- CEDAL's Vision and Strategy (2024-2026) and the proposal to rename our theological college (Perth Theological Hall).

Learning/Formation for all

Grow learning culture within UCA

Something for everyone in terms of education on Christianity

Strengthening growth in our respective communities

People are empowered to participate in ministry

Paths for formation (remote local online option)

Diverse and inclusive like UCA itself- open to all

Unity- a place where lay, ordained and ordinary members come together in passion for God

Accessible and connecting

- Financial
- Diversity
- Inclusivity

Platform for multiple voices

Use words that people understand

Community integration

Connecting different aspects/groups of the church (eg Indigenous, intercultural, ages)

Like minded networks or communities of passion practice are created

Scope for ecumenical connections

Range of offerings eg short- modular- nested qualifications, intensives, full time/part time

Offering programs that recognize diverse locations and distances

Online network (Connected thinking (Trinity location))

Internet base (podcasting, Youtube studio)

Virtual Centre (Zoom, teams etc)

Collaboration

Connections/coordinated - Presbytery and Synod eg Thrive, Safe Church, Intergenerational, Social Justice)

Collaboration with experts in the wider church (local, national, international)

Second qualified/experienced/talented/dynamic facilitators

Connect with proven existing programs/courses

Work in active collaboration with UAICC

Partnerships with agencies and communities

Quality Programs

A rigorous curriculum

Inspiring hopeful empowering (especially empowering for ministry agents for the practical challenges they will face in the future)

Safe place to ask questions/for a range of theological perspectives

Should allow for sharing of ideas and reflection among participants

Well designed website in cyberspace
Learning together in cyberspace

Outcomes of the Review

New Staffing Profile

Revision of the two Coordinator positions to address the siloed effect of the previous staffing model and to concentrate on a more holistic view of education and learning within the church and to aid in further growing the learning culture in WA. Both positions have now been filled.

New Vision and Goals

A new vision and goals in three key areas of Learning Culture, Diversity and Inclusion and Collaboration and Sustainability. Teaching staff will collaboratively contribute to the development and evaluation of actions and outcomes in these areas which will be overseen by CEDAL. An extract from our Vision and Strategy 2024-2026 Working Document is provided at the end of the report in Appendix 1. A proposal for the revised vision and goals is provided for decision by Presbytery separately.

Changes in Name and Governance

The Review found that over time, the name of our theological college (Perth Theological College) has become outdated, and no longer wholly connects with or complements our current education and learning needs and emerging trends in the Uniting Church in Western Australia.

It is proposed that Presbytery approved changing the name of our theological college to **The Well: UCA WA Centre for Education and Formation**, in order to restore the identity of our theological college as our education and formation provider, separate from CEDAL as the governing body, and to better encompass and meet the current learning needs and future hopes of the Uniting Church in Western Australia. A proposal is provided for approval by Presbytery separately.

CEDAL has also restructured its subcommittees to better support teaching staff and streamline decision making.

Progress on Collaboration

A new Memorandum of Understanding with Pilgrim Theological College a college within the University of Divinity within the Synod of VicTas has been negotiated and signed.

An updated Memorandum of Understanding with Equipping Leadership for Mission (ELM), Uniting Church in Australia Synod of Victoria and Tasmania in relation to lay leaders is in progress.

A Memorandum of Understanding is being negotiated with Wollaston Theological College about the establishment of a theological library in Perth.

ACT 2- National Gathering on Theological Education

I attended the National Gathering on Theological Education in Melbourne in December along with two others from WA including Rev Dr Cathie Lambert. The importance of collaboration between Synods and improved attention to the voices of First Peoples were key themes. The recommendations of this final phase of the ACT 2 project will be presented at Assembly later this year.

The review is now complete and CEDAL is very grateful for the leadership of Rev Claire Pickering who chaired the review and the sustained contributions of all members of the review team.

Karen Flowers Chair, CEDAL

karen.flowers1@outlook.com

0488 497 953