WILLIAM CLARKE COLLEGE
CHRIST OUR WISDOM

2025 EXTRAORDINARY LEARNERS

WHERE *EXTRAORDINARY* BEGINS

WILLIAM CLARKE COLLEGE'S PURPOSE STATEMENT

William Clarke College is a Christ-centred community that seeks to develop extraordinary learners with a passion to serve others.

HEAD OF COLLEGE MESSAGE

As our students have developed academic mastery, they have also grown in their character, their maturity, and their ability to face new challenges with confidence and skill.

I am delighted to share some of the highlights from our Extraordinary Learners from the Year 12 Class of 2025. These outcomes demonstrate the College's commitment to excellence in teaching and learning, supporting every student to develop into the best person they can be.

Of course, we celebrate those who have achieved at the highest level. These achievements include three students appearing on the All-Rounders Achievers Merit List, one student placing First in Course in NSW, four students appearing on the Top Achievers Merit List, 63 students appearing on the Distinguished Achievers Merit List, and the 16 nominations for possible inclusion in HSC showcase exhibitions. We also celebrate those students who have made significant progress in their learning, regardless of their final mark. Progress of this kind is an essential component of being an extraordinary learner.

As we reflect on some of these wonderful achievements of our students, it is important to recognise that a William Clarke College education cannot be captured in an examination mark. As our students have developed academic mastery, they have also grown in their character, their maturity, and their ability to face new challenges with confidence and skill. They have shown resilience, determination and hope as they have met challenges with courage, in some cases through significant hardship.

It is my prayer that the Class of 2025 will not only continue to develop their knowledge and skills but will continue to seek out ways that they can serve others with what they have been given.

Well done to the Class of 2025. We pray that God blesses you in the years ahead and we look forward to seeing the many ways you will take what you have learned here and make a positive difference in God's world.

Mr Alex Koch
Head of College

HSC NOMINATIONS

We are delighted to announce that the Class of 2025 were recognised for their Creative and Performance skills, with a number of students acclaimed and nominated for the following exhibition events:

ARTEXPRESS
ARTEXPRESS is an annual series of exhibitions of outstanding major works created by NSW Visual Arts students for the HSC examinations.

Jessica Dean

Jandiga Holmes

Suzannah Stedman

HSC NOMINATIONS

ENCORE
ENCORE is an annual showcase of extraordinary Music performances and written compositions created by NSW Music students for the HSC examinations.

Prashant Kumar (Music Performance/Musicology)

Nathan Rumsey (Music Performance)

CALLBACK
CALLBACK is a prestigious showcase of exemplary performances created by NSW Dance students for the HSC examinations.

Indiana Chandler

Holly Craik

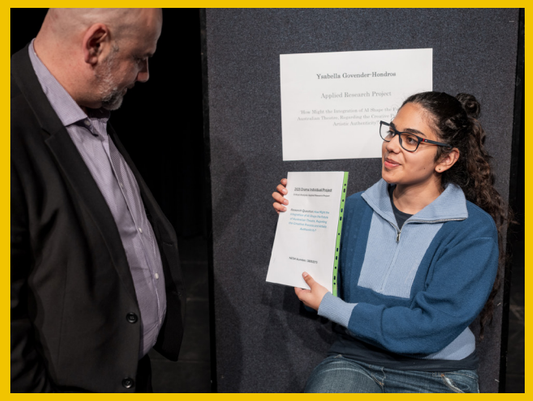
HSC NOMINATIONS

OnSTAGE
OnSTAGE is a presentation of stand-out performances and projects created by NSW Drama students for the HSC examinations.

Arielle Caban (Individual Performance) – 'I'm Not Breaking Down'

Gemma Pottie (Individual Performance) – 'Agnes of God'

Dayna Ellis (Individual Performance) – 'I'm Not Batman'



Ysabella Govender-Hondros (Individual Performance: Applied Research Project)

Ashley Kedward (Individual Performance) – 'Dating'

HSC NOMINATIONS

SHAPE
SHAPE is an annual exhibition of exceptional major projects developed by HSC Design and Technology, Industrial Technology, and Textiles and Design students for the HSC examinations.

Oluwatoyosi Folagbade

James Tweed

Cameron Goudie

HSC SNAPSHOT

From the Year 12 cohort of 201 students, the following highlights showcase the fantastic HSC achievements of the Class of 2025.

1st
in course for Science Extension

63
students appeared on the Distinguished Achievers Merit List for achieving a Band 6 in one or more of their subjects.

141
total instances where students were recognised for Band 6, E4 or 'notional Band 6'.

30%
of students achieved at least one subject in the top performance band.

71.5%
of students achieved at least one subject in the top two performance bands.

4
students appeared on the Top Achievers Merit List for achieving one of the highest places in a HSC course.

100%
of students in the following subjects achieved in the top two performance bands:
English Extension 1
History Extension
Music 2
Music Extension
Science Extension

3
students appeared on the All-Rounders Achievers Merit List for achieving results in the highest band possible for at least 10 units of HSC courses.

Note: Year 11 Accelerated students are included in the above figures.

HSC HIGHLIGHTS

Congratulations to the Class of 2025 on your outstanding HSC achievements. We are so proud of the effort, perseverance and dedication our students showed throughout their senior years. Their hard work and resilience, supported by the encouragement and love of their families, as well as our dedicated teachers who guided and helped each student grow, were remarkable and are reflected in these results.

The New South Wales Education Standards Authority (NESA) produce a Distinguished Achievers Merit List. These students attained academic mastery in a range of subjects. This required continuous wholehearted effort throughout the year-long internal assessment program and excellence in the HSC examinations. We would like to acknowledge the following students who achieved this.

Rowen McLean

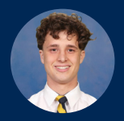
Rowen McLean was recognised for achieving the top mark in NSW for Science Extension.

The following students were recognised on the Top Achievers Merit List for achieving one of the top marks in NSW for their named subjects. **Prashant Kumar** for Music 1 (8th), **Rowen McLean** for Science Extension (1st), **Nirja Shah** for Earth and Environmental Science (10th) and **Matthew Willett** for Enterprise Computing (4th).

Prashant Kumar

Rowen McLean

Nirja Shah


Matthew Willett

Shahaan Choksey, Grace Karam and **Bianca Singireddy** were recognised on the All-Rounders Achievers Merit List for being in the top achievement band for each of their subjects.

Shahaan Choksey

Grace Karam

Bianca Singireddy

Rowen McLean and **Rahul Shankarling** were recognised on the Distinguished Achievers Merit List for attaining five of their subjects in the top achievement band.

Rowen McLean

Rahul Shankarling

Zaina Ata, Jessica Dean, Oluwatoyosi Folagbade, Angelina Gambhir, Valeriya Kirichenko, Amaarah Munif, Charlotte Wiggins and **Matthew Willett** were recognised on the Distinguished Achievers Merit List for attaining four of their subjects in the top achievement band.

Zaina Ata

Jessica Dean

Oluwatoyosi Folagbade

Angelina Gambhir

Valeriya Kirichenko

Amaarah Munif

Charlotte Wiggins

Matthew Willett

Aarna Agarwal, Ysabella Govender-Hondros, Jandiga Holmes, Esther Lai, Nirja Shah, Andrew Tran and **Chanel Van Neijenhoff** were recognised for achieving in the top performance band for three of their subjects.

Aarna Agarwal

Ysabella Govender-Hondros

Jandiga Holmes

Esther Lai

Nirja Shah

Andrew Tran

Chanel Van Neijenhoff

Jasinder Batth, Jaime Botoulas, Matilda Brown, Kiarra Butala, Emaan Butt, Ethan Chow, Karis Choy, Joel Evans, Shreyas Jhaveri, Nicholas Kelly, Prashant Kumar, Prateek Mandalapu, Gabriella McBrien, Nathaniel Pronvichulada, Nathan Rumsey, Nicholas Sendt and **Suzannah Stedman** were recognised for achieving in the top performance band for two of their subjects.

Jay Agarwal (Year 11), Kaylah Bennett, Cadell Birch (Year 11), Frederik Bounassif, Kaitlyn Chong (Year 11), Amelia Cox, Sahasra Dudipala, Sienna Farag, Yixuan (Sophie) Jin, Tharika John (Year 11), Sophie Klimontova (Year 11), Braithe Mander, Dhruv Mehla, William Moses, Joshua Ng (Year 11), Alexander O'Shaughnessy (Year 11), Wei (Sophia) Qian, Alisha Singh, Deepesh Singh, Megan Sutton, Tsz (Iris) Tsang, James Tweed, Andrew Whorlow (Year 11), Mikayla Woolley and **Alex Zhou** were recognised for achieving in the top performance band for one of their subjects.

"...[Ms Moon] encouraged and empowered me to put as much effort in as possible and seek improvement", helping him build confidence and critical thinking.

ATAR: 99.40

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, English Advanced, Enterprise Computing, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1, Physics

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Year 10 House Leader, Strength and Conditioning Club

MATTHEW WILLETT

Being named Dux of the College for 2025 reflected years of focus, discipline and intentional learning for Matthew Willett. Having been at the College since Year 2 in 2015, he brought both experience and perspective into his senior years, where his habits and determination fully took flight. "I have definitely seen myself grow and mature into a more well-rounded person," said Matthew. "I've seen a lot of growth in my personal worldview and how I can try to become a more positive influence for others around me."

That desire to positively influence others was strengthened through service, especially activities that pushed him beyond his comfort zone. "Even small actions can make a big difference in a variety of different communities," he reflected, taking that lesson beyond the College gates to make an impact in his new surroundings.

Teachers also left a lasting mark on Matthew's journey. Ms Moon, his English teacher, "refused to give up on me" and "encouraged and empowered me to put as much effort in as possible and seek improvement", helping him build confidence and critical thinking. Another teacher cheering him on was Mr Macourt who challenged him in Business Studies to extend himself inside and outside the classroom and was always available for advice and mentorship. Their support reinforced habits of responsibility, diligence and resilience that shaped his senior years.

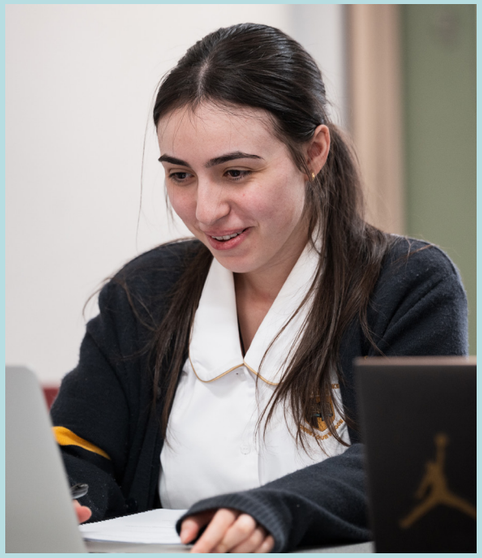
These experiences informed Matthew's understanding of what it means to be an extraordinary learner. He described an extraordinary learner as "someone who is able to holistically and consistently work towards their goals and aspirations. Everybody has different goals for their learning journeys but what remains consistent regardless of goals is the need to achieve balance across all aspects of life, whether that be academics or Co-curriculars, leadership or personal wellness." Being goal-driven was central to Matthew's success: consistent effort, rather than last-minute work, allowed him to take advantage of the "compound effect" rather than cramming around assessment tasks.

As Matthew begins a Bachelor of Actuarial Studies and Commerce at the University of NSW, he carries not only the achievement of Dux, but also the mindset, habits and heart of an extraordinary learner.

"Hope enabled me to believe in my potential and strive for my best. Humility reminded me to recognise that my achievements were not mine alone but made possible through the grace of God."

ATAR: 99.05

SUBJECTS: Christian Studies, English Advanced, Legal Studies, Mathematics Standard, Modern History, Society and Culture, Studies of Religion II



GRACE KARAM

Faith was at the heart of Grace Karam's journey at William Clarke College, shaping both her approach to learning and the way she engaged with the world. Believing that God had a plan for her, she attended Mass and prayed before exams, allowing herself to surrender her worries and approach each challenge with confidence, calmness and clarity. "I trusted that God was present throughout each exam and challenge," she said, a perspective that guided her throughout Year 11 and 12 as she became increasingly dedicated and disciplined in her studies.

Her dedication combined confidence, belief in her own ability and practical organisation. She credited a strong support system who constantly encouraged and prayed for her as key to her success, alongside strategies such as creating daily to-do lists, planning her week in advance, setting personal deadlines ahead of official due dates and breaking larger tasks into manageable goals.

Maintaining a healthy balance was equally important. Evenings were often reserved for reading or watching television as a reward for completed tasks, while piano lessons continued until HSC Trials, providing a creative outlet that supported her wellbeing. Walks through quiet streets helped clear her mind when the pressure felt overwhelming, sustaining her energy and focus.

Service became another way for Grace to live out her faith. Through helping others, she learned that "true joy is found in selflessness," deepening her understanding of Christ's teachings and the importance of supporting those around her. Her growth was reinforced by dedicated teachers and Mr Arthur, Head of Year, who consistently offered encouragement, guidance and feedback.

As she prepares to enrol in a Bachelor of Commerce and Bachelor of Laws at the University of Sydney, Grace carries with her both the habits of an extraordinary learner – someone, as she described, "who demonstrates consistency, resilience and commitment in their studies" – and the virtues that have shaped her journey. "Compassion guided me to support and uplift my peers. Hope enabled me to believe in my potential and strive for my best. Humility reminded me to recognise that my achievements were not mine alone but made possible through the grace of God."

"I studied every single day, even if it was just for an hour. I'd hold myself accountable with a schedule and made sure I never let the end goal out of sight..."

ATAR: 99.00

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, Community and Family Studies, Economics, English Advanced, Legal Studies, Mathematics Standard

LEADERSHIP: Year Group Prefect – Year 11

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Basketball Academy, College Representative: Cricket, College Representative: Boys Football, College Representative: Senior Boys Football, Public Speaking, Strength and Conditioning Club, Student Representative Council (SRC), Theatresports, Year 10 Year Leader

SHAHAAN CHOKSEY

The HSC had once felt like an insurmountable challenge for Shahaan Choksey but through determination and persistence he became confident in the power of hard work. Admitting he was terrified by the HSC, this driven student experienced a shift in thinking, realising the value of giving 100 per cent and celebrating the success that follows. "Looking back I see how facets of my school life transformed me into a student that didn't see school as 'hard' or 'serious', and instead as an opportunity just to do my best and to make memories," he said.

Consistency and a strong support network were central to Shahaan's success. "I studied every single day, even if it was just for an hour. I'd hold myself accountable with a schedule and made sure I never let the end goal out of sight," he explained.

Encouragement from teachers, family and friends kept him motivated, while understanding the HSC system and planning strategically allowed him to steadily improve his results. "It's testament that anyone can succeed no matter where they started, even someone like me who failed my Year 9 Math yearly," said Shahaan with a smile.

With this attitude, it is no wonder that Shahaan defined an extraordinary learner as "someone who can give their best whilst encouraging others to do so too. Someone who keeps asking questions, pestering teachers for feedback and helping their classmates when needed."

Now aiming to undertake a double degree in Economics and Commerce at the University of NSW, Shahaan believes faith played a major role in his learning, something that will undoubtedly sustain him in this next chapter. "It kept me grounded and also allowed me to have trust in God that things would work out," he recalled. "Before every test I'd pray to ask for help and clarity of mind, and looking back, it gave me so much confidence and hence success."

Service became another lens for growth. Helping friends with assignments or offering guidance reminded him his value extended beyond marks, and being part of the Leadership Team provided further opportunities to support others. "Hearing the differing perspectives and ideas of the Leadership Team reminded me that everyone is unique. We can all contribute to make the College, or any community, a better place. It really is incredibly rewarding to help people."

Careful organisation, effective time management and breaking tasks into manageable goals became key, supported by teachers and peers who encouraged her to keep working effectively.

SUBJECTS: Biology, Chemistry, Christian Studies, English Advanced, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1, Mathematics Extension 2, Science Extension

CO-CURRICULAR (YEAR 11): BIOTech Futures Challenge, Symphonic Wind Ensemble

AARNA AGARWAL

From her early days of arriving at William Clarke College in 2024, Aarna Agarwal knew she was drawn to a future spent serving others. Her hope to pursue medicine and become a surgeon has been shaped not only by academic discipline but also by a steady growth in character across her time at the College.

"I have grown significantly in confidence, resilience and self-awareness," said Aarna. "I have learnt how to manage challenges, accept feedback and persevere when things are difficult. Academically, I have become more disciplined and independent, and I have also developed a clearer sense of my values and the type of person I want to be."

That growth influenced how Aarna approached learning itself. She came to see an extraordinary learner as someone who is "curious, reflective and willing to step outside their comfort zone", understanding that responsibility and improvement go hand in hand, and that "mistakes are an essential part of growth".

This mindset sustained her through the demands of Years 11-12, where she discovered that consistency mattered more than intensity. Careful organisation, effective time management and breaking tasks into manageable goals became key, supported by teachers and peers who encouraged her to keep working effectively.

In her senior years, Aarna learnt the importance of balance by being intentional with her time. While she prioritised preparation for exams and assessments, she enjoyed being a part of Co-curricular Music in Year 11, which helped her stay motivated and connected. Making space for rest on weekends also allowed her to return to her studies with focus and clarity.

Aarna also discovered that "small actions can have a significant impact" and she felt most fulfilled when supporting those around her, adding that serving others "also taught me empathy, patience and the importance of listening". However, for Aarna it was the College virtue of compassion that shaped her the most. "It has influenced how I treat others, how I respond to challenges and how I see my future. Compassion has guided my desire to pursue medicine and reminds me that my personal success is based on the impact I have on others."

...Mr Macourt's guidance helped her "see the value in asking questions, thinking critically and using knowledge to make a positive impact".

SUBJECTS: Biology, Business Studies, Chemistry, Christian Studies, English Advanced, Mathematics Advanced, Science Extension

LEADERSHIP: Academic Prefect

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Public Speaking, Year 10 House Leader

CHARLOTTE WIGGINS

Of the six virtues, hope became the steady thread through Charlotte Wiggins' journey at William Clarke College, shaping how she approached challenges, learning and life beyond the classroom. "Even through tough times, or when life felt dull or difficult, hope helped me keep moving forward and stay positive," she reflected. "It reminded me that challenges are temporary, that effort and perseverance matter, and that better days are always ahead."

That spirit of hope was evident in Charlotte's growth during her time at the College. She became more confident in herself and her abilities, learning to manage responsibilities independently and to meet setbacks with resilience. Leadership further strengthened this growth, as she realised "leadership is about responsibility and integrity, not power", and that genuine influence comes from leading by example while remaining grounded in friendships, wellbeing and studies.

Academically, Charlotte discovered that mindset mattered as much as talent. She realised that anything was possible if she was willing to put in the time and effort, and that consistent application helped her push past self-doubt. Support from teachers in her senior years encouraged deeper thinking and engagement, and learning to enjoy the process made the workload feel less overwhelming. Mrs Kroll inspired her to enter Lions Youth of the Year, helping her find her voice, while Mr Macourt's guidance helped her "see the value in asking questions, thinking critically and using knowledge to make a positive impact". For Charlotte, this reflected what it meant to be an extraordinary learner, giving her best while also managing time, supporting others and making space for the things that brought her joy.

Service revealed another dimension of her character. Through helping others, she learnt "how rewarding it can be to make a positive difference, even in small ways", and discovered strengths in patience, listening and teamwork. She learnt how important it is to approach service with empathy and understanding, but most importantly of all, it showed her "that serving others not only benefits them, but also helps me grow as a person".

Looking ahead, Charlotte hopes to study psychology or psychiatry while making space to travel and embrace new experiences. Shaped by hope, she steps forward with confidence, purpose and a desire to make a meaningful difference.

She learnt that character mattered more than accolades and that showing Christ's love through her work would always outweigh any result on paper...

SUBJECTS: Biology, Christian Studies, English Advanced, English Extension 1, Mathematics Standard, Science Extension, Studies of Religion II, Visual Arts

LEADERSHIP: Service Prefect

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): BIOTech Futures Challenge, Debating, Student AV Team, Take Love Virtual Visiting

ROWEN McLEAN

Being named first in NSW for Science Extension for the 2025 HSC was a moment Rowen McLean will never forget. She credits much of this achievement to her Science teacher Dr Ontedhu, whose blend of brilliance and humility redefined the way she understood learning. "In the world of academics, it's easy to get wrapped up in ego and competition, but she embodied the side of academia that uses intelligence not as a weapon to bolster oneself but as a tool to help grow, inspire and impassion students to have that zeal for learning and what it can do to shape a better world."

Under Dr Ontedhu's guidance, Rowen discovered that being an extraordinary learner was not about perfect marks but about curiosity, discipline and the willingness to go that little bit further than expected. "I don't think [an extraordinary learner] is defined by something as linear as an A," Rowen reflected. "It's the quiet personal challenge to try and do better than last time and accepting that may be a slow process."

After starting Year 9 at the College, Rowen grew steadily in confidence. She found teachers who helped her believe that high achievement was possible through persistence. Equally important was the College's holistic vision. She learnt that character mattered more than accolades and that showing Christ's love through her work would always outweigh any result on paper, a perspective she believes is vital for the competitive path of medicine she is looking forward to undertaking at university.

For Rowen, success came from holding tightly to a clear goal. Visualising herself as a doctor carried her through long seasons of study, while consistency built momentum. She is honest about the cost. Dropping sport and Co-curricular Activities in Year 12 led to burnout, a lesson she now shares with younger students about the importance of balance.

Most importantly, faith shaped Rowen's approach to learning and leadership. She described "worrying about not doing enough and slipping behind in the vicious cycle of comparison the HSC can force upon you. But my faith was the anchor that I drew back to when I felt like I wasn't enough, reminding me that simply being alive and a child of God is the greatest blessing regardless of my academic performance."

With the skills from her degree, Nirja hopes to develop sustainable engineering solutions to improve livelihoods and protect the environment for future generations.

SUBJECTS: Chemistry, Christian Studies, Earth and Environmental Science, English Advanced, Geography, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): BIOTech Futures Challenge, Debating

NIRJA SHAH

Nirja Shah's plans beyond William Clarke College are driven by a deep concern for both people and planet. She hopes to commence a double degree in Advanced Science and Engineering at the University of NSW, motivated by the belief that the changing conditions of the earth demand practical and compassionate action.

Over time, she became increasingly aware that environmental challenges are not shared equally. "The nations hit the hardest are often those that lack access to the resources we take for granted such as clean water and sanitation, electricity and adequate infrastructure," she exclaimed. With the skills from her degree, Nirja hopes to develop sustainable engineering solutions to improve livelihoods and protect the environment for future generations.

This sense of responsibility grew through her experiences of service. From Clean Up Australia Day to flood relief, hamper drives and youth leadership, Nirja saw how care for people and creation are closely connected, learning that service was less about tasks and more about relationships. "Seeing the smile brought on someone's face upon receiving a kind act of service is the most valuable sort," she said, embracing the phrase that "in the joy of others lies our own".

During her time at the College, Nirja noticed a quieter transformation within herself. By her senior years, she viewed those around her with greater openness and compassion, realising that everyone carried their own story. This shift also shaped the way she approached learning. For Nirja, an extraordinary learner is someone who refuses to give up, who allows curiosity to lead them deeper and who treats mistakes as stepping stones rather than setbacks. "Whilst they may not have all the answers, they are willing to exceed their expectations, due to their love of learning," she said.

Consistency and discipline became the keys to her success, built through steady routines and intentional effort. However, she was quick to point out that faith strengthened that foundation, giving her hope during exams and reminding her that her worth was never measured by a final number. "Faith has definitely taught me that success in academics only comes through a combination of hard work and prayer, as either one alone would not have got me to where I am today."

Consistency became her anchor. Even in moments of defeat, determination and the steady support of teachers and friends helped her regain momentum and finish strongly.

SUBJECTS: Christian Studies, English Advanced, History Extension, Legal Studies, Mathematics Standard, Modern History, Society and Culture

LEADERSHIP: Prefect – House Captain

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): College Representative: Netball

BIANCA SINGIREDDY

Bianca Singireddy often looks back on the student she was in the early years of Secondary School and notices how much has shifted. Confidence replaced hesitation, resilience grew where doubt once sat, and by Year 11 and 12 she had begun to see herself as someone capable of more than she first imagined. "I developed necessary character skills, including resilience, perseverance and strength," she said. "These skills allowed me to grow as a person as well as assisting others around me to grow." Taking on new opportunities stretched her further, teaching her to speak up, to lead and to trust her own judgement.

Teachers played a defining role in that transformation. Bianca speaks warmly of Mrs Totonjian, whose personal example showed her how to face adversity with courage and grace. She credits her Mentors and Mr Arthur with providing both challenge and encouragement, creating a sense of community that carried her through the intensity of senior study. Their belief in her became the confidence she needed to believe in herself.

That growing assurance shaped the way Bianca approached learning. For her, being an extraordinary learner was not only about marks but about passion and generosity. She found that enjoying her subjects allowed her to excel, while supporting classmates gave purpose to her effort. Consistency became her anchor. Even in moments of defeat, determination and the steady support of teachers and friends helped her regain momentum and finish strongly.

As Darling House Captain, Bianca discovered another layer of growth. The role developed her Public Speaking and collaboration skills and taught her how to balance responsibility with relationships. This leadership role provided her "with a forum to connect with younger grades, gaining valuable insights into their beliefs and values," she stated.

Bianca now hopes to study a double degree in Law and Arts, majoring in Politics and International Relations, with the goal of working in international law and human rights. She carries forward a desire to make genuine, positive change, convinced that courage, the virtue that shaped her most, will continue to guide the path ahead.

"[An extraordinary learner] means being responsible for your own learning and not aiming to just know the answer, but aiming to understand, improve and keep learning each day."

SUBJECTS: Biology, Chemistry, Christian Studies, Economics, English Advanced, Legal Studies

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): BIOTech Futures Challenge, We Are (Student Media)

CHANEL VAN NEIJENHOFF

For Chanel Van Neijenhoff, academic success was never about a straight, uninterrupted climb. It was about learning how to bend without breaking. She believes her senior year turning point was developing clear goals while staying flexible when plans shifted. "If you stay too rigid in the face of setbacks, you'll topple over and feel like your end goal is unachievable," she mused. "The key to my academic success was being able to shift my mindset to seeing setbacks as learning curbs rather than roadblocks."

That change in thinking reshaped the way she approached school. As she discovered subjects she loved, particularly Economics and Legal Studies, learning became something she pursued rather than endured. She moved from "someone who simply sat in class and absorbed information to someone who actively sought out knowledge for the sole purpose of satiating my new curiosities", a shift that awakened both confidence and independence.

This attitude sits at the heart of what Chanel believes makes an extraordinary learner. For her, it is "someone who not only reflects on mistakes but uses mistakes to fuel success by wielding setbacks as tools to grow," she stated. "It means being responsible for your own learning and not aiming to just know the answer, but aiming to understand, improve and keep learning each day."

However, she is quick to point out that this attitude did not develop in isolation. Compassion, she says, was the virtue that shaped her most, largely through the example of her teachers. Their willingness to always be available, patiently revisiting concepts, convinced her that they genuinely believed in her potential. "One of the main reasons I believe I did well is because of all the extra time after class my teachers spent with me solidifying topics when I asked," reflected Chanel. That kindness became her motivation, giving her the confidence to persist through challenges, especially when topics felt difficult, and to see setbacks as part of the process.

Today, Chanel hopes to study Environmental Law and Urban Planning, fields that reflect her intellectual interests and love of learning. She heads into this new phase of life with the lessons of curiosity, resilience and responsibility, ready to approach each new challenge with the mindset of an extraordinary learner.

"...when I do find courage, I find it to be one of the most transformative and powerful virtues that allows me to grow holistically."

SUBJECTS: Biology, Business Studies, Christian Studies, English Standard, Mathematics Advanced, Visual Arts

LEADERSHIP: Prefect – House Captain

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Competitive Dance: Gold, Competitive Dance: Senior Secondary, College Representative: Football, Major Production: *Three and Counting*, Public Speaking, Studio 1 Dance: Senior Secondary Competitive, We Are (Student Media)

JESSICA DEAN

Courage was the driving force behind Jessica Dean's growth at William Clarke College, shaping both her academic and creative journey. Whether stepping up to lead as House Captain, presenting in Public Speaking competitions or pushing herself in challenging major projects, she learnt to embrace discomfort as a catalyst for growth. "I often retreat to my comfort zone and rarely find myself having the courage to continue in challenging situations," she revealed. "Despite this, when I do find courage, I find it to be one of the most transformative and powerful virtues that allows me to grow holistically."

Her love of Visual Arts flourished under the guidance of Mrs Arcella and the Visual Arts Faculty. Their passion and support helped Jessica recognise her potential, inspiring her to "vocalise the experiences and difficult feelings not so beautifully captured by words" through her creativity, a mentorship that fostered both her confidence and tenacity.

Grounded in this courage and creativity, Jessica developed a strong sense of self-worth and determination to succeed in both her academic and career ambitions. "Beyond the awards and the recognition, what really kept me going was my willingness to prove that I was capable of something greater than myself, something that would honour the opportunities, people and stories that all led up to my final months of schooling," she said. Jessica plans to study Marketing and Advertising at the University of Sydney, through a Bachelor of Commerce, aiming to combine her creative and academic passions within the business discipline, as well as engineering creative ways of engagement through media. Alongside her studies, she intends to continue painting and building her artistic portfolio, integrating her passions into her future.

For Jessica, "the person she describes as an enthusiastic and determined young woman", being an extraordinary learner goes beyond academic mastery. It means exploring new ideas, reflecting on mistakes and pushing personal boundaries. "Being open to learn and to be educated, provided me with the greatest gift – knowledge," she explained. "I am so immensely grateful to be able to make empowered and informed decisions about my own extraordinary life."

"[Humility] has encouraged me to accept feedback, reflect on my mistakes and understand that you can only grow once you acknowledge what you do not know."

SUBJECTS: Christian Studies, English Standard, Enterprise Computing, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1, Physics, Software Engineering

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Chess Club, College Representative: Athletics, College Representative: Volleyball

RAHUL SHANKARLING

Rahul Shankarling's academic success was built on curiosity, grit, resilience and a clear sense of what he wanted to achieve. From the moment he set his sights on studying a Bachelor of Computer Science at the University of NSW, driven by an interest in "how technology can be used to build meaningful solutions that improve daily lives", he committed himself to understanding concepts fully rather than simply completing tasks.

"Setting goals gave me something to work toward and motivated me throughout my senior years," he said. "Persistence (or stubbornness) was also key, as I did not move on from a topic until I was sure I understood it." That approach enabled him to tackle challenges confidently and with the trust that steady effort would yield results.

This dedication formed how Rahul viewed what it means to be an extraordinary learner. "An extraordinary learner has a genuine curiosity for the subjects they study, driven by the desire to understand and explore ideas deeply rather than being motivated by grades or outcomes," he explained. Rahul developed independence and self-discipline, balancing focused study with time to recharge, embracing a "work hard, play hard" philosophy that sustained him through the rigours of Year 12. "I pushed myself during weekdays and then let myself relax for a large majority of weekends," he noted.

Beyond academics, service and mentorship played a key role in his growth. By helping others, he learnt patience and empathy, seeing firsthand how even small actions can have meaningful impact. Teachers, including Mr Purser and Mrs Payne, modelled generosity, guidance and support, encouraging Rahul to use his gifts and knowledge to benefit those around him. Through their example and steady support, Rahul learnt that growth is shaped not only by knowledge, but by care and consistency.

Throughout his journey at William Clarke College, Rahul says the College grounded him in curiosity, persistence and humility. Humility, he mused "has taught me to recognise my limitations and remain open to learning from others. It has encouraged me to accept feedback, reflect on my mistakes and understand that you can only grow once you acknowledge what you do not know. This virtue has helped me develop personally and academically."

"[Faith] encouraged me to treat others with kindness and lead with integrity, and it helped me stay grounded, knowing that my value isn't defined by grades or achievements."

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, Community and Family Studies, English Advanced, Legal Studies, Mathematics Standard

LEADERSHIP: Service Prefect

CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): BIOTech Futures Challenge, College Representative: Football, College Representative: Girls Futsal, College Representative: Netball, Public Speaking, Theatresports

ANGELINA GAMBHIR

Finding a holistic balance became the centrepiece of Angelina Gambhir's final years of schooling at William Clarke College. With a huge number of College Co-curricular commitments, hundreds of hours of volunteering, three sports outside of school and her leadership role, she learnt early that success could not be measured by academics alone. "Scheduling kept me organised, but breaks kept me sane," she said with a smile. Planning her time carefully, sometimes revising flashcards at the gym, she discovered that achievement required both discipline and rest, a rhythm that allowed her to invest fully in study, service and the activities that brought her joy.

Leadership deepened that understanding. As Service Prefect, Angelina discovered that influence was less about titles and more about attitude. "I learnt that leadership isn't easy, but it is incredibly rewarding," she said. "Sometimes, something as small as making someone smile was enough to remind me why the role mattered." Working alongside others taught her to communicate clearly, value different strengths and serve without expecting anything in return, lessons that strengthened her confidence and shaped her into a more open-minded and supportive leader.

Her growth was also influenced by the people and the values around her. Teachers, parents, mentors and friends encouraged her to step forward and trust her abilities, while faith gave her perspective when plans felt uncertain. "Faith reminded me that setbacks aren't failures and that everything happens for a reason and within God's plan," she explained. "It encouraged me to treat others with kindness and lead with integrity, and it helped me stay grounded, knowing that my value isn't defined by grades or achievements."

Looking beyond school, Angelina hopes to study Law and Commerce, travel widely, enjoy this new stage of independence and "keep growing into the best version of myself". Yet she knows that the greatest change has already taken place in her approach to learning and life. "Consistency was everything. I learnt that you don't need to be perfect, you just need to keep showing up," she stated. "Growth only happens when you're willing to be brave, take risks and step outside your comfort zone."

VALERIYA KIRICHENKO

SUBJECTS: Ancient History, Christian Studies, English Advanced, History Extension, Legal Studies, Mathematics Standard, Modern History
LEADERSHIP: Year Group Prefect – Year 11
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Debating, Student Representative Council (SRC), Year 11 Year Leader

Relationships became the heart of Valeriya Kirichenko's journey at the College. Supportive friends and teachers who "showed genuine care and took the time to guide me, both academically and personally" helped her believe she was capable of more than she first imagined. Those relationships helped build her confidence as well as the way she approached learning and leadership.

Throughout her senior years and leadership opportunities, Valeriya grew in independence and discipline, discovering that results followed steady effort rather than talent alone. She came to understand that an extraordinary learner is "not about perfection or top marks", but about consistency and a willingness to improve. Education, she realised, goes beyond academic results. "It shapes how you think, how you respond to challenges and how you treat others."

That perspective was strengthened through service, where small acts revealed a larger purpose. Compassion became the virtue that shaped her most, teaching her to listen, to notice others and act with patience when people struggled. Faith offered grounding during pressure, reminding her not to be consumed by expectations but to focus on what truly mattered.

Now Valeriya hopes to study Law at university, drawn to intellectual property, international and media law. She has a genuine eagerness to develop a "deeper understanding of how the law can be used not only to regulate, but also to protect ideas, voices and rights, which is something I am passionate about."

PRASHANT KUMAR

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, English Advanced, Mathematics Advanced, Music 1, Physics
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): College Representative: Cricket, College Representative: Senior Boys Football, Strength and Conditioning Club, Student Representative Council (SRC), Year 11 Year Leader

Prashant Kumar approached every challenge during Year 11 and 12 with courage, letting it guide him through uncertainty and high-pressure moments. Whether tackling tough assignments, balancing sports and study, or navigating school life, he relied on that inner strength to stay focused. "School life was filled with many twists and turns," he reflected. "However, it was through courage that I was able to maintain a positive mindset to navigate through these obstacles."

Teachers played a pivotal role in turning that courage into results. Cheerleaders like Mr Macourt and Mr Peachey encouraged him to recognise his potential and push beyond his comfort zone. Their guidance, combined with the discipline and skills he honed through camps and school programs, taught him independence, resilience and how to balance responsibilities. Careful planning and structured routines allowed him to manage study, sport and downtime effectively, helping him stay focused while maintaining his wellbeing.

For Prashant, being an extraordinary learner is about more than grades. "An extraordinary learner is someone who goes above and beyond the basic study life and learning habits," he explained. "It's about the journey of building yourself as a person, developing lifelong habits that will guide you." With this mindset, he now looks forward to studying Civil Engineering and gaining practical experience in engineering and finance, ready to apply his courage, curiosity and commitment to learning in the next chapter of his life.

NICHOLAS SENDT

Nicholas Sendt's journey at the College was marked by a quiet humility that underpinned both his learning and his character. In fact, the College virtue of humility was particularly meaningful to this dedicated student. "I feel strongly that any person's gifts and achievements are never as important or valuable as being a good person, and serving others," he reflected.

Since joining the College in Year 3, Nicholas approached learning with curiosity and care, eager to understand the world around him. That inquisitiveness grew steadily, nurtured by teachers who challenged him to think critically and explore ideas fully. "Miss Ma created a welcoming environment while also encouraging academic and personal growth," he reflected. "Her support helped me realise I could push myself further than I thought possible."

During his senior years, Nicholas learnt not only to manage academic pressures but also to value balance and perspective. Forward planning allowed him to work intensely during assessment blocks while making space to relax, travel and recharge.

Nicolas will begin a Bachelor of Advanced Maths (Honours) and Economics at the University of NSW this year, a pathway that reflects his desire to keep questioning, exploring and thinking deeply. This echoes what he believes an extraordinary learner is, "someone who is motivated to learn more and understand more about the world around them". With this thinking, Nicholas will undoubtedly find success in the world outside the College gates.

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, English Standard, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1, Mathematics Extension 2, Physics

JAIME BOTOULAS

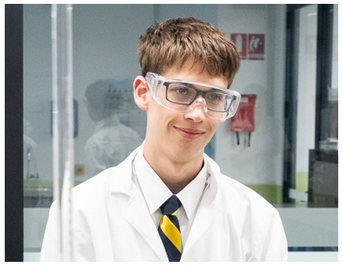
For as long as she can remember, Jaime Botoulas has always measured success by the difference she could make to someone else's day. Her decision to study a Bachelor of Occupational Therapy at the Australian Catholic University grew naturally from years of listening carefully and wanting to make life easier for others. Service opportunities at the College and her Prefect role showed her how powerful small, consistent acts of care could be. "Leadership is ultimately about generosity, not recognition," she reflected. Teachers like Mr Arthur encouraged that same spirit, reminding her to lead with kindness and constant positivity, while her faith gave her purpose when the path ahead felt uncertain. "Knowing that God has a plan for me helped me stay grounded and motivated," she said.

Consistency became the quiet engine behind Jaime's academic journey. She learnt to use class time intentionally, ask questions and chip away at small tasks so the big ones never felt impossible. Balance mattered just as much. Time with friends, part-time work and physical activity helped her reset, especially during exam seasons when she studied through the day and protected her afternoons for rest.

Having been at the College since Kindergarten, Jaime has certainly demonstrated the characteristics of an extraordinary learner. To her, this means embracing every opportunity with commitment and curiosity, stepping beyond her comfort zone, and striving for excellence while remaining connected to community.

SUBJECTS: Biology, Christian Studies, Community and Family Studies, English Advanced, Mathematics Standard, PDHPE
LEADERSHIP: Year Group Prefect – Year 9
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): College Representative Gala Day – Netball, College Representative – Netball, Student Representative Council (SRC), Year 10 House Leader

JOEL EVANS



SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Chemistry, Christian Studies, Earth and Environmental Science, English Standard, Mathematics Advanced

After discovering a love for environmental science, Joel Evans is now off to explore this field at the University of Technology Sydney, specialising in Terrestrial Biology. Central to this path was Mrs Williamson, his Head of Year for Years 7-9, Year 5 Science teacher, and Earth and Environmental Science teacher. “She encouraged me to follow my curiosity and go beyond the curriculum,” he reflected. “She was always willing to find time to answer questions, ultimately inspiring me to study Environmental Science to make a difference on global issues such as climate change.”

Joel’s academic success grew from a disciplined approach, a genuine curiosity for the natural world and a drive to explore ideas beyond the classroom. “To me, an extraordinary learner is one who works diligently in all aspects of their learning, seeking to expand their knowledge beyond the base requirements of the course,” he explained. A consistent routine helped him achieve this: after school he would revise and complete homework for two hours, leaving remaining tasks for the weekend. This structure allowed him to balance study with downtime, ensuring he could rest without compromising learning.

Service added another layer of growth. Through helping others, Joel developed a deeper appreciation of community and the impact one can have on the lives of others. Integrity was also key in Joel’s journey, encouraging him “to do good even when others are not looking,” he said. “The College inspired me to act in an ethical manner, regardless of the actions of those around me.”

FREDERIK BOUNASSIF

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, Economics, English Advanced, Mathematics Advanced, Mathematics Extension 1, Physics
LEADERSHIP: Prefect – House Captain
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): College Representative: Inter Boys Basketball

“The guidance and support of Jesus during the HSC was what pushed me through those times where I felt like giving up. This is because the peace in knowing that God has already shaped a plan removes any doubts and concerns regarding what could happen in the future with results. Because God’s plan is always greater than our idea of worldly happiness.”

Frederik Bounassif’s faith shaped not only his approach to learning but also his leadership during his senior years. Whether tackling the rigours of the HSC or supporting peers in the Leadership Team, Frederik leaned on his belief in serving others with integrity. He credited teachers like Mr Bellam, who challenged him academically while mentoring him personally, and Mr Burton, whose guidance offered a safe space for advice and reflection beyond the classroom.

His academic success stemmed from consistent, wholehearted effort, making the most of every opportunity and resource the College provided. Even when results were uncertain, he found contentment in knowing he had given his best. His leadership approach mirrored this ethic: working alongside others, focusing on collaboration and prioritising the needs of those around him.

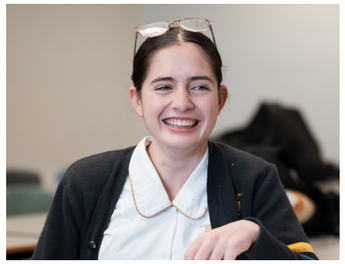
Turning the page, Frederik is heading to Macquarie University to study Law and Economics, aiming for a career in banking. The faith that sustained him through the HSC continues to inspire him, providing perspective, resilience, humility, patience and determination as he faces a new set of challenges and adventures ahead.

MATILDA BROWN

Even on her busiest days during Year 12, Matilda Brown made time for church, youth group, sport and study, a rhythm that helped her keep a healthy perspective throughout her academic journey. “These commitments were essential in maintaining balance and preventing burnout, allowing me to approach my studies with clarity and focus,” she explained. “Sport gave me mental space away from academics, while church and youth helped me keep perspective and remember that there is more to life than the HSC.”

Upon joining the College in Year 11, Matilda quickly built lifelong friendships and grew in confidence and resilience. She made her mark in classrooms, on the stage, on the sporting field and within the Leadership Team. As Christian Life Prefect, she discovered how empathy and hope could steady those around her and bring encouragement to her peers. Her faith shaped her perspective, reminding her that her worth is not defined by achievement. “Knowing I am loved by God gave me peace and purpose in both learning and leadership, especially during stressful periods,” said Matilda. Mr Noble also played a significant role, inspiring her to recognise the impact one person can have and to live out the call to ‘Make God Known’ in everyday moments.

As Matilda steps into Primary Education studies at Macquarie University, she carries a clear vision of what it means to be an extraordinary learner: “focusing on growth rather than results, showing curiosity, perseverance and humility, and being willing to learn from both success and challenge”. Those who know her have no doubt she will bring that same spirit into her future classrooms.



SUBJECTS: Christian Studies, Drama, English Advanced, Mathematics Standard, PDHPE, Studies of Religion II
LEADERSHIP: Christian Life Prefect
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 11-12): College Representative: Cricket, College Representative: Girls Touch Football, College Representative: Netball, IAMprovising, Senior Theatre Production: *Animal Farm,* Take Love Virtual Visiting, Theatresports

KIARRA BUTALA

For Kiarra Butala, the incredible support she received from teachers made all the difference in her journey at William Clarke College. “Mrs Williamson, Dr Ontedhu, Mrs Acret, and my amazing tutor, Mr Burton, all inspired me to progressively excel by challenging me to push beyond my limits,” she said. Their guidance helped her develop discipline, resilience and a willingness to step outside her comfort zone, lessons she carried through every year of schooling.

Faith in herself, complemented by the encouragement of her family, friends and teachers, allowed Kiarra to stay focused and approach tasks with determination, turning challenges into growth and learning. Beyond academics, electives, Co-curricular Activities and time with friends reinforced the importance of balance. “My friends are part of my favourite memories as we navigated the best and worst moments of high school together and pushed each other to grow into compassionate people eager to serve and contribute to the community,” she explained.

Since putting the pen down in her final HSC exam, Kiarra plans to begin a broad double degree of Arts and Science at the University of NSW, exploring her interests before specialising. “Graduation opens up so many doors and I am currently still in the process of choosing which door to open,” she said. For Kiarra, being an extraordinary learner means setting goals, working consistently and embracing challenges, qualities that will guide her through university and beyond.

SUBJECTS: Biology, Christian Studies, Earth and Environmental Science, English Advanced, History Extension, Modern History, Visual Arts
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Reef Crew, Student AV Team, We Are (Student Media)

YSABELLA GOVENDER-HONDROS

SUBJECTS: Business Studies, Christian Studies, Drama, Economics, English Advanced, Mathematics Standard
LEADERSHIP: College Vice-Captain
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): BIOTech Futures Challenge, Chess Club, Concert Band 1, Debating, Reef Crew, Student Representative Council (SRC), Take Love Virtual Visiting, We Are (Student Media) Year 10 Year Leader

A steadfast commitment to her Christian faith guided Ysabella Govender-Hondros through the most challenging moments of senior school, providing perspective, calm and resilience. Prayer and reflection helped her manage pressure, stay consistent and trust in her preparation, turning stressful moments into opportunities for growth. “Faith encouraged me to work as hard as I could and then trust God with the outcome,” she explained. This approach strengthened her discipline, patience and ability to respond thoughtfully to challenges, guiding how she approached both learning and leadership.

Teachers and Mentors supported her at every step. Mr Arthur consistently encouraged his ‘legends’; Ms Ryou helped Ysabella feel capable and confident; and Mr Burton encouraged “me every step of the way to pursue my dreams whilst sticking to my core values as a Christian,” she stated. She gave a special shout out to Mr Koch, a “consistent support for all students at WCC, and myself especially in the performing arts, through his presence at every student event, regardless of the day, date or time”.

Looking ahead, Ysabella is excited to begin a Bachelor of Politics, Philosophy and Economics (PPE) at the University of Sydney, where she hopes to further develop the leadership and analytical skills she honed at the College. Serving as College Vice-Captain for Extraordinary Learning reinforced the value of curiosity, consistency and growth, lessons she will undoubtedly carry into her university studies and lifelong learning.

ESTHER LAI

SUBJECTS: Biology, Christian Studies, English Advanced, History Extension, Mathematics Standard, Modern History, Visual Arts
CO-CURRICULAR (YEARS 10-12): Studio 1 Dance: Senior Secondary Competitive, We Are (Student Media)

For Esther Lai, inspiration in the classroom often came from teachers who believed in her potential, none more so than her Visual Arts teacher, Mrs Lightfoot. “She created a space where creativity felt valued and safe,” she explained. “Her encouragement pushed me to take risks and express ideas with confidence.” Through that guidance, Esther began to see her art not just as a subject but as a powerful way to communicate, connect with others and make a meaningful impact beyond the classroom.

Over the years, Esther grew in confidence, independence and self-assurance. She learnt to take ownership of her learning, balance commitments and reflect on her experiences. She also recognised “the importance of patience and persistence, as achieving meaningful outcomes sometimes requires consistent effort over time”. Dedication and discipline became central to her academic success, while hobbies, Co-curricular involvement and time with friends offered space to recharge. “Studying alongside friends kept me motivated, while pursuing music and other hobbies helped me reset,” she said.

With university on the horizon, Esther plans to study a Bachelor of Laws and Commerce, keen to understand how law and commerce influence decision-making, institutions and real-world outcomes. She believes her time at William Clarke College fortified her courage, enabling her to make “quiet decisions to challenge myself, embrace discomfort and trust my abilities”. With a strong faith guiding her direction, Esther’s path, built on resilience, patience, purpose and perseverance, is just beginning.

WILLIAM CLARKE COLLEGE'S VIRTUES

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