

ACU's innovative Frontier Student Evangelising Teams celebrate their third year

In early 2018, Australian Catholic University (ACU) embarked on a new Campus Ministry volunteering program for students. The goal of the program was to create faith-inspired students who would be the next generation of Catholic leaders.

Fast forward to late 2019; the innovative program has exploded in popularity across every ACU campus as it enters its third year, with close to 100 students now having participated as Frontier team members.

"The Frontier Evangelising program was launched with the intention of forming faith-inspired student teams that engage and inspire the wider student community," said ACU Campus Ministry Manager Brother Michael Callinan.

"The students work within the Campus Ministry team at their local campus to engage the ACU student community on issues of Catholic faith and the mission of the University. The year-long program allows undergraduate students from any discipline to get involved."

The program is streamlined into three tiers: bronze – the entry tier into the program; silver – the second-year tier for ongoing students; and gold – the final tier of the program, which is open to a handful of students who lead others within the other tiers.

"The program requires a commitment to 80 volunteer hours a year, undertaking tasks in a team environment under the direction of a Campus Ministry pastoral associate," said Brother Michael.

"There are a wide variety of areas for the students to get involved in as part of the program, including direct evangelisation, liturgical ministries, music ministry, major event support, social media promotion and community outreach."

ACU Bachelor of Physiotherapy (Hons) student Monica Pazniewski just joined the program. She decided to get involved after attending World Youth Day in Panama.

"I was amazed to learn that ACU had the Frontier Team available as an option for me to get involved with," said Monica.

"One of the exciting things I'm looking forward to with the Frontier Program is getting mentorship from a practising Catholic physiotherapist. The mentor I've chosen is also a mum, so I'm very keen to learn how she juggles the work-faith-family balance and how she implements her Catholic faith into her everyday work".

Each student benefits from unique opportunities once they sign up for the program:

They are linked with a Catholic professional mentor who is matched to their chosen field of study. This will help to create an industry-ready graduate who is determined to help build a better world for the future. The breadth of Catholic professionals has included several University professors, a hospital chief executive and a High Court judge.

Each student receives individual spiritual accompaniment and formation with an ACU pastoral associate over the year. This support helps to integrate each student into a well-functioning evangelising team.

The students in the silver tier are guaranteed a fully funded place at one of two annual Catholic youth conferences each year in which they receive training in evangelisation for the University environment.

"Another bonus is that the students gain recognition within ACU's student leadership program, Leading with Impact," said Brother Michael.

"It all works to create the next generation of Catholic leaders, friendly faces spreading the message of the Gospel in their daily lives, on campus and beyond."

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