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COLLEGE ALBERT LE GRAND

ALBERT THE GREAT COLLEGE

THE COLLEGE CHARTER

This document, the College Charter, outlines primarily the spirit of the College and its mission. These pages give you a brief insight into what essentially structures our College, and defines our identity and aspirations. We hope you will share our values and beliefs. Furthermore, it defines a formation and a liturgical programme, which you, as a student living here, would be expected to participate in. Please, read it carefully to ensure you are prepared to take part willingly in the life in our College, to commit yourself to the proposed programmes and activities, and agree to subsequent obligations.

**Coat of Arms**

On the upper left hand corner of this page you can see the College crest. It represents what we aim for here and depicts symbolically what motivates us. The shield is divided into two parts: the left hand part is composed of three diagonal red bars and three open books. The right hand part represents the Dominican coat of arms combining a black and white lily cross on black and white fields.

What is the meaning of our crest? Three is traditionally considered the number of perfection, and red is the colour of passion. Thus three red diagonal bars refer to the ultimate passion towards what books represent – that is knowledge. Additionally, they reflect three values necessary to progress in knowledge and understanding: Joy, Dedication and Perseverance.

Three books placed one above the other refer to a gradual process in acquiring knowledge until its perfection. Moreover, they represent the three principal values on which, at the dawn the scholastic era, all European universities were founded: the selfless search for truth, the freedom of speech and research, and the respect paid to researchers.

The Dominican part indicates that everything mentioned above is to be conducted in the Dominican spirit and with the Dominicans. The part, with sharp divisions between black and white, refers to the quality of mind, which in the search for truth is capable of making proper distinctions between right and wrong, truth and falsehood. The cross in the middle represents what we strongly believe in, i.e. that Truth is not just a philosophical or metaphilosphical term but bears a very personal character. Ultimately, we believe that Truth has been revealed through the very person of Jesus Christ.

**The International College**

Albert the Great College is an international Hall of Residence, which welcomes students from all over the world. To maintain its international character and to allow every student to find his/her place in the community there are two official languages within the College: French and English. Thus you are required to have at least a basic knowledge of English. However, if your knowledge of English is not sufficient and an additional support is required, we will happily offer you free English Classes during the Academic Year so you can both improve your linguistic skills and feel at home with us.

Furthermore, we cherish dearly the British culture here. Our College was created in the spirit of a traditional English college, where tutors and students live in proximity inspiring each other in their endeavours. This explains also the term ‘College’, which is not a ‘kot à projet’, because there is no one short-term project or more specific projects to be achieved during or by the end of the Academic Year. Here, we focus on your overall route towards personal maturity and responsibility.

**Community life**

The community life constitutes the first of three pillars of your life in the College. It can be a source of joy, friendship and brotherhood, and it can be a source of frustration. This is why it so important that you should wish to contribute to the common good and dedicate yourself to living with others. It is in community that we learn responsibility. The quality of the community life is very much in your own hands.

There are many informal meetings and activities like birthday celebrations or ‘cuisine of the world’ dinners prepared by students from different countries, etc. You will learn about them during your stay, and you are warmly invited to both contribute to them and participate in them.

Apart from this, there are formal meetings and dinners organised by the College. Your presence there is mandatory.

**The Dominicans**

Albert the Great College belongs to and is administrated by the Dominican friars, and thus naturally it subscribes to the Dominican mission to the world. This is why St Albert, known for his merits as ‘the Great’ by later generations, a Dominican, scientist and theologian, was chosen as the patron saint. The Order of Preachers, commonly known as the Dominicans, since its beginnings in 1216 has been devoted to building bridges between scientific research, art and culture on the one hand, and faith on the other. As Dominicans we strongly believe that not only is there no division between reason and faith, but also they are like two indispensable wings allowing a human being to approach the Truth. One of the Order’s mottos is VERITAS, from Latin ‘Truth’, which sets an exigent perspective for rigorous intellectual preciseness and spiritual openness. We hope that you, as a student of our College, will join us in this fascinating and never-ending journey in search for Truth, whatever form it might take.

We also believe that studies have a beginning but no end, as there is always more to learn than what has already been acquired. When we grow in knowledge we begin to realise how little we know. Thus we consider your time of studies as a gift you have received, and we hope that you will make the most of it. This is why we put such great stress on your achievement in your studies. Nonetheless, we desire that you become not only a professionally skilled specialist but also and above all, a critically thinking, open-minded person who, without neglecting the spiritual dimension, can understand what profoundly makes us human, and so have courage to face the challenges of the contemporary world.

**SAS Programme**

As a practical tool we offer you complementary to your studies a formation programme. It is called SAS an abbreviation from Society and Art in the Spiritual perspective. The programme is designed in formula of lectures and seminars alternatively focused on questions concerning Society and Art, and delivered two times a month. The Society branch mainly ponders upon all recognitions of a self within and outside the society structure, including politics, economy, social policies and human rights. The Art branch is more focus on a creative aspect of a human being through meetings on history and theory of art, and depending on a year, through practical workshops.

As this programme constitutes the second of the College pillars, your participation in it is obligatory.

**Liturgy**

One part of our Dominican mission in Louvain-la-Neuve is the liturgical service. This is where we breathe and we find our source – through the prayer, in God. The Sunday Eucharist is of a particular importance as we commemorate the Resurrection of our Lord and praise his life-giving presence among us. Since 2010 we celebrate the Sunday Evening Mass at 8.30pm, which is predominantly destined to students living in our university city. As a student of our College we want you to become a vivid part of our mission. It practically means that both, the Dominicans, and the community of students of the Dominican College are in charge of this celebration. This includes the preparatory meetings, i.e. readings and songs for the Mass, as well as meditations on the Holy Scripture and any sort of meetings where we can share our faith. As we welcome other students ‘chez nous’ it will also be your responsibility to be in charge of the continuation of our celebration in the Blackfriars pub after the Mass. This liturgical and spiritual aspect constitutes the third pillar of your life in the College thus your participation in it will be required.

**Compassion**

St Dominic is remembered in our tradition as someone who during his night prayers cried out ‘Lord, what will happen to the sinners?!’ No doubts, we all need God’s mercy but we are also called to be his co-operators by being merciful with hearts filled with compassion. This is why one apartment of our College is destined to help people, particularly women, in need. This apartment serves as a temporary haven for women who suffered from disdain, violence or depravation of dignity. Their presence does not impose on you any obligations except being merciful. We believe that your enthusiasm and energy can be one of the best remedies to those who once lost their hope. It is in the spirit of compassion that we can help each other to make hope and joy shining in life yet again.

**ROI and Terms & Conditions**

The practical aspect of life in our College is described in an additional document called ROI, an abbreviation from Règlement d’ordre intérieur. This document, along with the Terms & Conditions, and fundamentally with the College Charter defines your duties and obligations during your stay in our College. From the College side we are wholly committed to deliver you maximum means we can so that your time with us may be enjoyable and fruitful, and you may grow as a knowledgeable and mature person.