A QUESTION OF

CULTURE SHOCK:

TO INSULATE OR ISOLATE

BY

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CHAPTER ONE

Introduction

Aims of This Paper

After an introduction and setting the scene for change in tertiary education this paper will look at one major aspect of this change, that is the change in the expectations and satisfaction levels of the student population now that this population is paying fees directly, rather than indirectly via taxes, for its education. In particular it will concentrate on full fee students and specifically on those students coming from overseas. It will look at the problems involved in being an overseas student in Australia, the problems that institutions have in providing solutions to these problems and what is expected of the institutions and the students in the future if the changes put in place are to be successful for everyone involved.

Politicisation of Education

In 1987 the "Dawkins Green Paper" and the legislation that followed became the latest politicalisation of higher education. The ramifications of this paper are still being felt eight years later and look certain to be felt long into the future yet. There are many behavioural changes which have occurred as a direct result of the legislation, while, at the same time, many attitudinal changes that have taken place within the education system in recent years can be traced back and shown to be an indirect result of the implementation of this paper's policy.
This legislation was just the latest stage in the centralisation of educational power into federal government control. In 1901 education had been put totally into the hands of the states. In the 1950s the federal government became the major body funding education for the first time and thus had more say than in the past. With the advent of a Labor government in the 1970s and an emphasis on social justice, higher education became totally free in an effort to break down the elitist image of a university education. By the mid eighties it was clear that free tertiary education had not changed many things within the university system. Limited places meant that only those with the best school education gained a place, and a perceived emphasis on the arts and professional subjects meant that tertiary education was still for those with the better social opportunities.

It became clear to many that a change was necessary not only to open up tertiary education to everyone but also to change the emphasis from the traditional subjects and ways of doing things to a more forward looking and accountable system. Dawkins for one believed that in a period of fiscal constraint and economic difficulties governments had a duty to set national priorities and that these should be reflected by the higher education system (1988:15). He even saw a role for higher education in setting the national agenda but perceived problems in both the funding and managerial structure of the tertiary sector that did not allow this to occur. The funding provisions of the past, he stated, had allowed universities to maintain all their activities, even when they were not viable and/or duplicated activities elsewhere, rather than concentrate on their strengths. It had also allowed universities to erode services, such as libraries, in the belief that one off funding would be available in the future when things became intolerable (1988: 16-17). This view in government was the catalyst for the white paper on higher education. The paper was about
change, it was about making the tertiary education sector look to the future not the past and about making it more effective and accountable by making funding more competitive. The was being that through competition services, efficiency and quality had to improve to allow the individual university to be viable.

The changes that took place in 1987 and 1988 within higher education were a reflection of the democratically elected leaders' views on education, not the views of educationalists. Many educationalists of the ilk of Kannel fought against the perceived loss of power to their political masters. Others such as Beare rationalised the ideas put forward in the following manner:

> It will not be educators who will decide how education should be transformed to confront the future. Nor should it be. Education is too socially powerful, too important in its impacts, and especially too instrumental economically to be left to people (teachers) who are not daily involved in business, commerce, politics, social welfare, planning. And it is now too costly, too heavy a charge on the public purse to be left as a plaything of experts. (Smart 1992: 42)

Smart, writing in 1986, stated that academics should not put their heads in the sand and reject privatisation "in toto" but examine each commercial venture against a set criteria which protects academic standards and integrity (1986: 17).

In 1987 the changes generated by Dawkins marked another chapter in the history of the politicisation of education. Politicians were no longer willing to rubber-stamp the decisions of "educational experts". Since 1987 it has become increasingly clear that politicians are willing to use power they have always had through holding the purse strings but have never fully utilised. Pfeffer holds that there are three preconditions for the use of power: the first is an interdependence, ie what one organisation
does has a direct effect on another's ability to perform; secondly the existence of inconsistent goals; and thirdly the scarcity of resources (1981:68-69). When we look at education we can see that the outcomes of education directly affect the ability of the workforce to perform and the effects these outcomes have on the economy. In the mid eighties tertiary education was changing only slowly and its needs, goals and aims were inconsistent with and lagged behind government policy. Lastly, a major resource, money, was becoming scarce. Under these circumstances the tertiary education system was ripe for government to use its political power because they met all of Pfeffer's conditions.

Behavioural Changes

The major changes that directly came out of the white paper as specific aims were the halving of the number of institutions through amalgamation and an ending of the binary system (Dawkins 1987: 28); the adoption of processes to recognise prior learning and give greater flexibility to students to take subjects at multiple institutions (Dawkins 1987: 23); the introduction of the Higher Education Contribution Scheme for Australian students and the freeing up of existing regulations on full fee students from Australia and overseas (Dawkins 1987: 83-84). This diversifying of funding (ie government grant and direct student fees) enabled the number of student places to be expanded. It also produced, along with economic pressures, a demand for greater accountability, and questions in regard to performance and the return on public and private moneys (Higher Education Council 1991: 5). This was because the more diverse and less structured the funding the greater the need for better planning and reporting. Both the administrative and the academic communities have been forced to re-evaluate their efficiency and effectiveness in the light of
these changes to ensure quality and relevance so that they become accountable.

"...it is little wonder that the public should be seeking reassurance on the question of value for money in higher education. It is not an attack on the system or denial of its achievements, nor inherently a threat to academic freedom and institutional autonomy, but a legitimate desire to know how institutions maintain and monitor the quality of their activities, what measures they have in place to identify and deal with possible areas of inefficiency, and how effectively they can respond to changing patterns of community need. In part too it is the result of frustration that previous calls for public accountability - for an effective transparent system of quality assurance - have in many cases either been ignored or treated with paranoid disdain. (Higher Education Council quoting Linke 1991: 5)

As we will see later in this paper the major implications of these changes for institutions were that they had more students, less public funds, different funding arrangements and a broader ethnic and cultural mix among the student population. All of these changes brought their own problems and each institution had to find ways of dealing with them to suit their own circumstances. Among other things the legislation of 1988 had the aim of encouraging growth and changing the method of funding. In order to achieve this it also had to change behaviour within the institutions in regard to areas such as efficiency and quality, the view being that "the more efficient the performance of our higher education system, the stronger the growth that will be possible and the more easily it will be achieved" (Dawkins 1987: 1). The attitudinal changes had to be addressed by the institutions who firstly had to recognise the implications of the political changes and that attitudinal change was in fact needed.
The rest of this paper will look at those attitudinal changes. A final point should be made before moving on though, and that is that the circumstances outlined above directly correlate to what Pfeffer and Dick state in their papers. Pfeffer (1981) says that conflict results in politics, and therefore political power will be utilised if the decision to be made or the resource involved is deemed to be important enough. He also states that a central power will use its own values and rules to make a decision (70). While Dick (1993) states that:

Evidence demonstrates that if you change people's behaviour, their attitudes will later change to maintain consistency. Witness Peter Wilenski's (1986) idea of driving change by introducing legislation. It is often believed that you change behaviour by first changing attitudes. This is sometimes true. But mostly it is easier to change attitudes by first changing behaviour, than it is to change behaviour by first changing attitudes. (52)

The Australian government perceived a conflict in goals and the use of resources between themselves and the tertiary education sector. They decided to exercise their political power. The power they held enabled them to make decisions using their own political values not those of the experts, unless they happened to agree with the government. As can be seen from the discussion above they exercised that power through imposing behavioural change via legislation with a view, as we will see in the discussion below, to changing attitudes in the future.

Attitudinal Changes

The problem that arises in trying to change behaviour and attitudes in an educational institution is that one is dealing with what Mintzberg calls two parallel hierarchies. The professional bureaucracy (ie the academics) is democratic and bottom up while the second (the administrative support staff) is machine bureaucratic and top down (1983: 198). The academics actively seek administrative control while insisting on professional
independence. This is nowhere more pronounced than in a university with faculties and administrative support departments each fighting for the elusive dollar.

The changes generated by Dawkins meant that attitudes had to change in a number of areas. The universities had to become more attuned to community pressure, real or perceived. This included becoming more efficient and effective in providing the service required by the community, be that government, educational authorities or the clientele. It also meant looking out for market niches and becoming more market driven, doing what they did well and not doing things that were marginal, becoming more aware of student needs and expectations as well as cultural differences. In summary, doing things better with less money unless they could raise funds from elsewhere. To a certain extent tertiary education was thrust into the corporate world of the private economy. However, the difference was that, unlike many other businesses in the private sector, they did have a safety net via some government funding.

Attitudinal change, the introduction of fees and the dependence of the institution on those fees also brought certain ethical questions to the fore. Before the 1990s there had been some discussion in relation to ethics, especially in the area of research, but as Powell states "Ethical issues ....in connection with an academic's teaching responsibilities have received remarkably little attention". He cites the draft code for academics put forward in 1978 within the Journal of Advanced Education as an example as it did not even mention teaching (1983: 30). In the 1990s however, a number of codes of conduct can be found. Some are institutional based in regard to teaching and other matters, others are put out by the Australian Vice Chancellors Committee (AVCC) that all universities must observe,
such as in the marketing of education overseas. This last code was the result of certain institutions acting rather unethically in their literature and methodology of attracting students to their campuses. This was especially true of private English language courses which, in some instances, were fronts for rackets (Marginson 1993: 188).

One area of significance that has recently come to the fore is the question of quality. Nearly all students are currently paying some kind of fee in Australia and large numbers are paying full fees. In the past this had not always been the case. When fees had been in place previously a university education had been the domain of the relatively well off or the student who had won a scholarship. Although this was not always the case for other forms of tertiary education, on the whole there was not the natural progression from secondary school as there would seem to be today. This is borne out by the statistics stated in chapter two of this paper. The fact that Australians had experienced thirteen years of free tertiary education, that the student population was generally older and that many of the full fee students had come from overseas now meant that there was a shift in expectations. The types of courses provided and their quality have come into question in recent years. This shift has meant that institutions have had to re-evaluate themselves more than ever before. It is important to note that when this shift in expectations was not immediately recognised by the institutions, the government again used its power by implementing quality audits and ratings. This use of power to change behaviour has had the desired effect with more emphasis being placed on quality at tertiary institutions in the last two years than in the whole of the 1980s.
Individuals in universities have used a number of coping strategies to deal with the large number of changes that have occurred in recent years. Kaye (1994: 54) points to three, these are:

a) There were those who did not need to change. These few were ahead of their time and were formally not recognised or rewarded for their forward thinking.

b) There were those who sought opportunities to retrain so that they could fulfil their changed or new roles appropriately.

c) There were those who were either unwilling or incapable of changing themselves so as to be productive contributors in the restructured systems which employed them.

Kaye goes on to state that people in the last group did not recognise the legitimacy of the forced direction of change nor its necessity and therefore did not see the need to change themselves and actively campaigned against the changes.

In some ways Kaye's words can be related to the institutions themselves. Some were ready for the changes, some, once recognising the need, were prepared to change and train their staff so they could change too and although no institution has not changed at all, a number have put up extensive resistance to change. This was seen primarily in some institutions' resistance to amalgamations, some of which is still continuing. These amalgamations were aimed at gaining efficiencies of scale and to eliminate duplication of courses. However, tradition and status were given a level of importance that in some cases allowed institutions to resist these changes, the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (RMIT) being a good example. Other amalgamations were not suitable and had to be dissolved, University of New England being a prime example. These
dissolutions have been used as a way of showing that not all change is for the good and that big is not always beautiful. The problems however, have not stopped the changes.

Many educationalists found the adjustment to the reforms difficult but came to accept them over time and worked towards making them work. Marris (1990:51-61) tells us that this reaction is common. It is a type of grief for that which is lost which has to take place before an individual can move on to the future. When looking at married couples Marris points out that some couples are prepared for the breakup, others accept it initially but have a problem at a later date and some never accept the breakup until the divorce is signed. This can be related to Kaye's three coping strategies. It can be seen that some staff mourned for the old days for different lengths of time and adjusted to the future just as if they had suffered a personal bereavement.

The need for tertiary education to meet the needs of the government, students and the community has meant that institutions have had to re-evaluate the services they provide and the way they are provided. Subject areas, facilities, methods of teaching, administrative support are all areas that have come under the spotlight in recent years. Quality has become the buzz word of the moment. "The big mistake of the change agents responsible for the restructuring of TAFE and the university system was to act on the assumption that the transformation process would be relatively uncomplicated, swift and painless." (Kaye 1994: 56). Some of the changes may have been swift, relative to how fast the institutions wanted to go, but they certainly have not been uncomplicated or painless.
Where does this leave the students, the consumers? Well like elsewhere in business the consumers have caught on very quickly. The international students, especially, have started shopping around for the best bargain appropriate to their needs, not only between different institutions but different countries as well (Smart 1992b: 21). Students are becoming more demanding now that they are paying fees out of their own pockets. Going to university is no longer seen as a privilege but a right. Given this, if they have to pay for that right they expect a good return. Students are seen to have limited power because they are at the bottom of the heap (Fullan 1991: 189). However, like consumers of other goods, students are finding that they do have the power to force changes. Student demands to be able to evaluate teaching, the recognition of the need for cultural awareness and the provision of good services and facilities are all signs that the students' message is getting through. The result being, hopefully, a better understanding of the students' needs and requirements from a university, ie quality courses taught by quality lecturers and run by a competent administration.

Summary

It can be seen therefore, that change has by no means been easy for the universities. Kaye identifies the ability of employers, or those that have power, to understand the change process as a factor in whether change is successful or not (1994:48). It was noted earlier that the two different structures found in education institutions make change difficult. We can see from the later discussion that the inability of some of those in power to recognise the ramifications of the legislation in terms of attitudinal change has meant that the difficulty with structure, and individuals within those structures, has been multiplied. Attitudinal change has therefore come slowly since the Dawkins reforms were introduced and those who did
move quickly have gained certain benefits. By being the first into markets and/or by concentrating on their strengths and gaining a reputation for quality in certain teaching or research areas they have created certain market niches for themselves. Thus they attract quality students and sponsorship dollars in areas of known strength. Those who were left behind have no choice now but to catch up. The commercialisation of tertiary education is here to stay. Although some institutions will always be supported due to factors such as geographical location, those who do not follow the dictums of accountability, quality, service and effectiveness will find themselves at the bottom of an ever widening resources gap between the haves and the have nots. Commercialisation brings out the best and the worst in quality control (Marginson 1993: 196-197). "The worst Australian private schools are below the standard of the worst public schools" (Marginson quoting Conway 1993: 197). Quality is Australia's best selling point on the overseas market yet, ironically, that is what will suffer if the worst of the dictates of commercialisation are not recognised (Marginson 1993: 197).

Goals of This Paper

By looking at international students, who have by far the greatest number of problems when studying in Australia and in most cases pay the largest fees, I feel that an understanding can be promoted of the many problems that all full fee paying students face. It is hoped that greater understanding will bring about further change and solutions to at least some of the deficiencies within the education system.
The paper will first look at the history of international students in Australia and the problems they have faced. This will be done via a literature review of publications that outline the history, comment on the problems and study the students themselves. The paper will go on to look at the results of a survey done by the author of the relatively small international student population at the Northern Territory University (NTU). The results of this survey will be discussed and then compared with other similar surveys done in recent years at the University of Wollongong, the University of New South Wales and in the Adelaide universities. The survey covers problem areas for the newly arrived international student, both academically and personally, and how they coped with such problems. In addition to the survey of students, the comments of certain academics and senior administrators at the NTU are used to reflect the attitude of the institution towards full fee paying students. Lastly the author makes a few personal comments about future directions, the needs of full fee paying students and the changes required at the NTU to better reflect the present thinking in regard to providing higher education to international students in particular and full fee paying students in general.
CHAPTER TWO

Tertiary Education in Australia

Recent History

In order to understand the changes that are happening in 1995 in tertiary education we must look at where they have come from. History is important because it tells us a lot about attitudes and behaviour that have to change in order to meet the circumstances of today. We also need to understand where the tertiary education system is today so that we can plan for tomorrow.

In the last 40 years the need for tertiary education has become more important. In the 1950s most people left school at fifteen and worked their 'way up the ladder'. In 1966 the census revealed that 119,327 Australians had degrees, by 1986 this figure had risen to 603,449. In the same period as this five-fold increase took place, the workforce only increased by a third and the overall population by a half (Marginson 1993: 11). Marginson also provides us with figures to show that the degree is not the only area of growth in tertiary education: TAFE certificates, diplomas and postgraduate degrees have all seen dramatic rises in importance. In 1939 only one in every hundred school leavers went on to university, today one in four makes the same transition (Marginson 1993:15). He did not however, provide figures on actual graduates.

For such growth to occur there has to be money. Initially, this was provided by government. In 1951 government spent only 1.3% of Gross Domestic Product (GDP) on education, by 1980 this had grown to 5.9%. However, by 1990 government funding had dropped to 4.8% of GDP.
This drop in funding occurred as tertiary education started to boom. Between 1982 and 1990 higher education enrolments rose from 341,390 to 485,075. The following year there was a further 10.2% rise to 534,538 (Marginson 1993: 14). The growth in the importance of a tertiary education to the individual in the 1980s has not therefore been matched by rises in funding from the government. The lack of resources and the growing needs of students has meant that institutions have had to seek alternative means of funding. The types of alternative funds that have been sought, such as full fee payment by the student and corporate sponsorship, have had further implications for the tertiary institution of today.

**Human Capital Theory**

Human capital theory suggests that people make a decision on whether to invest in extra education based on the monetary return that one can expect when finally entering the workforce (Jackson & McConnell 1986: 530). It also suggests that the role of the academic is to add value to the student raw material (Porter, Lingard, Knight 1992: 26). It is an economic fact, however, that, with all other things being equal, as the quantity supplied rises in relation to the quantity demanded the price of the product declines. This has happened in education. In 1969 a 25 to 34 year old full time worker with a degree would on average earn 79% more than the average income. By 1990 this figure had dropped to 30%. A person with a trade certificate could expect a slight edge in 1969 earning on average 7% more than the average worker. In 1990 a person with this credential was earning 0.8% less than the average wage (Marginson 1993: 15). The rise in demand for higher education certification from employers and students has resulted in a substantial rise in the number of students with such a
qualification. The effect being a decline in the amount of return for the student. This is because the number of jobs available to graduates has not grown at the same pace as the number of graduates looking for work. Therefore, the employer can choose between prospective employees and pay a lesser premium for their training and qualifications. This phenomena has not however, resulted in a decline in those wishing to go on to tertiary education as one might expect. Accepted economic theory would tell us that a rise in supply of graduates would result in less people entering university (in other words less people going on to gain a qualification because the return is not as great as when there was a shortage) so that a balance is achieved between the number of people with a qualification and those providing work requiring a qualification, the balance being a reasonable return for the student at a reasonable price to the employer. Instead, the continuing private and public business sectors demand for a tertiary qualification has led to an acceptance that a tertiary education is now a necessity and not a luxury or an ideal. As more and more positions are advertised requiring a qualification for lower levels of employment the amount of return on a qualification is still declining.

This phenomena is not new. The same process happened in both primary and secondary education. Two hundred years ago any form of education was the sole domain of the rich. Over the intervening time however, the need for an educated workforce has become a fundamental part of national growth. By the late nineteenth century in Britain, compulsory education for all was in place at the primary level. During the current century the leaving age has risen on a number of occasions to reflect the needs and wishes of society. Although the prescribed leaving age has not risen above year 10 in the past 20 years the retention rate into years 11 and 12 has grown. In 1980 only 34.5% of those entering school stayed on
until year 12, by 1991 the figure had risen to 71.3% (Marginson 1993: 13). Despite the relative drop in return from a tertiary qualification, stated above, a large proportion of year 12 graduates would have gone on to tertiary education. Another indication of both the acceptance of, and the need for, a tertiary education is the rise in the number of mature and part time students. The need for these students now is to upgrade qualifications, not just to enhance promotion prospects and therefore provide a better return, but in some cases to keep the job they have with no significant extra return at all. Marginson (1993: 39) uses the following table to express the benefits and costs of education in human capital terms:

Table 2.1 Hypothetical rates of return on investment in human capital

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Benefits</th>
<th>Costs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private rate of return</td>
<td>extra earnings from education learning consumption benefits</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social rate of return (1)</td>
<td>total extra earnings to individuals total consumption benefits to individuals</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social rate of return (2)</td>
<td>rate of growth of GDP over a specified time period (e.g. 20 years) discounted for the effects of all factors determining economic growth other than education and research</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
What the table expresses is that both the student and the community benefits from a better education but both also have costs. In regard to the student his or her private return is above average earnings once qualified, although as we have already seen the amount of return has been reduced. The student's costs are the loss of at least some if not all potential earnings while studying and the cost of learning materials, such as books, as well as fees. On the other hand, the general community takes on the burden of providing a 'free' education through higher taxes, in return for which society hopes to gain benefits once the graduate has a well paid position through his or her extra spending power, the perceived social benefits from an educated population, such as intelligent debate within given democratic freedoms, and the innovation that an educated individual may provide which leads to overall growth in the economy.

The decline in the private return for the individual (ie the reduction in wage differentiation between those who have a degree and those who do not) and the perceived importance of education as a source of national growth would ordinarily result in a larger input of resources from government. When it comes to policy and direction this has been the case, as we shall see, but in terms of financial support the opposite has occurred: why? Externalities, ie the perceived social and economic benefits to the general community, in the above framework are the only argument for government input (Marginson 1993: 40). The value put on these externalities by government and society is generally reflected by the monetary input that is made. Some people, such as Fane in 1984 (Marginson 1993: 69), put little value on these externalities at all. This is in direct contrast to the thinking of 1965 when the committee on the Future of Tertiary Education in Australia stated:
Education should be regarded as an investment which yields direct and significant economic benefits through increasing the skill of the population and through accelerating technological progress. ... Economic growth in Australia is dependent upon a high and advancing level of education (Harman & Meek 1988: 1).

People do not invest solely for externalities, they invest up to a point where returns in monetary and other benefits are equal to the perceived cost. Therefore, with the perception that the returns are dwindling, the amount of time and money that individuals and governments are willing to invest is also declining. Human capital theory today concentrates on the consumption benefits to the individual, that is the individual's "ability to receive, decode and understand information relevant to making innovative decisions" (Marginson 1993: 46), the theory being that a graduate will be able to make a more effective decision through his or her better understanding of all the issues involved. In addition it is hypothesised that education is the primary factor that enhances innovation and efficiency (Marginson 1993). This change in emphasis from perceived benefits to the nation to perceived benefits for the individual has been one of the reasons for the shift away from government funding the individual for part or all of their personal education past a certain level. It also partially explains, along with the increasing numbers of graduates, why monetary returns in the work place have dropped. Human capital theory has therefore taken a backseat to economic rationalism, which we will discuss in a moment, in the late eighties and nineties.
Economic Rationalism

The growth in numbers, the reasons for that growth, the drop in government funding and the changes in the demographics of the student population have all had a profound effect on tertiary education. From a governmental point of view it has led to the introduction of economic rationalism. This is defined in three parts, each of which affects education today. First, "education is now seen as a branch of economic policy rather than a mix of social, economic and cultural policy". Second, "the economic content of public policy today is neo-classical and mostly market liberal". This has resulted in a minimalist state attitude which is not total under a Labor government but is certainly very evident. Thirdly, education, along with other sectors of the public service, has been brought under the immediate control of the ministers. This has meant a more centralised and strategic approach and a greater emphasis on efficiency and accountability at the expense of the public good (Marginson 1993: 56). This aspect has been a serious concern for the traditionalists within the academic community. The traditionalists see economic rationalism as the death knell for the teaching of less popular subject areas, especially in the arts faculties. Non-applied research is also seen to be under threat. Class sizes dictating whether a subject is taught or not may very well mean that certain subjects are rarely taught, if at all. However, non-traditionalists argue that rationalisation will mean that one or two universities can run viable classes in less popular subjects, probably relying on the external mode of education, rather than a large number of universities teaching two or three students at a time. Whether centralisation results in loss of local and relevant content is also a matter of debate.
From the individual's point of view, economic rationalism has affected the student's choice in terms of whether to continue on to tertiary education, the institution to attend, course to undertake and even the lecturer under which to study. Lecturers are valued differently by institutions as well under economic rationalism, their ability to attract outside funding or work being more highly valued than some of their other abilities, while administrators are valued for their effective use of limited dollars. Whether the effects of economic rationalism on education are seen as good or bad, it cannot be denied that they will be with us for some time yet.

**Government as the Catalyst of Change**

As Porter et al point out, the use of higher education to promote national aims is not a new phenomenon in Australia. Indeed the establishment of a national university in Canberra was intended to epitomise the government perspective of looking towards the future of a more self reliant Australia. Governments in the 1950s and 60s also took an interest in research and the establishment of a 'can-do' philosophy within education (1992: 27).

In 1988 John Dawkins, the Federal Education Minister of the time, however, stated that he believed that the high funding levels of the 1970s had had a detrimental effect on tertiary education (p16). He based this assertion on the premise that institutional planning for the future had seemed to have taken place with the assumption that funding levels would be maintained and anything new could be accommodated within the old. This perception that tertiary education was lagging behind government policy was one of the main reasons that Dawkins brought out first the 'Green discussion paper' in 1987 and later the White paper which was the
basis of legislation. These papers were not about turning tertiary education on its head (although in many ways they did). Dawkins stated that the Green paper was about

establishing processes and structures whereby administrators and others working in higher education institutions are able to take the necessary and often tough decisions to give their institutions strength, vigour and flexibility to grow and to contribute to the economic and social well being and intellectual development of this country. (1988: 18)

Dawkins outlined the benefits of the changes as

sustained growth in student numbers .... measures to strengthen institutions, and make them more responsive (to the demands of society). It proposes a new relationship between institutions and the Federal Government. It establishes a process for careful and rational consideration of the options for resourcing the required growth. But more than anything, it requires institutions to strengthen and streamline their own decision making processes. (1988: 14)

All in all the Green paper made the institutions change after a period of stagnation. It made institutions think about what higher education was about and where it was going. It had a specific target of raising the annual output of graduates from 88,000 in 1986 to 125,000 by the year 2001 (Smart 1990: 15). The legislation that followed brought in many specific changes, such as greater flexibility to charge fees to Australian post graduate students, a lifting of restrictions on international students studying in Australia, new funding criteria based on size and student numbers, the ending of the binary system and the introduction of partial student fees for all. However, it was the ramifications of these changes that has brought about a general change within tertiary education. As Karmel predicted in 1988 we have seen amalgamations of institutions to attract funding and cut costs, a greater emphasis on quality, a
concentration of resources into specific areas of study at each institution and a greater emphasis on market forces generally (Karmel 1988).

The behavioural changes brought about by the government have forced institutions to consider their reason for being. The changes have also forced the institutions to accept certain realities, one of which is that the government is not going to provide all the money. The need to attract extra revenue has meant a rise in the number of fee paying students, especially from overseas. However, it is questionable whether the attitudinal changes that were supposed to result have actually occurred to any major degree.

It was noted by the Department of Employment, Education and Training (DEET) in August 1992 that in trying to capitalise on the new overseas market some institutions failed in this endeavour financially and there were cases of abuse of the migration program. In addition, Australia's approach to full fee students overseas was "too narrowly commercial with little recognition of the wider needs of students or of the other benefits of internationalising our education system". The need for this recognition led the government to define the internationalism of education as "making courses and teaching methods more internationally relevant and competitive through a number of means, including through links with business and overseas government and education institutions" (DEET 1992: 3). The same document outlines the benefits of international education in terms of providing aid, opportunities for trade and the internationalisation of the community, the emphasis of the last point being cultural understanding and exchanges on both sides. However, this emphasis is narrowed later by stating that greater understanding provides
greater opportunities for trade through personal contacts and the ex-students’ knowledge of Australia.

It can be seen therefore that after recognising the criticism of Australia’s narrow commercialisation of education, even this document still puts emphasis on economic rationality as the reason for encouraging the education of overseas student in a more culturally sensitive manner.

Summary

This chapter has looked at some of the reasons for the recent changes in tertiary education. Tertiary education has been pushed bodily into a market economy on a scale that it has never experienced before. Competition for the student dollar, quality of service and facilities and the need to make less funds go further are all areas that have had to be confronted. This is no more true than when servicing the overseas education market. This market has grown in recent years, however the number of students coming from overseas dropped for the first time in 1994. Why did this happen? What implications does it have for the Australian education system and tertiary education in particular? Is it because our institutions do not fulfil the expectations of those paying for their services? These are three questions that I hope to provide some answers for in the rest of this paper.
CHAPTER THREE

The Needs of International Students

A Change in Emphasis

In 1986 "Overseas students in Australia constituted roughly the same proportion (4%) of the total higher education population as in the UK and US" (Smart 1986: 18). In the period directly before this date, 1974 to 1984, there had been a 10,000 limit placed on the number of students to be accepted from overseas. Most of these students were funded by aid packages paid for by the Australian tax payer, as they had been since the Colombo Plan of the 1950s. The limit had been placed on universities because there was a fear that the free education system may attract too many international students and thus reduce the number of places available for domestic students (Williams 1989: 1-6). From 1980 international students had to pay 20% of the average full cost of tertiary education. By 1988 the overseas student charge had risen to 55% of the average full cost. This charge, however, was not an attempt to gain revenue within a potential export market. It was mainly introduced because of government concerns with students using their acceptance into university as a 'back-door' method of migration. The charge, along with the policy that graduates must return home for two years before they could apply to migrate to Australia, was seen as a disincentive to those potential 'students' whose main purpose was a wish to migrate. The charge was collected before the issue of a visa and went into the government's pocket, not that of the universities. It could not therefore be used to improve facilities directly.
In 1984 two major reports were published. The Jackson committee stated that it felt that Australian institutions had the potential to develop education into a major export sector. It recommended that institutions be allowed to enter the market individually and directly charge full fees. At the same time the Australian government should cut back on educational aid and provide educational assistance only to targeted developing countries. The Goldring committee on the other hand was against full fees, stating that it would disadvantage poor students and lower academic standards. It recommended a continuation of the existing assistance program which helped all international students wishing to study in Australia. It accepted the thinking, at that time, that benefits accrued from trade and good relations with our neighbours from this policy. It did, however, support the idea of expanding the market by allowing institutions to enrol international students who could afford to pay, and collect fees directly. It was these reports that influenced Dawkins in 1987 to free up the international student market totally. This was despite the fact that the rules for institutions had been tightened as recently as 1985 so that international student numbers could not exceed 10% of total student numbers in any particular course of study. By 1990 international students, except in targeted areas, had to pay full fees either by private means or via a scholarship from their home country (Williams 1989b: 11-15).

The change in emphasis on the method of payment meant that the institution providing the education had to take on more responsibility for what it was providing. No longer were the institutions providing education to students who were perceived to be second class and would accept what they were given. No longer was the welfare and pastoral care of these students the domain of the Australian government who provided the funds for them to receive their education. The international student
had become the customer with consumer rights. It took a while for some institutions to realise this and they suffered a down turn in numbers enrolling after an initial upturn. One of the reasons this occurred was that, as in all industries, if the service is not there your customers go to other providers if and when the opportunity arises. If institutions wanted to benefit from direct financial payment they had to provide a service that would encourage the students they had attracted to stay and attract more full fee paying students in the future. It became clear that word of mouth was important in this regard. The provision of support services, such as English language short courses and other identified specific needs of international students, and by ensuring that teaching standards rose, was seen as the most effective way of taking on these responsibilities (Williams 1989b: 18-23).

Some writers, such as Baldwin, Marginson and Dwyer, see a conflict between the traditional view that 'students are learning the academic trade from those who are already masters of it', and the concept that students are buyers of knowledge and credentials. Marginson expresses a fear that consumerism could result in superficiality and a pre-occupation with short term benefits, while Dwyer states that it could result in institutions taking anyone who can pay, qualified or not (Marginson 1993: 197). Baldwin is concerned with the traditional teacher/student relationship and what she sees as the profit orientated use of the word "customer" or "consumer" (1994: 130). She perceives this orientation as doing only what is necessary to ensure that a product is bought. It is easy to see where this perception comes from when you look at private universities like Bond, whose mission statement is "Bond University seeks to attract the best students, to set the highest standards of learning and research and to provide Australia and its region with graduates who have intellectual and
practical skills to meet the challenges of the 21st century". This statement sounds good but when you look at the interpretation of these objectives you find that the emphasis is put on research, business and community links and other commercial and political aspirations - the student/teacher relationship and the general support of the students and their personal endeavours are given little importance in this regard (Watts 1988: 4/5).

The perception of profit orientation can also be understood when one looks at how, at least in the late '80s and early '90s, education was marketed by individual institutions. Both government and the institutions themselves saw, and to some extent still do see, education as an export industry just like any other and marketed it as such. This is culturally unsound in Asia where education is treated with respect. At the same time fees went up and the level of education required for acceptance at some institutions came down, giving the impression of a lowering of standards (Smart 1992b: 23-24).

In answer to these criticisms people like Professor Don Watts, late of Bond University and now Chancellor of Notre Dame University, states that fees empower students when they demand services. He feels that public funding disempowers students and quality suffers because the consumer does not have the same rights as those paying fees directly (Watts: personal interview Oct 1994). An example of this can be seen in the case of one student at Deakin University in early 1994. Having studied the literature he chose Deakin's Masters of Development Studies above a number of others. He paid his fees only to discover that in one unit the content was 11 years old and that he was updating the lecturer. He decided to sue the university for false advertising and the matter was settled out of court with the unit being suspended and updated (Napier
1994: 9). Would a non-fee paying student have the same success? Would they even try? It is the writer's opinion that the answers would be no to both questions. However, it is also reasonable to ask would an Asian student, who believes you must respect your lecturer, elders, etc., question the content and quality, and if they did, how far would they take the issue? It is much more likely that they would leave the institution for one of higher standing (Smart 1992b). Quality has certainly become a major issue in recent years but is this because of market forces or the work of the Quality Council, set up by the government in late 1992, and the extra funding provided to those who score well?. Taylor, quoted by Burke, stated in 1986 after the imposition of full cost fees in Britain:

...the very nature of the relationship between institutions and students has changed. A relationship which was previously capable of being understood in a number of ways, for instance, as being based on goodwill, patronage, generosity, shared values, repayment of colonial debt, concern for the Commonwealth, etc., can now, except in the case of Government Scholarship holders, be more readily interpreted in commercial terms. Institutions are marketing a service to high fee paying clients in order to help subsidise their activities and, increasingly, the clients are demanding value for money and a return for their investment. A successful commercial arrangement can only be measured in terms of the effectiveness with which the customer's needs and expectations are met. (Burke 1989b).

Why Study in Australia?

According to Mezger the most compelling reason why students study in Australia is the lack of educational opportunity in their own country (1992: 9). However, this is fairly naive because, as Smart points out, the UK, Canada and America have much bigger overseas student programs than Australia. Australia also competes against Japan, other European countries and New Zealand (Smart 1992b: 21). The decision to come to Australia is more often based on reputation, the existence of friends or
relatives already living in the city where the university is located and finances (Smart 1992b). According to Hill, knowledge gained through personal contacts with persons who know the area, university, etc. plays a very large part in the student's decision making process of choosing which country and at which university they wish to study (1992: 11). So what does Australia have going for it? Well between them Hill, Mezger and Smart come up with a number of sound reasons:

a) Australia is seen as politically stable,
b) Geographically it is closer to Asia than many of our competitors and has similar time zones,
c) As an English speaking nation it has the edge over Japan and Europe as English is the language of international commerce,
d) The low crime rate compared to the US,
d) It allows students and their dependants to work while studying, and
e) Australia is more affordable generally although this advantage is decreasing as fees have risen significantly in the last couple of years.

It should be noted that Chien states that most Asian students would rather study in the United Kingdom or the United States. The only reason they do not is the expense. He warns that if educators put up fees too high, Australia's main advantage will be lost (1988: 10).

Hill et al also state that in their study many of the students interviewed had not been accepted into US and British universities before trying Australia. They also noted that students studying at Wollongong had often applied for places in a Sydney university before settling on Wollongong (1992).
Despite having tougher visa and medical controls, the advantages outlined above give Australia a distinct advantage over her competitors. However, Australia cannot take these advantages for granted, international students still face many problems in this country and unless these are recognised and measures taken to reduce their impact, the current stream could become a trickle (Smart 1992b).

At the same time as looking at why students come to Australia we should look at why institutions want to attract them. As stated in earlier chapters, the main reason traditionally has been altruistic - providing an education for the population of less fortunate nations, in the hope that better trade and foreign relations will occur in the long term. However, with the advent of full fees, income has become a prime motivator. Another reason is the internationalisation of education. Both the international and local students gain a greater understanding from interaction and the sharing of different perspectives and culture (Burke 1990: 7).

The Problems Faced by International Students

The problems that international students face are well documented, Ballard and Clanchy (1984 & 1991) were publishing books in the early eighties on the subject and Bryan Burke (1988) completed a major research project in 1987. However, we still find that mistakes are being made and research is being ignored, even when that research is current, such as the reports done at Wollongong University in 1992 and 1994.
A list of common problems faced by international students, especially Asian students, would include the following:

a) lack of competence in spoken and written English,

b) homesickness and culture shock,

c) gaps in background knowledge and training (such as computer training or lab skills),

d) variations in teaching and learning styles,

e) housing problems and problems of social relationships, and

f) difficulties fitting into Australian student life. (Ballad and Clanchy 1992: pp4 - 26).

These problems and others will be discussed in more detail later on in this chapter but for now a general overview will be given. Ballard and Clanchy concern themselves mostly with the problems that come from teaching international students. These problems derive partly from the student's experiences in his or her own country, and therefore their cultural make up, and partly from lecturers' lack of experience in teaching students from overseas and their lack of flexibility in teaching and assessment styles. Examples abound in Ballard and Clanchy's books (1984 & 1991) of instances where students have had problems understanding the western methods of teaching, such as the Japanese economics student who could not critically analyse the works of two famous economists because that would show a lack of respect and put him above them (Ballard 1984: p9-11), or the Thai student who pointed out that a lecturer who asks the class's opinion of another student's comment would be thought of as lazy or poorly qualified in his country (Ballard 1992: p1). Both the critical review of literature and group discussion of material are common practice in Australia. The student must be made aware of what is expected and the different methods of teaching used in Australia. At the same time the
A lecturer has to be aware of cultural differences and be flexible in his or her assessment. It is only through exposure to problems like these that the quality of teaching and the recognition of the problem can be improved.

Bryan Burke (1988) on the other hand concentrates on the social issues. Throughout his work he emphasises the need for more social services for international students and a recognition that students from overseas suffer the normal student social problems of attending university to a greater degree than an Australian student because of the lack of language and cultural background. For this reason, he advocates better support networks and services specifically aimed at these students, the obvious reason being that a student who has personal problems does not study well. This argument has become stronger in recent years with the advent of fees, the view being that fees entitle students to expect this type of support. Whether this view is correct is part of what will be discussed later in this paper. Burke does not advocate a totally separate response to the problems faced by international students but a mixed model using specialist and mainstream services. The one proviso he places on using mainstream services is that they "must be sensitive to the special needs and circumstances of overseas students" (1988b:14).

So a general summary of the above would be that international students suffer the normal traumas of going to university, first time away from home, having to manage finances, etc. In addition to these, however, they have disadvantages such as language and cultural problems which affect learning and personal life. It is these additional problems that this chapter will discuss.
Most people will tell you that first impressions are very important. For the international student this first impression is not at the university itself but in their own country. The marketing of the university programs has already been commented on for its export industry orientation. However, this is not the only criticism of the universities in this area. Professor Watts (1994 interview) stated that many universities exaggerated their advantages and minimised their disadvantages, both verbally and in their literature, to such an extent that what the student believed they were getting and what they received were two totally different things. However, he did point out that the misunderstandings also came about through cultural and language difficulties. These resulted in innocent statements by the universities being misinterpreted to mean something quite different from what any Australian would understand. Of course, these misunderstandings could lead to considerable embarrassment and damage the reputation of the university involved. Ensuring these types of misunderstandings do not occur has become an important aspect of marketing education in recent years. Burke gives an outline in his paper presented at RMIT of the issues that a university should be aware of when presenting information, top of the list is being pertinent and candid (1988b: 11).

Another reason for the problems that occur is the students' belief that they are proficient in the English language, having learnt it for a number of years at school (Sen 1970: 25). They do not realise that the English they learned there will not be sufficient for their studies and the social problems they will face. All universities today insist that students from overseas take a test in their home country before acceptance and most students
attend at least a short course in English upon arrival in Australia. How the universities and the embassies dealt with these problems and others, such as the multiplicity of qualifications potential students have and the testing for English competency, had a great affect on the students' decision on where to study (Watts 1994, Holloway 1989: 53-64).

Once the decision has been made there is the preparation for the departure for a foreign country and the initial problems of housing, settling in and generally finding out where you are upon arrival. This problem has been recognised for some years, but how it is minimised is still a matter that is left up to the universities and, of course, some do it well and some do not. As early as 1970 Sen was writing about the need for orientation programs in Britain for overseas student nurses and the importance of meeting people off the plane or ship (1970: 28-30). Students often know very little about Australia, let alone the city in which they will be studying, they are often miserable after leaving their family, apprehensive and uncertain about the reception they will receive (Noi 1990: 5). In reading Noi's book the reader is taken through a number of emotions ranging from those just stated to elation and excitement about the adventure. Noi describes many aspects of Australia from an Asian perspective, and the Australian reader may find that a number of things that he or she has taken for granted are seen differently through others eyes. It is the view of the writer of this paper that the very fact that the book is written at all is a comment on the serious lack of understanding in Australia about other people's cultures and their needs when coming to this country. Noi describes the environment of Australia as it is, everything from what to wear, Australian customs, the types of food available, problems in accommodation, study habits, etc. Its goal is to outline some of the problems that international students can expect to face and give some suggestions in how to deal with
them. It is not suggested that orientation programs do not exist, they do, a lot of them based on the Australian International Development Assistance Bureau's book "Oriented for Success". What is being stated is that literature, such as Noi's (1990) and the AIDAB guide, seem to suggest that some institutions do not pay enough attention to this aspect of educating a student from overseas.

On landing in Australia, hopefully students will be met by somebody from the university. Unfortunately this is not a certainty. Professor Watts, who certainly saw the 'meet and greet' exercise as one of prime importance, described to the writer how in Western Australia, Curtin University will accommodate students at the residential colleges on their first night in Australia. The next morning they will be given a tour not only of the campus but the immediate area surrounding the campus as well, pointing out doctors' surgeries, shops, post office, etc. This contrasts markedly with the Northern Territory University, which until recently had reverted to using taxis to meet students at the airport, even though quite often they arrive in the early hours of the morning. It is still the case however, that a student arriving early on a Saturday morning may not meet an NTU staff member until Monday or even Tuesday. This type of service only adds to the students' disorientation and confusion.

Once in Australia the students' main worries from a social stand point are accommodation, finances and meeting new people (Burke:1989: 9-15). Accommodation is a problem. In the short term the international students mostly rely on college residences, as it is difficult to arrange accommodation off campus before arrival unless friends or relatives live in the area. To some extent this has its advantages, international students are forced to mix as they are sharing accommodation. However, in a
residence with a large overseas student population, this may mean simply mixing with other international students. This helps with homesickness and so on but does nothing to integrate the student with Australians. However, it is accepted that an overseas student is much more likely to get to know Australians in a residential college than if they are living in a house or flat. Most residential colleges will have their own orientation programs and will attempt to minimise the culture shock (Burke 1989). Burke, in his paper, goes even further and advocates a peer pairing system. Although he recognises the pitfalls of matching two students, he feels that the advantages of an old hand and new hand partnership in the first six months are very beneficial to everyone involved. A peer support program at Flinders, with a view to improving interaction between local and international students, has proven to be successful "although resource intensive" (Mullins et al 1995:32). It is not stated in the text but it is assumed that the resources involved would be administrative rather than financial.

First Few Months

Once here the adjustment required to live in Australia and get used to the lifestyle can be extremely difficult. The food, the social nuances, attitudes to all types of subjects, ranging from sex and sexuality to the environment, are in many cases completely different to what the overseas student is used too. The problem in recent years has been that, despite the availability of literature proving that support in these areas is required, institutions have been so busy dealing with the provision of basic services, such as adequate housing, that support services have often been left behind (Brash 1989: 65-71). Brash goes on to ask questions like: What are the best methods of assisting students? What if a sustained support system causes
undue dependency on institutional support? He answers his own questions by advocating better preparation of the student, both before and after they arrive, for the rigours of studying in Australia. He also advocates better training for academic staff who lecture international students. In doing so he believes that the amount of support required will be lessened, therefore reducing the probability of dependence.

As stated earlier, most people recognise that the problems associated with attending university and leaving home for the first time have a greater effect on international students. These students often have additional cultural and language problems to contend with as well. Burke states that it is important to recognise that, unlike the Australian student, the primary, if not the only, reason that the overseas student is in Australia is to study. Therefore, the options and priorities of the overseas student are both limited and different to those of other students (Burke 1989b: 73). In detailing the types of problems that affect international students, Burke defines him or her in the following manner; an adolescent, a foreigner in an unfamiliar environment, an ambassador with an increased awareness of nationality, ethnic background and/or religion, and finally as a consumer with the right to expect value for money (Burke 1989b: 74, see also quote by Taylor earlier in chapter). According to Burke, this definition is now widely accepted and points to the code of ethics accepted by the Australian Vice-Chancellors' Committee (AVCC). The "Code of Ethical Practice in the Provision of Education to International Students by Australian Higher Education Institutions" along with the generic guidelines for all students "Universities and Their Students Expectations and Responsibilities" set out the responsibilities of the universities. The areas covered include the promotion and marketing of education, the provision of information and the provision of appropriate infrastructure.
and support services as well as agents, admission standards arrival and orientation. Burke goes on to state however, that having a code is one thing, putting it into practice is another. Burke gives six major headings in considering areas where international students especially need help. These are:

a) Cultural adjustments:- That is getting used to the new country and culture as well as a sense of loss for their own. This is generally termed as "culture shock" and involves customs, values, family, friends and food.

b) Finances and accommodation:- Managing on a limited budget, paying bills, finding reasonable accommodation and work.

c) Living independently:- Learning to live without family support, having to do chores, such as washing and shopping and generally managing their own affairs.

d) Language and communication:- University level reading and writing is often difficult even for the most accomplished non-English speaking overseas student and participation in classroom discussion and asking questions is particularly difficult.

e) Study related concerns:- Differences in style of teaching frequently cause difficulty. As does the way other writers work is used which can lead to problems with 'plagiarism'. Students also have difficulty in using libraries and laboratories which are often better equipped than the ones they are used too.

f) Being different:- Racism is often a problem for international students, as is the difficulty they may have in making friends with Australians. (Burke 1989b: 75).
If the headings Burke gives us are accepted the issue becomes one of how to deal with the problems. Should they be dealt with through mainstream support services or via specialised services? What amount of resources should be allocated? Should staff, both academic and/or administrative, get specialised training to help deal with the problems? Burke's answer is a clear yes. Although he recognises that many of the problems faced by international students are also faced by Australian students, and many of these can be dealt with by the mainstream student support staff, he still advocates specialist staff. He also states that if mainstream support services are going to deal with international students they must firstly have the resources and secondly an understanding of the special needs and circumstances of these students. He argues that a university becomes more competitive in the generation of income if it is known to have good support services, therefore greater support services generate the income to pay for the extra resources required. In relation to staff training, he argues that all staff who come into contact with international students, library, admissions, faculty staff, etc, not just support staff and lecturers, need training so that they are aware of the differences in background and needs of international students (Burke 1989b:76).

In arguing for the above, Burke feels that there will be a flow on effect to local students, especially non-English speaking background local students, who may well argue for the same preferential treatment as those from overseas. His argument follows along the line that more resources to student support areas, and in facilities generally, primarily aimed at international students benefit all students in the long term. In attracting more students paying full fees more resources are available. These resources are spent on improving facilities and services which are available to all students, as well as on training staff whose new knowledge
helps them do their jobs more effectively for everyone (Burke 1989b:77). He goes on to say that most problems faced by international students are predictable and therefore preventable. Effective selection procedures, adequate pre-departure information, comprehensive orientation programs and introduction into existing student networks reduce the need for remedial services. However, concerns still exist about problems that all students can identify with, such as a lack of reasonable accommodation, financial worries and study difficulties.

Burke in this particular article argues for solutions to problems that can be seen to be achievable but ignores somewhat the social problems that exist for the overseas student. These fall into three main categories: language, food and socialising.

Language is a problem for all international students, even those students who speak English very well have problems once they arrive. One of the reasons for this is that the English that is spoken by the locals is not the English they have learnt in school or spoken in their home country. Wherever you go in the English speaking world you find that the language is spoken slightly differently and that there are ambiguities in what people say which are confusing to the foreigner. For instance, a cashier in a bank asked Gan Kien Chien "How would you like it?" He answered "I like it very much, thank you." A simple question as to what dominations of notes Chien wanted was misunderstood not because his English was poor but because the cashier spoke in what Chien calls a type of shorthand (Chien 1988:9). The fact that English can be so ambiguous is a problem not only for the student but for the administrator and lecturer as well. We will see this more clearly when we look more closely at the problems students have actually studying in Australia.

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Food is a problem for most Asian students, especially for those living in residences where food is provided as part of the fee. To the Asian palate Australian food is very bland. A lot of the problems in regard to homesickness can be traced back to a yearning for the students' favourite dishes (Chein 1988: 11). The fact that most Asians eat rice and not potato with their food, and also that religious considerations restrict the types of meat that some students can eat, means that they depend on the variety of spices used and the methods of cooking to make their food interesting. Australian cooks and Australian students also living in residence often fail to realise this and therefore do not appreciate the problem (Chein 1988:11).

The third problem area that Chein deals with is socialisation which in his and many other Asian students' eyes means drink in Australia. This is a problem because most Asians are not heavy drinkers of alcohol. Most Muslims do not drink at all, while Chinese usually only drink on special occasions. So in rejecting an invitation to go down the pub they effectively cut off a major avenue of socialising in Australia which depends upon 'mateship' which is often reaffirmed at such gatherings. This perception exists despite the male orientation of such thinking. Many international students find it difficult to find avenues in which to meet Australians other than at social occasions involving alcohol. Another problem in regard to socialisation is the Asian students' work ethic. Chein, as does Burke, reminds us that the student is here mainly to study. This, so Chein contends, can cause a number of anxieties, especially if the student has been sponsored by his or her family or even village community, the responsibility felt to those back home means that work becomes an obsession and therefore socialising and the need to relax once
in a while are often forgotten (1988:11-12). Many students see the loneliness that results from the lack of socialisation and the homesickness for family and friends as "the price" of an overseas qualification (Ballard 1984: 3).

In the table below, Mezger attempts to show the types of cultural problems that an international student has to overcome when studying in Australia. As has been explained above they are many and varied. The table enables the reader to more fully understand the complexities and the difficulties that an international student faces when going overseas. It can also be seen that these difficulties are often different to those faced by domestic students leaving home for the first time.
Table 3.1 Role Changes for International Students in Australia

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Students Own Culture</th>
<th>Australian Culture</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Demonstrated success in an academic/student role.</td>
<td>Untested student role. Yet to prove himself. Dependent and feeling incapable</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capable</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culturally suitable understanding and behaviour in male or female roles and in relationships with same and opposite sex</td>
<td>Unfamiliar with Australian male or female roles and with relationships with same and opposite sex</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure financial role (usually supported by parents).</td>
<td>Insecure financial role; income often below poverty line. Required to be fully independent and responsible for finances here.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Usually the domestic role in home has been one of dependence on parents (usually mother).</td>
<td>Full domestic role required (all cooking, household chores etc).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Secure friendship roles</td>
<td>Socially isolated. Limited and new friendship roles.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear role as family member (eg son, daughter).</td>
<td>No family role</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clear understanding of academic student role in own country (eg more passive, less analytical).</td>
<td>No knowledge of Australian student role model (the Western student role model is active, independent, analytical, questioning).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Relationship roles are clear, structured and often rigid, based on known social position and status (high context based).</td>
<td>Relationship roles are unknown. Australian relationships are casual and flexible (low context based).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New role as ambassador - heightened awareness of nationality and enhanced feelings of being different.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>New role as foreigner and possible experiences of prejudice and racism.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(Mezger 1992: 136)
Problems in the Classroom

We have looked at the problems that international students have outside the classroom, but what about inside the classroom? Ballard began a conference paper in 1988 with the following words:

Students coming to study in Australia from overseas are required to make a double cultural shift: from their own national culture to the national culture and lifestyle in Australia, and from the classroom culture of their previous experience to Australian traditions of teaching and learning. (Ballard 1988: 41)

Too many lecturers tacitly assume that students will adjust their learning habits to suit the new demands. The Asian student is typically passive, respectful and syllabus/textbook dependent and this is at odds with the traditional western methods of learning at university level (Ballard 1989: 81). Ballard asserts that Asian students especially find units that require extended pieces of writing or critical and independent judgement particularly difficult. For this reason these students tend to concentrate on science - and maths - based courses where textual language is less important (Ballard 1988: 42). However, as Nairn pointed out to the writer these subject areas have far more technical terms which can provide an even greater problem for the student (Nairn 1995). The way a lecturer teaches is based on his or her own experience. In most cases in Australia this means a traditional Australian, or at least western, mode of learning where critical thinking and the ability to write in a structured way is very important. In this environment the examination is important but ability can be recognised through other work despite a bad result. On the other hand most Asian students have come from a very competitive schooling background. Success in this environment is based on performance in examinations and achievement is rated highly both by the individual and
the community (Ballard 1988: 42). The Asian system therefore dictates that a student be hardworking, respectful to the teacher, not raise unnecessary questions and master the text book. Consequently there is little discussion and few questions in an Asian classroom. Lack of resources means that little extra reading is required and information is memorised. A student who fails is not perceived as stupid but either as lazy or he or she had a bad teacher (Ballard 1988:43).

A massive readjustment, in both attitude and learning behaviour, is therefore required when the student arrives in Australia (Ballard 1988: 46). This is because the lecture hall here is less formal, students ask questions and criticise the views of the teacher, teachers make jokes and stray from the text book and undermine it as an authoritative piece of work. Behaviourally the lecturers do not hold themselves responsible for the students' success or failure and often feel that students are uninterested or inattentive if they sit silently and are passive. Lecturers see themselves as facilitators pointing students in the right direction. They do not intend the class content to cover the whole topic, and expect the student to do a lot of supplementary reading (Ballard 1988: 44).

Language, as has already been stated, is a very big problem. Many students believe that they have a good command of the English language when they arrive in Australia. Many can read and write very well but are slow. Many more find verbal English very difficult as they are inexperienced in speaking the language on a constant basis. The amount of extra reading and writing proves to be very hard work for a number of students, while the extent and speed of the discussion in the classroom often leaves the student lost (Ballard 1988: 44 & 1984: 1-3). This inability
to understand has psychological effects on confidence even for the most highly qualified. Ballard quotes a Korean professor:

> When I couldn't express myself, what I try to explain, what I have in mind, what ideas I have about my research, then I feel I have become a fool. This language problem deprives me of my confidence in my study sometimes. (Ballard 1984: 3)

Of course, the problem of confusion through lack of knowledge of another person's culture cuts both ways. For instance, it is common for some Asian students to give small gifts upon first arrival and after returning from a trip to hosts and respected personages. This, of course, includes the lecturer who, as already explained, is an important person in an Asian student's life. However, a gift may not just be given out of custom or generosity, it can also be seen as a bribe or perceived to have strings attached. Questions, such as would it be rude not to accept? and how will it be seen by others? go through a person's mind. The lecturers also need to be aware that criticism of a student's work can be seen as racism rather than simple comment on a piece of written work. Both the student and staff need to be more fully informed about the other's customs and values in order to overcome these problems (Ballard 1992: 5-19).

**Quality of Service**

So far this paper has looked at the problems the overseas student faces from a social and learning perspective, but has only touched upon the last major area of difficulty that the overseas student may encounter - quality. The standard of the institution's services, facilities and support mechanisms have been mentioned, as has the content of the course material, but the argument which revolves around what a student is likely
to expect for his or her fees as opposed to what is available, and what level of service will satisfy the student, has not been discussed in any detail up to now.

A student who pays fees directly to the institution, whether the student be Australian or from overseas, is much more conscious of his or her right to demand a better service (Mansell 1989: 101). As well as expecting material to be up to date and delivered in a method that is understood by all (see above), international students are now beginning to question its relevance to their particular situation. In other words, should the content have examples from their home country and not be solely based on Australian conditions (Mansell 1989: 100)? Mansell says that this is a reasonable expectation. After all, most, if not all, international students will return to their home country. It is only reasonable to expect that the knowledge they take back with them is useful (This is also supported by the DEET paper quote in chapter two). Mansell therefore advocates a flexible curriculum whereby extra elective units can be offered dependent upon demand, as well as having lecturers who are knowledgeable about circumstances within their discipline as they exist in Asia (1989: 103-104). This type of flexibility is available at NTU currently in Business Faculty postgraduate courses but not at undergraduate level. The difficulty is that the numbers at NTU are so small and the students come from so many different countries that it would be impossible to put on units that had relevance to every student. The postgraduate school gets around this problem by utilising groups and major comparative research projects. By allowing students to study concepts as they relate to their own country the course provides relevance and allows the student to better understand.
The demand is not only for flexibility within a discipline but also between them. The demand for variants of double majors outside of the traditional arts/law degree is growing among all students, but most noticeably among the students from overseas. The reasons are both financial (ie, fast tracking two degrees) and relevance to their needs and circumstances (Mansell 1989: 103).

The marketing of courses and the institutions that provide them has already been mentioned (see Smart above). However, it is not only the methodology of that marketing but the content. As shall be shown in chapter five, many of the staff at NTU are critical of that institution's use of agents, the cynical view being that these agents will give out incorrect information or commit sins of omission so as to attract students to the institution and therefore gain a commission. This is just one avenue by which incorrect information can get into the market place, lack of knowledge or stating information in bureaucratic language are two other ways in which the agent, embassy official and institution employee can give out information which is false or misleading. Printed material can also be bureaucratic, non-specific and copious to the point that not all the information that the student requires gets through (Watts 1994).

According to Lusch and Lusch, the goal of marketing is to inform the prospective buyer that a product is available. The goal of the individual institution is to show that their product is the best in such a way that, in the case of education, students gain correct information so that they can make an informed decision, which shows the course that best suits their needs is being provided at that institution. In other words education and the marketing of it should have a consumer orientation and not a sales
orientation where the institution provides what it dictates the student needs (1987: 12).

Summary

This chapter initially looked at the changes that have occurred in Australia in relation to policy in regard to international students. It discussed the responsibility that Australia as a host nation and the institution as a provider of a service have in ensuring that the problems international students face are minimised. The discussion then moved on to what those problems might be, including language, teaching styles and culture shock, and the methods by which these problems can be alleviated. Lastly, it looked at quality and the need for the institution to be aware that, with the reintroduction of fees, came a change in culture which gave it a greater responsibility to provide what the student wanted and not what the institution wanted to give.
CHAPTER 4

Comparative Survey

Introduction

This chapter and the next will look at a number of surveys which have been completed over the last ten years in Australia on the subject of overseas students. The surveys include one by Burke at University of New South Wales conducted in 1984 and published in 1986, entitled "Experiences of Overseas Undergraduate Students", along with a follow up survey completed in 1987 and published in 1988, entitled "From the Airport or an Australian High School"; "Being an Asian on Campus" by Rogelia Pe-Pua at University of Wollongong in 1994, "The Experiences of International and Local Students at Three Australian Universities", a draft report on a survey done in Adelaide in late 1992 and as yet unpublished by Mullins, Quintrell and Hancock and a small pilot survey by the author of this paper completed in 1995. The Adelaide report is also backed up by two earlier studies conducted by Quintrell in association with others.

The aim of this chapter is to compare the results of the surveys to discover whether overseas students suffer the same problems wherever they are in Australia and to see if anything has been learned since Dr Burke's surveys in 1984 and 1987. It will look at major areas within the surveys, such as cultural adjustment, university services, finances, food, language and learning difficulties, etc, in turn comparing the results in each survey. The results from Dr. Burke's survey and the writer's will be compared in all the areas mentioned above, while relevant comments will be used from the other surveys and the interviews that were conducted with staff and students at NTU. At the same time the results will be cross referenced.
with some of the literature mentioned in chapter three. Chapter five will look at the interpretation and recommendations made in the papers from UNSW, Adelaide and Wollongong to see if they have relevance to NTU. Some comments will also be made in regard to the results from the survey and interviews with staff in relation to NTU.

The Northern Territory University

The surveys from Wollongong, Adelaide and Sydney have had their methodologies and limitations explained in their respective papers, for this reason only a brief outline will be given here. The methodology section will therefore concentrate on the NTU survey in this regard. First, however, some background information will be provided in regard to the Northern Territory University itself.

The Northern Territory University is relatively new. In 1994 it celebrated twenty years as a place of tertiary education and five years as a university. It has faculties in Business, Education, Arts and Humanities, Law, Technology, Science, Industry and Education Training as well as Aboriginal and Islander Studies. In 1995 the university's Effective Full Time Student Unit (EFTSU) was approximately 3000. In 1987 it received its first seven overseas full time students (it had been running short courses for students from overseas since 1984). By semester one of 1995 this figure had risen to 160 from 29 different nations. However, it should be noted that this was a drop from 185 in semester two 1994 (NTU 1994: 2) and was exactly the same figure in comparison with semester one 1994. Of these 119 were full fee paying and 34 were Australian International Development Assistance Bureau (AIDAB) sponsored. The seven other students being on other scholarships, in terms of course level, 64 were
undergraduate, 44 postgraduate, 25 were taking TAFE courses and 27 were attending the English Language Intensive Course for Overseas Students (ELICOS) (NTU 1995). Eighty three of the 160 international students were studying in the Business faculty.

The residential college, North Flinders International House (NFIH), caters for 300 students mostly on a full board basis. In 1995 around 40% of the population of NFIH was made up of students from overseas (personal interview with Nyland 1995).

The Northern Territory University is located in the city of Darwin which is the capital of the Northern Territory of Australia. Darwin is a relatively small city of approximately 70,000 people. Its location at the northern tip of Australia means that it is closer to Asia than Canberra and has evolved a 'look north' culture in recent years. It is a very multicultural city with large Chinese, Greek, East Timorese, Indonesian and south east Asian ethnic minorities. In addition, 25% of the population of the Northern Territory is made up of indigenous Aboriginal people. Many people see Darwin as a small city with a somewhat more racially tolerant and multicultural society than other places in Australia. This multiculturalism and Darwin's geographic location have been selling points for the university.
Methodology

The study was based on a questionnaire sent to 100 overseas students who had studied at the university for at least a semester. In addition, interviews were conducted with selected staff members as well as students who held or had held offices in overseas student organisations at NTU. The questionnaire itself was based on the one Burke used in 1984 and 1987 with only minor changes. The questionnaire had 99 questions. Section A, containing questions 1 - 13, concerned biographical data. Section B asked 10 questions in regard to living arrangements and family support. Section C was the largest section with 70 multi-choice questions aimed at obtaining information in regard to the student's experiences and needs, this was done by asking the student to indicate how much difficulty they had coping with an issue or situation on a one to five Likert scale. The last seven questions in section D asked for comments on the type of support they had received and gave the student a chance to expand on areas of concern.

The response to the questionnaire was poor, only 20%, so no firm conclusions can be represented in this paper. This also means that the findings are unable to be broken down into nationalities or ethnic groups because of the low numbers. This is a pity because it would seem that certain groups have more trouble studying in Australia than others. However, some of the results from the respondents and interviews were so strong that it is reasonable to believe that they can be classed as indicative of the situation at the Northern Territory University. Certain other results would seem to support the findings of the other studies and therefore merit consideration.
Those who did respond to the questionnaire came from 15 countries namely:

- Brunei
- China
- Fiji
- India
- Indonesia (3)
- Malaysia (2)
- Namibia
- Papua New Guinea
- Poland
- Singapore (3)
- Sri Lanka
- Switzerland
- Taiwan
- Thailand
- Western Samoa

were made up of 14 males and 6 females and fell into the following age groups:

- 19-20: 5
- 21-22: 4
- 23-25: 6
- 26-30: 4
- 30+: 1

Given the diverse nature of this small group this paper will not attempt to make any generalisations based solely on the NTU survey. However, it will make comment when the results are supported by the other surveys. For the same reason, no statistical formula is used to focus the results in specific areas.

In comparison to Burke's questionnaire the NTU survey was miniscule. He had 1097 respondents out of a population of 1970 in 1984. Two thirds of the respondents were male and 96% were in the 19-25 age bracket while 95% were from the Asian region. All of Burke's respondents were undergraduate (1986: 2). The 1987 survey was smaller, targeting the 242 students who completed their first year in 1987. In this survey 168 responded and the ratio of male/female was 54:46. 95% of the respondents were under the age of 22 and all came from the Asia/Pacific
region (1988: 2). As already stated, the survey conducted at NTU was a copy of Burke's and was used with his kind permission. The 1992 study in Adelaide was also based on Burke's. Unlike his study, this one was sent to both domestic and international students with the aim of ascertaining whether there was any difference in the problems faced and whether international students experienced these problems to a more serious degree. The survey was sent to 1705 international students and 3400 domestic students. Of the 1250 responses 436 were from international students and 814 were domestic. The majority of responses were from Malaysians in the international group (Mullins et al 1995: 10).

The survey at Wollongong was quite different. It was based on interviews with a focus group of 45 overseas students out of a population of 1,100. The 45 students came from eight countries all within the Asia region, 29 of the students were male and 24 were postgraduate. The report did not state the gender split amongst the postgraduate students. The survey concentrated on four main areas: the learning environment, university services, intergroup relations and an overall assessment of the university (Pe-Pua 1994: 3).

The Wollongong survey was used for comparative purposes, even though it did not always correlate with the questions in the questionnaires, because the interview results often put a more human face on the stark statistics compiled by both Burke and the present writer. For this reason many of the points made by Pe-Pua are utilised in chapter five and not in this chapter. Results from other surveys to which the author has had access have been used where applicable as collaborative material.
Cultural Adjustment

In 1987 this was the area that Burke identified as the one that caused the students 'greatest concern', with food, worrying about family left behind, homesickness and feeling conspicuous being the main problem areas (1988:5). In the 1995 study at NTU, food was still a problem but only for some. The nine students who stated they had great or extreme difficulty with the taste of food in Australia and/or missed the food from home were from Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, Brunei and Indonesia. This difficulty is despite the multicultural mix in Darwin mentioned earlier. It is interesting to note that of these nine only three had any other great problems with adjusting culturally, ie with settling down in Darwin, missing home, worries about family, etc, and only one of them felt overly conspicuous at being an overseas student.

Of the other eleven students two said they worried about family and suffered homesickness, while another mentioned loneliness on top of these two. The student from mainland China stated that she had difficulties settling into a western style culture.

Burke's results in 1987 are in contrast to his results in 1984 and the results gained at NTU in 1995. In 1984 only 20% of the respondents suffered from culture shock (1986: 9) and do not mention food at all. The study at Wollongong concentrates on cultural differences and the problems this causes. In relation to culture shock and difficulties settling in upon arrival, the study identified the perceived differences in values as a major cause. "Australian students were perceived to have different value judgements and different tastes" especially in relation to noise, women and leisure activities (Pe-Pua 1994: 48). These differences in values were seen

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as the main barrier to interaction with Australian students. On the same basis the similarities in values were the main reason for interaction with other overseas students (Pe-Pua 1994: 44-46).

Finances and Accommodation

In 1987 over half of the respondents found it extremely difficult to obtain part time work and nearly half had extreme difficulty with the cost of living and finding accommodation. This is despite the fact that Australia has some of the most liberal work regulations for international students (see chapter two). Over a third had difficulty paying their fees (Burke 1988: 6). In 1984 80% of respondents had difficulty dealing with the cost of living in Sydney, 81% stated they were available for part time work, while only 48% had regular part time work (Burke 1986: 3). Since 1987, of course, most overseas students have had to pay full fees and therefore are paying much more than they would if the overseas student charge was still in place. On the other hand the perception is that these days only the rich overseas students or AIDAB scholarship holders can afford to study in Australia, so fees are less of an issue (Pe-Pua 1994: 51). This would seem to be borne out by the respondents to the NTU survey. Seven of the twenty had scholarships and only five of the whole group stated that they had suffered any financial difficulty. Of the rest only a further four stated that a rise in fees would create moderate difficulty. Of those looking for part time work, which was not all of the respondents, all stated it was difficult to find. The survey in Adelaide found that international students were twice as likely to experience serious problems in finding part time work (Mullins et al 1995: 18). The Wollongong survey did not cover finances in any great detail and so no real comment can be made here.
Studying at University

This area concerned such things as time management, fear of failure and coping with the amount of work. In 1984 Burke reported that 70% of respondents felt 'considerable pressure from home to do well in order to satisfy their own aspirations, as well as the hopes and expectations of their families' (1986: 4). In 1987 only 36% of Burke's second group of respondents reported a great or extreme fear of failure and felt pressure from home to get good marks (Burke 1988: 7). At NTU however, the figure was 65%. The difference could be because of the extra financial burden now placed on students, although as mentioned earlier, according to Pe-Pua, this is not necessarily the case, or because of the type of students gaining entry. In Adelaide the figure for those experiencing difficulty was 38% for international students and 19% for local students. As might be expected the third who said they had little or only a moderate fear of failure in the NTU survey also stated that they were coping well with the amount of work, style of learning and managing their time, although one did state that she was having difficulty living independently and was experiencing self doubts. Of the others half were having difficulty across the board, two more said that they did not know how to study effectively, while another had problems with self doubt. It is interesting to note that of the six that were having the greatest difficulty, none came from a country where they would have experienced the British/Australian mode of teaching previously, as they would have in Singapore for instance. Pe-Pua made particular reference to this point in her study, pointing out that students who come from a country that follows the British system of lectures and tutorials have fewer difficulties (1994: 8). The figures for Burke in 1984 in these areas were again higher than both the NTU study and his in 1987. In the Adelaide survey international
students experienced between three and four times greater difficulty in writing assignments and participating in seminars and tutorials (Mullins et al 1995: 18).

Language and Communication

As with any survey, we rely on people's perspectives, especially when answering questions about themselves. It is interesting to note, therefore, that four of the six respondents at NTU who stated they had difficulties across the board coping with the workload, difficulty with independent learning style and managing time, also stated that they had no difficulty in communication and language, while a fifth said she only had problems with oral communication due to Australian slang. There could be two reasons for these particular perceptions: firstly the students believe they understand what is being said to them and what they are reading, but in reality do not which leads to a problem with coping with the workload; or secondly, despite a good understanding of the language and abilities to communicate, the students still find the amount of work hard and the style of learning difficult. Although most students can testify to this second point, the difficulty with language exacerbates the problem for international students. Of the other 14 students surveyed only four said they had great or extreme communication and language difficulties, either in writing, reading or oral communication. Only one of these, however, stated that he was having extreme problems with all three.

Burke's 1987 survey gave much the same results, with 28% have difficulty speaking up in class and 19% having great or extreme problems with oral communication. Only 14% stated they had problems writing essays in English (1988: 8). In comparison Burke's 1984 survey again showed
much higher rates. He says that 60% of respondents had difficulty with speaking up in class and 40% had difficulty in writing assignments. Reading was less of a problem with only 20% having considerable difficulty (1986: 7).

Living Arrangements and Personal Support

In 1987 Burke found that 60% of respondents had relatives in Sydney. At NTU less than a third of the respondents had relatives in Darwin and all of those who did lived with them, whereas only a third of those who had relatives in Sydney actually lived with them in 1987. The majority of respondents in both surveys lived in private rented accommodation and mostly shared with other overseas students. Only 6% in the 1987 survey and 25% at NTU lived in a residential college (1988: 8). The figures were different again in 1984 with 40% of respondents having relatives in Sydney, but it did not look at accommodation (1986: 13).

When asked about close friends, this being defined as 'those you feel most comfortable with', less than a third at NTU responded that they only felt comfortable with overseas students, while nearly half answered this way in 1987. It was interesting that in the NTU survey over 20% stated that they did not feel comfortable with overseas students who did not come from their home country, but they did feel comfortable with Australians, whereas this answer had gained a nil response in the 1987 survey (1988: 9). In 1984 only 15% of respondents had counted Australians among their close friends (1986: 13).
Professional Support

Apart from the support students received from family and friends, the NTU survey and the one Burke did in 1984 also asked questions about obtaining professional help both academically and for personal matters. In 1984 only 20% of respondents indicated that they had sought any kind of professional help with personal problems, the other 80% preferring to talk to relatives and friends. In regard to study problems the number of students willing to consult professionals, such as student counsellors in regard to courses and study skills, was larger but still only half said they would find it either moderately difficult or easy to do so. A third of the respondents said they would find it hard to approach staff and ask for individual help with a study problem (1986: 13-15).

At NTU seven of the students said they had great or extreme difficulty in dealing with the International Student Unit (ISU) and three said they had great difficulty choosing subjects and enrolling. Three students stated that they had great difficulty in ascertaining who the right person was to approach at NTU with a problem, while four more said they had moderate difficulty in this area. Eleven of the respondents said they had not approached any professional counsellor and none of the respondents had approached an NTU counsellor, this is despite the fact that all had approached someone during their time in Darwin. Those who had approached someone other than friends or relatives received help either from the student union, AIDAB counsellors or religious advisers.
The above is in stark contrast to the findings in Adelaide where it was found that international students were more likely to use the university health service, counselling, accommodation, welfare officers and the language and learning services than local students. Mullins in 1995 and Quintrell in 1990, in comparing this result with Burke's findings, ascribe this dependence to the fact that international students in Melbourne and Sydney are more likely to have family support. If this is correct, then the survey should have shown relatively high figures for NTU as there is little family support in Darwin. As this was not the case, either the students did not need as much help, the information about who to go to had not reached them or they did not trust the services offered. Given the results of the survey it is unlikely that it is the former and if either of the latter two cases apply it should be of some concern to NTU.

**Discrimination and Prejudice**

The questions in the survey in this regard only required students to respond in relation to how difficult it was for them to deal with racial discrimination, not to state the number of times they felt they had been discriminated against. Therefore, the fact that only two respondents, in the NTU survey stated that they had great or extreme difficulty dealing with racism and three more had moderate difficulty, does not mean that the problem does not exist. Indeed the student union at NTU stated that their perception was that it was so much of a problem that they planned an anti-racism week for second semester 1995 (King 1995).

In 1987 Burke did not ask the questions in regard to discrimination but in 1984 he found that a third of all students found dealing with racial intolerance difficult (1986: 6).
Participation and Involvement

The results from the NTU survey and the one by Burke in 1984 both found that relatively few international students participated in official orientation programs. Of those who did attend only around a third found the different events useful. Only a quarter of respondents in 1984 said they attended social activities run by the general student populace, while 44% stated they attended events specifically for overseas students (1986: 12-13). At NTU the survey found that 14 respondents had not attended the official NTU orientation program and, of the six that did, three said it was helpful and three not helpful. The 14 respondents who did not attend were not asked why they did not do so and the reasons could be many and varied, ranging from arriving after the events to not knowing they existed. Nine respondents stated that they had attended student organised functions either by the union or the Overseas Student Association, three of these also attended AIDAB orientation programs, all of these stated that they found these events helpful or very helpful.

A third of the respondents to the NTU survey stated that they had great or extreme difficulty with two or more of the following areas: making friends and feeling lonely, joining in campus activities, working with other students and academic advisors, nervousness and feeling tense, pressure to drink alcohol and sexual attitudes in Australia. Only one stated that they had great difficulty approaching faculty staff. The results in 1984 were approximately the same with only minor differences.
Summary

Despite the limited nature of the survey done at NTU, it would seem that the results gained backed up existing literature and results from other surveys done elsewhere. As we will see in chapter five this is not surprising, given some of the statements made by staff members at the NTU. It would seem that little has changed since Burke's 1984 survey. The same problems are occurring now as were occurring in 1984 and this is only to be expected. The students are still coming to a strange country and have to make major adjustments. What is disappointing is that the universities seem to have done very little to find better ways of coping. The only thing that has really changed is the numbers of students suffering from the seeming indifference to the problems they face and the amount of money they are charged for the privilege. Since the deregulation on the number of students that can be attracted to Australia, international student figures have risen dramatically. By creating an extra avenue for income it would seem reasonable to assume that universities would do their utmost to first attract and then keep these students by providing a good service. However, the results from the above surveys would seem to indicate that not enough has been done to alleviate known and preventable problem areas.
CHAPTER FIVE

Literature - Survey Comparison

Northern Territory University

There are strong similarities between the results of the studies discussed in chapter four and the literature discussed in chapter three. However, as we will see in this chapter, very little of this information seems to be put to practical use. The writer of this paper can only write about the situation at NTU from his own experience and other information based on interviews with staff and students done in conjunction with the questionnaire. However, from the fact that surveys are being conducted elsewhere and from the comments contained in the resulting reports, it would seem that many of the problems faced by international students are not being addressed by universities generally. The identified problems are therefore not isolated to NTU.

The question is why? Is it due to a lack of funds or unwillingness to expend resources in this area? Is there a lack of knowledge about the problems faced by international students or a lack of commitment on the part of the universities?

In trying to gauge staff knowledge and sentiment towards the issue of international students at NTU, a number people were interviewed, ranging from student union officers to lecturers, from the Vice Chancellor to students.
The number of interviews, fourteen, is relatively small but the persons interviewed do hold, or have held, key positions in regard to international students and therefore are able to make statements on this issue from a number of perspectives.

The aim of this chapter, therefore, is to bring together the issues already discussed and to put them into a local perspective with comment from NTU. In so doing we will be able to see the variance in perspectives at a local level and the extent of the problems faced. This will enable the writer to discuss some solutions and hopefully some recommendations which will alleviate some of the more fundamental problems.

For such a discussion to take place there is a need for some scene setting in order to put some comments in perspective. The International Student Unit (ISU) at the NTU was restructured two years ago. Formally it had been a 'one stop shop', that is marketing, administration of applications, counselling and pastoral care were all conducted from one office. These functions were all split up within the restructuring. Marketing became its own department with a wider portfolio than just international students, counselling was incorporated with the mainstream student services while the rest of the unit was subsumed by student administration. All the different functions were physically relocated in different areas of the university and also placed under different heads (ie student administration is under the Registrar and student services and marketing comes under the Deputy Vice Chancellor {Administration}). In amongst all this restructuring international students also lost their lounge. Although the ISU did keep its own identity, its services were greatly restricted to administration with a small pastoral care role. Mainstream student administration also took on a greater role in regard to enrolment. The
thinking behind the restructuring was that a lot of the work done by the ISU could be done by mainstream services and there were economies of scale and efficiency gains to be made both financially and administratively. This thinking can be further seen in the staffing of the unit, which is a level four administrative officer and a level five international student officer supervised by the deputy manager of student administration, who is required to spend half her time with the unit and the other half on normal student administration issues. In addition, the staff of the unit are not physically located in close proximity to one another but in different areas of the student administration building. As we can see from the survey, and as we shall see from some of the staff comments, this restructuring has led to a lot of dissatisfaction with the present arrangements for international students at NTU.

The debate as to whether international students should be catered for within the mainstream university services or have their own separate unit was discussed in chapter three. In that chapter it was mentioned that Burke is of the opinion that although Australian and international students have many problems in common, the international students' problems are more acute and somewhat different. For this reason he is of the opinion that international student units are necessary and require a separate status. This is not to say that international students should not be encouraged to use mainstream services, however, these services must be culturally sensitive (Burke 1988b: 14). NTU seems to have tried to find a compromise by having a unit but limiting its functions and relying as much as possible on mainstream services.
The result of the changes made at NTU, according to many staff and students that were interviewed, including the head of ISU (Topham 1995), has been a dramatic reduction in the service provided to international students. It was stated by a number of the interviewees that if the staff around the university do not know who should be doing what, how can the students? Further comments suggested that the unit is starved of resources so that workflow is slow and inefficient and, as can be seen from the study, 50% of the respondents stated that they had difficulty in dealing with the ISU. Add to the above other results from the study, such as students not knowing who to talk too, or having problems enrolling and not using the student counselling service, and it would seem that this compromise has not been a great success at NTU.

One argument put to the writer as a reason for the current dissatisfaction was that the service provided before the restructuring was excessively good and any cuts would result in some negative response. It was further argued that the cuts that took place brought services back more in line with what occurred elsewhere (Davis 1995). In the same interview there was some recognition, however, that everything was not right and changes still had to be made. This argument is all very well but it does not explain why, since the restructuring, there have been five international student officers. This turnover in staff has, of course, added to the inefficiency of the unit, resulted in a lack of continuity in dealing with administrative and personal problems and generally helped in making the unit ineffective. O'Hagan, the latest international student officer to resign, was kind enough to give the writer a copy of her confidential memorandum which she sent to the university administration. In this memorandum she outlined some of the difficulties faced by the unit and the reasons for its failure to perform. She named three areas of concern within the internal
structure to explain why the unit was failing to perform its tasks satisfactorily: communication, lack of support and lack of training. She also voiced some concerns in relation to other areas, including marketing, student services and within the faculties themselves (1995). These are all matters that will be addressed within this chapter.

**Communication**

In her memorandum, O'Hagan speaks about communication problems within the unit which she puts down to the physical location of staff, the lack of regular meetings and the unavailability of the deputy manager student administration while she is dealing with issues outside the unit (1995). Other staff members also stated that they had concerns in relation to communication between the faculties, the ISU, marketing and student services. In an interview, O'Hagan also commented on the fact that dealings with international students had to take place across a counter even when issues were of a delicate nature. This meant that students do not feel comfortable enough to bring problems to the ISU staff (1995). This is an important point given the pastoral care role of the unit. This is not such a big issue for the domestic students as pastoral care is not a primary function of the mainstream student administration area. However, lack of communication was not restricted to this one area. Not knowing who to communicate with in relation to certain issues and one area not knowing what the other was doing were common themes within the interviews conducted by the writer. Communication was certainly a major issue in the relationship between marketing and the faculties, the main issues in this relationship being the inaccuracy of information about courses given by marketing to the students (according to the faculties) and the bureaucratic procedures for the acceptance of students into courses by
the faculties (according to marketing). O'Hagan (1995) was also critical of the communication between faculties and her area in alerting the unit to problems with particular students. Of course the faculties also had problems with ISU and the circle of who has the biggest problems with who went round and round, the real problem being that no one is doing anything about it.

From a student perspective the problems outlined often came down to simply not knowing who was available to help. This is not to say that the information was not available in the form of pamphlets and speakers within the orientation and welcoming programs. A number of interviewees stated that what is lacking is the personal touch which gives a sense of trust. There was also comment about the lack of follow up, ie staff staying in their offices rather than going to the classrooms and accommodation to ascertain what problems students are facing.

Communication in all its facets seems to be a major problem within the new structure. There is no co-ordinator of information. There are no contact groups even between different staff areas or between the students and the administration staff. The staff do not have the time to ensure that others are aware of what they are doing. Given the language problems of the students, the cultural differences that pertain to communication and the general strangeness of being in a foreign country, these communication problems impact on the international student to a greater degree than they would on a domestic student. This is because a domestic student is inclined to have much more family support, have a better understanding of how to go about obtaining information and is dealing with a system that is not totally alien to him or her (Burke 1994).
Information

In the course of this study, the writer has heard many stories concerning wrong information being given out or something said out of place, giving a distorted perspective of what is offered by NTU in terms of service, courses and facilities. As can be seen from the literature reviewed in chapter three and the comments made by Watts (1994), the problem is not one confined to NTU. However, it is up to NTU to endeavour to limit the occurrences as much as possible. According to some of those interviewed the current organisational structure, outlined above, does nothing to alleviate potential problems in this area.

Many of the interviewees were critical of the agents employed by the university overseas to encourage students to enrol at NTU. The problem is that the agents have no direct ties to the university and therefore may, consciously or unconsciously, give out incorrect information about the university, its courses and Darwin in order to attract a student and gain a commission. This was of concern to many of the interviewees. It was also suggested by Teague and Nichols that past experience had shown that the problem of incorrect information could also occur if the university were to use Austrade or other embassy officials. This would be the case because most of these officials are from down south, they have little or no knowledge of Darwin, the university or the unique environment in which it is located (1995). O'Hagan was also critical of the agents and pointed out that they asked for information that in her view should have been given to them at the time the agent's agreement was signed as a method of ensuring that the correct information was at their fingertips (1995). However, the solution would not seem to be giving out more written information as NTU itself does not always seem to be able to get it right.
The package of material used for the promotion of NTU, obtained from the marketing branch as representative of the material sent out to students and agents, upon examination contained contradictory statements with one pamphlet providing incorrect information on student numbers, the number of campuses and some costs such as on campus accommodation. This pamphlet was obviously older than the others but was still apparently being used. Some of the material made statements about the availability of "special foods to meet religious customs being readily available" (NTU undated) or implied this (1994b). As 45% of students who answered the NTU questionnaire had difficulty with the food in Darwin, and Nyland (1995) readily admitting that on campus accommodation cannot cater for everybody's taste in this regard, it would seem that this statement is misleading at best. The sin of omission is also apparent with statements such as the one regarding part time work which, while stating that work is "not always easily available" (NTU 1994b), ignores the fact that it is almost impossible to get due to discrimination and/or if there is even a slight language problem (Burke 1986: 3). Indeed, in the agents guide the statement "Many Overseas Students have found part time work since arriving in Darwin" appears with no qualification in regard to difficulty (NTU 1994c). As previously stated, all the respondents to the NTU survey who were looking for part time work had had difficulty. The guide quoted above also has a code of ethical practice which requires agents to give certain 'accurate' information before the student arrives, however, the question has to be asked, if the NTU cannot provide the information to the agents how can the agents fulfil their obligations? Incorrect information can only lead to dissatisfaction once the student arrives, which ultimately can lead to the loss of income through students leaving and informing others at home about their experiences.
Marketing

The problems of marketing were well known by many of the staff interviewed. However, arguments that the size of the university limits the amount of resources that can be put into this area are common place. Some different strategies have been tried, such as targeting certain countries. By putting the bulk of the limited resources into three or four countries it was hoped to build a niche market rather than trying to gain students from a wider area (Davis & Teague 1995). The problem with this strategy is that if the university gets it wrong they are left with no fall back position. If the student is given the wrong information, for whatever reason, or promised something that the university does not provide, then that student is not going to be satisfied. A dissatisfied student going home can ensure that many potential students do not come to the NTU. Once again we can note here that Asian students especially rely heavily on word of mouth (Hill 1992: 11, Smart 1992b)

The decision not to push some undergraduate courses was also criticised. Lecturers in the Business faculty noted that at one time the number of international students doing the Bachelor of Business totalled more than all the other courses put together. It was perceived that the relative fall in international student numbers was due to a lack of support from marketing. They were also critical of the lack of follow up on satisfaction levels. This, it was stated, meant that the university was not necessarily aware of what it was doing, right or wrong.
Incorrect information or a lack of information are not the only reason that students have not flocked to NTU. Another criticism of the marketing strategy of NTU was its promotional focus. For a number of years NTU has concentrated on promoting its closeness to Asia and therefore the relative cheapness of coming to study at NTU. This, along with the multicultural nature of the local community, have been major selling points. The point made to the writer by a number of the interviewees was that since a large number of the potential students can afford to pay large fees, the relative cheapness of Darwin is not a large factor in their choice. It was also pointed out that these perceived advantages would not apply to a large number of the current international students. In fact NTU has a number of disadvantages: Some of those pointed out to the writer were that the university is relatively new and therefore has no status; Darwin is a small city and most of the international students come from large cities and enjoy the lifestyle that large cities provide; and its multicultural society is longstanding, very few potential students have family members in Darwin as most of the immigrants of the last fifty years have settled in the southern states. As already stated in chapter three, Smart was very critical of the marketing of Australian Education, stating that it was too commercialised. Smart was also quoted in connection with international students not complaining but simply leaving to continue their studies elsewhere (1992b). With international student numbers seemingly on a plateau at NTU it would appear that now is a good time to take another look at the marketing strategy.
One way of doing this is to ascertain why students currently enrolled at NTU came to study in Darwin. Another is to question students who were offered a place but went to other universities or came to NTU but finished their studies elsewhere about their decision processes. This could be done through questionnaires upon application and withdrawal. The survey conducted by the writer at NTU did not ask why the student chose to study at NTU, so there is no confirmation of the perceptions stated above, although the limited number of students with family in Darwin does seem to confirm that family support is an issue, given the higher responses in Burke's (1986 & 1988) surveys. In the Adelaide survey the most common response from University of Adelaide international students was that it was the reputation of the university that most contributed to their choice of institution. However, the survey does also seem to disagree with some of the interviewees at NTU in relation to their perceptions about cost. Respondents from Flinders and University of South Australia both answered that the low cost of living followed by the quality of the courses were the reasons for their choice of institution. The cost of living is, of course, different to the cost of actually coming to Australia and doing the course, which is what NTU promotes, but cost is still obviously a factor to be considered. By doing an exiting questionnaire the university may find that it would be better to concentrate on promoting its quality courses rather than the university as a whole. Knowing your market and catering for that market is an important part of gaining an advantage over other institutions (Lusch and Lusch 1987: 89-180).
Lack of Support

O'Hagan's statements in regard to this matter revolved around the lack of support for her position as international student officer (1995). However, it was obvious from the comments made in the interviews that this lack of support is not restricted to the unit. The university, it would seem, is not overly willing to put resources into servicing international students at NTU. Both the Vice Chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) pointed out that income from international students was less than that received from the Commonwealth and Territory governments for Australian students. The Vice Chancellor, Professor Nairn, stated that international students were "not as important as some would see it" and that "interstate students were more important and provided more finance". Nairn went on to say that costs would be reduced if there were no international students at NTU. He assured the writer that international students do not make money for the university and therefore that is not the reason why the university tries to attract them. In his view the main reason for attracting international students was the cultural mixing and internationalisation of the university. The Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration), Mr. K. Davis, stated that the University would miss the $1.4 million income generated by international students if it was not there, but this was not the most important reason for having these students. The international mix on campus was much more important given that the university promoted itself as an international university with links to neighbouring Asian nations, therefore not having international students would be a "bit hypercritical" (1995). Davis also stated that when the Territory government's subsidy to the university ran out in 1996, income from international students would be greater per head than that generated by Australian students. Given this last statement it
would seem more natural for the university to be trying to attract international students. Instead both Nairn and Davis stated that costs were the main reason for cutting back on services and the less than aggressive marketing strategy (Nairn & Davis 1995).

With two of the leading administrators making the above statements it would seem that the university wants to have international students on campus for status reasons, but wants only to provide a minimal service because they do not generate the income necessary to justify the financial expense of having them on campus. This makes it difficult for those staff members whose responsibility it is to look after the international students to do their jobs. This lack of support from the chief administrators can also be illustrated by what seems to be a lack of knowledge about areas that service international students. When asked specific questions in relation to the workings of the international unit Davis, for instance, stated that he was unaware that students were not met by NTU staff at the airport during 1994 and most of first semester 1995. This was despite the fact that he fully agreed with the literature which stated that the first 24 hours to one week were critical to the success of an international student studying in Australia. Davis also advocated the new international student lounge, to be opened in second semester 1995, as a major step towards retrieving lost ground in servicing the needs of these students (Davis 1995). The head of ISU, on the other hand, stated to the writer that the lounge was located in the wrong place, being in amongst administrative offices and not close to classrooms. It would therefore not be used for this reason and also because there would not be a permanent presence by a staff member to help with difficulties (Topham 1995).
All other staff interviewed thought that it was important for NTU to have international students on campus and that not enough was done to support them during their time at the university. Most were unaware that the university gained more funds for Australian students. All felt that the university had a moral responsibility to help these students achieve their goals. As Redman (1995) put it: "At one extreme you have a commercial responsibility to provide the best service so as to ensure that the student is satisfied with the product. At the other extreme the university has a moral responsibility to look after its students and help them deal with any problems that may arise so that they have every opportunity to obtain the qualification they desire." Lecturers of post graduate students pointed out that these students paid significantly higher fees than Australian students and that fees from these students paid for the upgrading of the post graduate study and lecturing areas within the Business faculty. It was also pointed out by these lecturers that the international nature of the courses offered at this level in the Business faculty relied heavily on the input of international students and would be unworkable without such input.

It has been shown that staff, both within and outside the ISU, are critical of that unit's ability to provide a service, and without a drastic change in the attitude of those in higher places it is unlikely that the situation will change. It has also been shown through studies, such as the ones used for this paper, and the writings of people like Burke (1988, 1989, 1990), that without a quality service that caters for the needs of international students, the required results in terms of income, larger numbers and the scholarly and social mixing of cultures will not occur.
Staff Training

The problems of cultural unawareness were described through the writings of Ballard (1992), Burke (1988b) and Noi (1990) in chapter three. If staff are unaware of some of the difficulties a student may face due to cultural differences then it is almost inevitable that misunderstandings will occur.

Again the information that NTU gives to the agents does not seem to take the literature into account. The Guide to Agents states that overseas students often have difficulty in adjusting to the different lecturing methods but as answer to the problem it simply states that students should be prepared to take extensive notes (NTU 1994c). As has already been seen, the taking of notes is often part of the problem due to language difficulties, so this suggestion is not very helpful. These misunderstandings, whether they be in the classroom or at an administrative level, will affect how the student looks upon Australia, the university and its staff.

At NTU there is an ever growing number of Aboriginal students in addition to the international students on campus. Aboriginal people account for 25% of the population of the Northern Territory and therefore it can be expected that the number of students from this section of the community will continue to grow. Given that students from so many cultures study at NTU, one would think that cultural awareness would be an important aspect of staff training. However, this is not the case. According to Nairn (1995) some general staff were trained in Aboriginal culture "a couple of years ago" but there has been nothing since. He went on to state that there can never be enough training and it is always a balance of costs and benefits. He also pointed out that you cannot force staff to attend and agreed that those who do attend are usually those who
do not need this form of training because they already have an interest. It is a matter of selling the need for training to supervisors and managers and then training will take place on the job, according to Nairn (1995).

In response to the above statements on training, some may ask that, if the training and the selling is not taking place, how can the staff recognise the need and even if they do, how many supervisors are knowledgable enough to do on the job training? A number of the interviewees were critical of the selection process for staff. They stated that in many cases the wrong people are selected for positions. In the Business faculty, it was pointed out, all the lecturers of the Masters of Business Administration (MBA) and the Masters of Developmental Management (MDM) courses have taught and/or studied in Australia and at least one other country. Carrying this type of thinking through to administrative positions would result in two main benefits. Firstly, you would get experienced and trained staff who understand the difficulties certain students face in positions that have contact with those students and, secondly, people already in the system and aspiring to go further will be more willing to attend training sessions, either off or on the job, in the knowledge that it will help not only the student but also themselves. It is, however, obvious that you have to have the staff training sessions running in order to encourage staff to attend.

**Student Services**

As mentioned earlier, the responsibility of providing professional help to international students was given back to the mainstream counselling service in the restructuring of the ISU. However, it was not until semester one this year that it was funded for a position that had international students as a major focus (the other being immigrants). Burke believes
that any use of mainstream services should be implemented only where there is a sound knowledge of the issues that surround international students (1988b). If this is accepted then NTU was providing a service in 1994 that went against that suggested by current thinking and literature. Some interviewees at NTU were also critical of the over use of the word 'counsellor' on campus. According to them, Asian students equate counsellors with psychiatric help and therefore very few would be willing to make use of the service to talk about family, academic and financial problems. It has been pointed out to the writer that this is also the case for Australian students but it would seem, based on anecdotal evidence at least, that this is more the case in regard to Asian students. Burke (1986) also found this to be the case. Another staff member, who did not wish to be identified, was critical of the fact that even though they constantly work with international students they were not aware that students services had filled a position whose primary focus was international students until mid 1995 and at the time of the interview had still not met the incumbent.

O'Hagan's comments in this area revolved around the focus of the service, which she saw as more on counselling and less on orientation and helping the students to integrate (1995). However, Student Services informed the writer that orientation was a major part of the incumbent's role. A new orientation program was implemented in second semester 1995 coordinated by this position and helped by a committee that included a number of those interviewed for this paper. Therefore, O'Hagan's comments in this regard could be seen as premature.
Summary

In this chapter we have looked at how the literature and the international student's views stand up against the NTU staff's perceptions of what is actually happening. In general, the negative comments of the students were also conveyed by the staff. A lot of what is happening at NTU was not supported by the literature which often stated that something very different should occur. Many of the staff were disillusioned with the practices in place and the seeming lack of support from those in charge. Some of the staff, most notably those in the front line, have voted with their feet as have some students.

It would seem that NTU is not providing a good service to its international students, this is borne out by the literature, staff and students. There would also seem to be little inclination towards providing a better service by those holding the purse strings. This being the case, it is the view of the writer that the administration of the university has some decisions to make and these will be covered in chapter six.
CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

Where to From Here?

It would seem from the survey results and the comments of staff that the Northern Territory University does not serve its international students very well. Although it may be argued that individuals try to and do provide a good service to these students, it certainly cannot be argued that this is the case for the university as a whole.

There would seem to be a fundamental unanswered question hanging over the university's policy regarding students from overseas. That question is:

Why are international students important to the university and do the benefits of having them study at NTU outweigh the costs?

It would seem that the answer, according to those in control, is that the importance of international students lies in what they provide the university in terms of status, and this should be gained at what they would class as a reasonable cost. While those lower down the hierarchical ladder see the importance of the international students not in terms of status but in terms of cultural understanding and the sharing of knowledge. In order to gain this, they would argue, the university has a responsibility to ensure that the student's stay in Australia is a successful and happy one for the student as well as the university.
What is this responsibility? Is it owed because they pay fees or because they are students with certain needs? The staff reaction, at all levels, was that the university has a responsibility because the students have certain needs. This reaction came mostly from the knowledge that not all international students pay fees and all of them have some problems. It was also felt that the university has a responsibility to all students who are enrolled to provide the best service possible in order to help them gain the qualification they desire.

Statements like the one above ask more questions than they answer. What is the 'best service possible' in terms of administration, teaching and support services? Where is the line between cost and benefit to the university and/or the student? Where does the university's responsibility finish and that of the student, or even the local community, begin?

If the view of the literature is to be accepted, then we can say that it is recognised that the majority of students have some problems when they attend tertiary education. In the case of international students a number of these problems are accentuated by the student's cultural and language difficulties. This being the case, it can be argued that the students have certain needs over and above those of domestic students. The basic hypothesis of the literature is that, since the university enrolled these students, it has not only a responsibility, but also a moral duty of care to ensure that these students are given the support they require so that they have every opportunity to attain their goal. If the university is not willing or is unable to provide this support then it should seriously look at whether it wishes to attract international students to its campuses.
At NTU it would seem that the main problem lies in the size of the international student population. It is too small to warrant spending large amounts of money on the provision of specific services. Given this current situation, the chicken and the egg syndrome arises. By not providing the service NTU is not gaining a good reputation overseas and this is one reason why it is not attracting larger numbers of students. Without a larger international student population the hierarchy is unwilling to commit more resources. In order to resolve this situation NTU has to take a long look at its policy focus.

NTU is situated in a city that proudly calls itself Australia's gateway to Asia. To a certain extent the look north attitude of the Northern Territory government has been taken up by the university. To this end the university has forged many strong ties with other universities in Indonesia, Malaysia and the Philippines, among others. It was for this reason that Davis (1995) stated that with this international focus it would be hypocritical for the university not to have international students. However, as both the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Administration) pointed out, the university currently gains more income, at least at an undergraduate level, through its Australian students and therefore the Vice Chancellor saw these students as more important. For this reason there is conflict in terms of the policy focus in regard to recruitment to the university. The international focus of the university requires that it attract international students which currently, at least at an undergraduate level, costs the university money, while a domestic focus gains more income at a perceived lesser cost due to lower marketing and support services being required.
In light of this conflict it would seem that the university has settled for a compromise, in which a minimum number of international students are encouraged to enrol in the university to provide the international status it requires, while a minimalist service is provided for them. In the view of the writer this is a short sighted policy. The university has been losing its funding from the Northern Territory government gradually for a number of years. With this in mind the university has been looking for other sources of income but seems to have ignored the obvious - that once government funding is totally withdrawn, international students will be paying fees higher than those received by the university for domestic students. Attention should also be paid to the latest International Development Program study which predicts a fourfold increase in the number of international students over the next 15 years (Blight 1995). This being the case, the current policy of limiting the amount of resources spent on international students and giving priority to other activities is one that seems out of place.

It is the view of this writer that the university has to decide where its future is and take a long term view in regard to achieving that future. If the Northern Territory University is going to be an international university it must concentrate the majority of its efforts in this area. If, on the other hand, it plans to look south for its student population, then it should forget about trying to attract international students and being an international university. The current minimalist policy toward international students is only hurting the reputation of the university overseas through dissatisfied students returning home and talking about their experiences at NTU.
There are many solutions to the numerous individual problems that have been outlined in chapters three, four and five. However, in a holistic sense, the university has to make a fundamental decision in regard to policy. There are four real alternatives:

a) Do not outwardly encourage international students to come to NTU. In doing this the university is under no obligation to provide specialised services to the few international students who do study at NTU. It can concentrate on the domestic market, serving the local community and endeavouring to attract interstate students. In cutting back on services currently provided for international students, resources will be freed so that better services can be provided through mainstream student administration and counselling. Of course, given that a number of the domestic students, especially Aboriginal and immigrant students, have similar difficulties as the international students, many of the present services will have to stay in place.

b) Carry on the status quo which provides a service which satisfies no one, least of all the students. The service is perceived to be minimalist and of only limited benefit to the student. It can be seen from the comments outlined in the survey and in the interviews with staff that no one is happy with the current situation.

c) Focus on the international policy of the university and endeavour to attract large numbers of international students. This will require the provision of a large number of services and support mechanisms, better recruitment and training of staff and a willingness to ensure the quality of teaching and the relevance of course materials. This, it is argued, will not only benefit international students but all students, be they fee paying or...
not, and it can be paid for from the extra fees collected (Burke 1989b & Ballard 1989). The extra fees would come from the attraction of larger numbers through more satisfied clients passing on their experiences. In this scenario the egg comes before the chicken.

d) Provide the courses in the student's home country. Many universities have entered into twinning arrangements with institutions in the student's home country. Often the arrangement is one whereby the student studies the first, and sometimes the second, year of their course, at whatever level, in their home country and only comes to Australia for their final years. This reduces the cost to the student thus allowing more international students to enrol. Many of the cultural and living away from home difficulties disappear and the courses can be made relevant to the home nation's environment a lot more easily. As the course is sponsored by an Australian university and the final years are studied here in Australia, the course is accredited and standards maintained, so that at the end of the course the student still receives an Australian qualification (Wells 1993). Wells argues in his paper that this system is a much more equitable provision of education and therefore not only benefits the student but also the reputation and standing of Australia and the institution. Nairn (1995) on the other hand points to a number of administrative difficulties that other universities have had in regard to their twinning arrangements, and says that it is not always the case that the student will undertake the last years of their course at the sponsor university, or even in Australia. He further stated that he was much more enthusiastic about NTU's recent move into Malaysia where a student will undertake a whole TAFE course at an institution in Malaysia. It is hoped that the student will go on to higher education at NTU, but it does not
matter if this does not happen because the student already has one NTU qualification without all the problems associated with travelling overseas.

The adoption of a policy which is unashamedly international will not necessarily adversely affect other programs within the university, indeed many will benefit. For some time the university has been an advocate of concentrating resources into what it does best. There are areas within the university, such as alternative energy engineering, education, horticulture, management and business with international reputations. By focusing its efforts still further, it is the opinion of this writer that these areas will only grow in stature if the university becomes more internationally orientated. Along with this growth will come an international reknown and reputation giving the university the status it needs to attract international students in these areas. The services provided for international students and the training the staff should receive will also flow on to domestic students, thus providing a better service all round.

The problems of attracting international students to the NTU have already been discussed. By relying on natural drawcards such as the location of Darwin and the multicultural community, NTU has limited its appeal. International students, as the survey has shown, in the initial instance are looking at reputation and quality and only secondly at cost. This is borne out by the South Australian studies and Hill et al's 1992 study where the students attending the perceived better institution did so on the basis of status and reputation. It was only the students who went to the less well regarded universities who indicated that cost was a factor.
Quality of courses and reputation are only two aspects, however the quality of service has to be given a higher priority in relation to international students. This does not necessarily have to be at a significant cost. Better use of resources, both human and financial, can provide much of the incentive that is required to turn around the slacking reputation of the university. This can have dramatic effects in a short period of time, because word of mouth is so important. By making the changes that are required in an obvious manner and showing a resolve to do things better, existing international students will get the message back to their home country just as fast as they did when the service began to decline.

It is the view of the writer that there is a median between the acknowledged extremely good service provided by the university a few years ago and the less than adequate arrangements currently in place. In looking at the reasons for providing a better service, the university must recognise that other than the staff at the university some international students have no other support mechanism. This is especially true during the first few months after their arrival in Australia. This cannot be said about the majority of domestic students who often have a wider support base of friends and family who are easily contactable.

This paper will not end with the customary list of recommendations because the changes needed are more fundamental than some cosmetic surgery. However, some of the suggestions made to the writer will be outlined below before some concluding remarks are made. The type of changes that can take place at little cost in order to provide a better service are:
a) The repositioning of ISU staff so that they are in close proximity to one another, and

b) A private interview area.

At the same time, however, the unit should maintain its existing relationships within the student administration framework. This one change will gain a number of benefits: firstly, better communication will result between the members of the unit; secondly, the close proximity of the counter to both the administration officers will allow the sharing of this task more equally, this will result in the unit being more effective in its other tasks; and thirdly the separate interview area will allow for culturally sensitive discussions to take place. This is important, as without the students having the confidence to talk to members of the unit it can neither understand nor help with a problem that the student is facing. At the same time the benefits of having the unit within student administration in regard to the normal enrolment and other administrative procedures are not lost.

c) The physical relocation of marketing.

If not as part of the ISU at least into the same building/area. A number of interviewees commented on the importance of the personal approach in regard to international students. Often Teague, as head of marketing, is the only face and/or name a student knows when arriving at NTU. Therefore, she is often in receipt of information that is required by ISU. At the same time when ISU come up against a problem with regard to an agent or other marketing problem, there is a need for communication between the areas. It is argued that the current locations mean that not all
information is passed on, communication is often difficult and time consuming and that a physical closeness would result in a more effective and efficient use of resources.

d) Better human resource management policy and procedures.

There are a number of issues here that have an impact on international students:

1) the employment of staff with both the experience and qualifications in the relevant areas. Some of those staff members interviewed were critical of how staff were placed in positions which should be filled by specialists.

2) the naming of those positions. Two of the interviewees pointed out that some position titles were culturally insensitive. For instance, the use of the word "counsellor" in a position title immediately puts some students in mind of a psychiatrist instead of someone trained to help with a number of student problems which have nothing to do with mental disorders. Burke found this problem in his initial 1984 study (1986:15).

e) A more costly change in this area would be the employment of a full time head of the ISU.

If NTU is serious about having international students, it must co-ordinate the services it provides to them more efficiently. The head of the ISU is
the person who should be doing this. By having a full time head this function can be achieved.

f) Better training.

Training is an issue for both staff and students in regard to cultural sensitivity and also as to the functions of the different areas and people within the university. The above encapsulates the need for a two pronged approach in which the staff become more perceptive of the problems of students from other cultures, which helps in the initial phase after the students' arrival, and the students become more aware of the differences from their own culture in a way that allows them to adapt and understand their new environment. This training does not necessarily have to be expensive if existing resources are used. For instance, in combating the lack of knowledge about NTU, Darwin and Australia, it was suggested that more use should be made of students who have successfully completed courses at NTU. It was stated to the writer that a number of ex-students were willing to attend seminars/orientation gatherings in their home country before the student departs to provide a personal touch to any information that may be provided.

g) Better information and more co-operation between those providing it.

The need for more accurate information was outlined in chapter five. The information that goes into printed material must be analysed much more carefully, while those working in different areas that have an impact on the international students time at NTU must ensure that the Marketing branch knows of any changes in policy and/or procedure in good time to
include in printed material. Agents must then be briefed in a more comprehensive manner on any changes. The need for more information from the students themselves was also highlighted and certain questionnaires suggested.

h) Buddy system.

It was also stated that students already here are also prepared to help with meeting and greeting students so as to make them feel more comfortable. This core of students could also be a nucleus of a "buddy system" along the lines outlined by Burke (1989b) to help even further with the settling in to a new environment.

By having the right people in the right place, as has already been mentioned, training will become easier, as Nairn stated (1995), because staff will have an interest. Like most other changes suggested in this paper, training will not occur unless the support is there from the higher echelons of university administration. Therefore, the enthusiasm and knowledge of the supervisors and their superiors is the only thing that will drive any training initiative.

Summary

Although some suggestions have been discussed, this paper has not ended with the customary list of recommendations for people in administration to look over and take on board or discard as they choose. It has concluded by stating that something much more fundamental is required than simply polishing the edges. The university has to make a simple decision:
Is it going to continue its international focus in the future and if so is it going to support its international students better than it has in recent years?

If the answer is no to either part of the above question then NTU has to seriously reconsider its focus and strategic policy. If the answer is yes to both parts of the question it needs to totally overhaul the current structure so that international students are provided with what they are promised when they enrol in a university overseas. In commercial terms this means a quality product with all the after sales service and warranties that would be expected with such an expensive purchase. In moral terms the expectations of the students are no different from those just outlined however, the university must accept that it should be fundamentally committed to its moral obligations. The question is, does NTU have the spirit and determination to take on its moral obligations?
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