

The OSA Times

Newsletter of the Adelaide University Overseas Students' Association

September 2003

The OSA at War

Skirmish War Games 2003

I heard of skirmish last year when a friend of mine went to the game. I asked her for her opinion. 'Fun but painful,' she said. That is because she had suffered several bruises. Well, this year the event was organised by Overseas Students' Organisation and was held in the beginning of the second semester. Hence, I told myself that I had to make it my first priority, as it was perfect timing for me. The reason being life gets hectic in university, especially when there is a major assignment to be handed in.



Skirmish was played at a place called Blow Hole's Creek. It was a

two hour drive from the city. The journey was relaxing, as one can choose to take a short nap, or to enjoy the view of the countryside. Upon arrival, we were separated into two teams. The purpose of this was to allow two teams to pit against each other in the game. We were told to wear protective suits as a shield from the paintballs. Before entering into the arena, we were informed by the staff to wear protective masks at all times, unless one is in a safety area. There was a case of a guy losing one of his eyes because he took off his protective mask when he was playing in the arena.



Playing the game involves two teams pitting against each other with the objective of trying to invade the opponent's territory. The team that manages to get hold of their rival's flag wins the game. We played a few games till lunch then we had barbeque. Later, we continued playing, until sunset. Overall, I think Skirmish is a melting pot where everybody gets to mingle. It is a great opportunity to get to know students from all places. Hence, I strongly recommend that people go to Skirmish, as it is a great place to have fun.

Doreen Eng

Introducing the New OSA Research Officer

Kia-ora. That is Maori for "Hello". My name is Belinda St. John-Ives and I am the new Project Research Officer for the OSA. I moved to Adelaide from New Zealand recently and I am happy to be in the position of helping the OSA to meet its aims of representing International Students and ensuring that International Students participate fully in campus life. Before moving to Australia I studied postgraduate Human Geography in New Zealand and prior to that I lived and taught English in Taiwan for two years and learnt basic Chinese. I hope to use my experience of living in another language and culture and of university to assist the OSA in making your time at the University of Adelaide a rewarding and memorable experience. I can be found in the OSA office upstairs in the George Murray Building. Please drop by and introduce yourself, come and try speaking Chinese to me, or call on me if you need any assistance. I look forward to meeting you.



New Faces at the OSA



Hello everyone! My name is Wenke and I come from the eastern part of Germany. I am a study abroad student and I am going to study Asian Studies and Geology at the University of Adelaide for one year. Before coming to Adelaide I began studying Geophysics and will continue with this subject after going back to my hometown, Leipzig. There are several different reasons why I chose Australia and specifically the University of Adelaide for my overseas studies. One of them is Australia's culture and the fact that the society is utterly different from Germany, in that people are very open and easygoing. I selected the University of Adelaide because of its good reputation. After being here for six weeks, I like

Adelaide and its friendly people and feel very comfortable. Although I have heaps of work to do with my studies I do not feel homesick. That is not only because of the lovely environment but also because of my boyfriend Alexander who decided to do his studies in Adelaide, too. So I think we made the right choice and will never rue it.

A Decade of Multicultural Week

Multicultural week (or M-Week) is an annual event was born 10 years ago in 1993. It is an initiative created and organised by the Overseas Students' Association at Adelaide University. A week is set aside each year to spread the message of multiculturalism across the University community. The aims are to celebrate the diversity of culture found on the campus together, promote understanding and to allow an insight into these cultures. And to have fun. The themes of the last ten years have been: Many voices – “One message”; “Colours”; “Ethnicity”; “Existing in Harmony”; “Bridging the Distance”; “Fusion of Cultures”; “Cultural Quest”; “Unity in Diversity”; and this year it is “Cultural Salad”. The main elements of the week over the years have been food stalls, displays of traditional dress, guest speakers, games, M-Nite celebrations, parades, performances, exhibitions, movies and demonstrations; all put on by international students from the University of Adelaide, University clubs and external organisations.

The Overseas Students' Association is run by committee members who dedicate their time and energy to make M-Week a reality. These international students do this in order to share their cultures and contribute something to the University. The organisation is broken up into portfolios (publicity, technical and ground, food, performances, sponsorship) that are taken on by groups of students. The organisation begins about two or three months before M-Week. The students squeeze the planning between their lectures. With a very limited budget, minimal experience and lots of enthusiasm these students work to make the event a success. While the weather has not always worked in favour of the OSA, the University community has always turned out to experience the sensual delights that this 'cultural salad' provides. Hence M-Week has survived ten years and become a mainstay event on the university calendar. Hopefully the event will continue to grow and attract greater support so that the aim of promoting cultural awareness is realised.

This year's M-Week, September 9-12, promises to live up to those of the past. The performances will include African drum music, martial art displays, an Aboriginal choir, belly dancing, bands, Hungarian dancing, break dance and swing... The food comes to you all the way from Malaysia, China, Indonesia, Thailand, Germany and India... There is an exhibition of cultural pieces by Nexus in the library. You can buy funky M-Week t-shirts at below cost prices. You can join in the 'tug of war', play hopscotch, and even do the limbo. On Tuesday, the opening, everyone is invited to wear traditional costumes, and express their uniqueness. The success of M-Week depends on people participating and sharing in the diversity found in our microcosm of the world. Unity and harmony on campus surely bodes well for the world at large, so be there!

Changes to the General Skilled Migrant Program

As of July the 1st 2003 a number of visa changes came into effect that are of relevance to International Students wishing to gain permanent residence under the General Skilled Migrant Program. The most notable of these changes is that overseas students must have completed at least two years of full time study while physically in Australia, before they qualify for additional points or work experience exemption. Further, the qualification(s) that are completed must be relevant to the skilled occupation that is nominated on the application. Previously in order to gain additional points or a work experience waiver only one-year full time study was required and, in contrast to the Graduate Skilled (Temporary) Visa, the qualification did not need to be relevant to the nominated occupation.

In relation to the requirement of two years full time study there are a number of points to note. The qualification(s) must result in the award of a degree, diploma or trade qualification. Two qualifications may be undertaken during the two years and students can study at two Australian educational institutions with a number of provisos, including that each is related to the nominated occupation, that each course results in the award of a degree, diploma or trade qualification, that each is completed at the institution at which it was commenced and that the application is made within 6 months of completing the second qualification.

Additional changes to the General Skilled Migrant Program are increases in the number of points awarded to students for fulfilling certain criteria. An extra 5 points are available for overseas students who study and reside in regional Australia or a low growth metropolitan area for at least two years (this includes South Australia); for completing an honours or Masters degree in addition to a bachelor degree in Australia; for completing an Australian Doctorate; for skilled occupations on the Migration Occupation in Demand List (MODL); and a further 5 points for having a job offer in relation to an occupation on the MODL.

There are transitional bridges in place for those overseas students studying towards a degree, diploma or trade qualification in Australia on, or before 31 March 2003, who apply for general skilled migration before 1 April 2004. These students are only required to meet the provision of one-year full time study in order to gain exemption from the work experience requirement and points for full time study. In addition, these students are able to take advantage of the increase in points, mentioned above, if they are eligible. Of special note is that Overseas Students wishing to utilise this bridge must have applied within 6 months of having completed their Australian qualification.

If these changes are relevant to you then I suggest that you refer to the Australian Immigration website at www.immi.gov.au and that you obtain a copy of Booklet on General Skilled Migration. Do not forget the important dates above.

Changes to the OSA Constitution

The OSA Constitution is a document that captures the essence of what the international students at the University of Adelaide believe. We have been a focus point of cultural diversification and a hub of activity as will be witnessed in the forthcoming weeks. In addition, we hope to boost our advocacy impact on campus by the recent employment of a part time Research Officer. The position will hopefully be made full time in the next year. In light of the National Liaison Council AGM that was held in South Australia in the winter break we need to discuss our role on the national level. As you may well be aware there are other international students in other states who are facing if not identical then similar challenges in relation to their education and various other issues.



The OSA needs to be more proactive in this capacity as we are currently lagging behind the other states (in conjunction with UNISA and Flinders) in student advocacy on the national scene. The NLC is the peak representative body of international students in Australia. It has branch offices in each state, which is comprised of a Branch Convenor, General Secretary Education Officer and Liaison Officer. In a bid to increase interest in the NLC (SA) branch we need to establish a formal

role for one of our office bearers. The best position to undertake this role is the Education Officer. The role would involve facilitation of communication and logistics from NLC (SA) to the campuses and associate members. In essence we would like to see the Education Officer take on a more proactive role on matters of national interest. At the same time it is a good opportunity to introduce some of the committee members to the national politics so that our future student representatives are well versed in the art of national politics by the time they have matured into well-articulated student representatives.

In addition the OSA Constitution needs to redress the common problem of an elected executive member who gets to be elected by virtue of no other contestants being available. It is suggested that if the no candidate option should have more votes than a nominated candidate that a by election should be held within three weeks for the vacant position. In the event that it is not possible to have a by election or no candidate wins again, the council can hold a GM in three weeks to co-opt a member to the vacant position. This is a matter of common sense since a person who gets more votes against them than for should not be in office just because he/she is the only candidate at the time.

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The current Assistant General Secretary and General Secretary positions should be merged. On a task list basis there appears to be a lot of work for both parties but on a practical level there is not much to be done. This is because we currently have an administration assistant who takes care of the financial details of the organisation. On the other hand the General Secretary position as it is, could be better used if both positions were combined. I do not feel that the General Secretary as it is has enough work separate from the Assistant General Secretary, which also does not have enough work.

I hope that these few points get you thinking if there are any comments that any one would like to be made it would be greatly appreciated. Other than what has been said, have fun enjoy your studies and remember the OSA is here for you so take advantage.

Victor Otieno Asoyo.
President OSA 2002/03

The Link Program

The link programme is an initiative run by MCCA (Multicultural communities council of South Australia) with the support of Education Adelaide. The program consists of activities that are cultural, social, recreational and sporting. The aim is to facilitate the meeting and interacting of people from local communities so that international students are able to establish links with the city of Adelaide. The Link programme is taking place from the 2nd to the 18th of October. For information regarding the dates and nature of the activities consult the website at <http://www.multiwebsa.org.au> or ring 84100300 or email multiwebsa@mcca.org.au

September

Saturday 6th of September – Cultural night at Nexus Multicultural Arts Centre
Saturday 13th Social Day at the MCCA
Sunday 21st Meet the Greek Community
Saturday 27th Music Making Day at the MCCA

October

Saturday 4th Food / Culture Day
Sunday 12th Meet the Polish Community
Saturday 18th Social Day at the MCCA

This is a great opportunity for OSA members to get out and meet Adelaidians from all walks of life, so make the most of it. Please report back to the research officer (Belinda) and let her know how it went. Have fun!