



Adelaide University Overseas Students' Association

Report on Interaction between Local and International Students

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1. Introduction

“We cannot simply assume that interaction between Australian and international students will happen automatically and that by having international students on campus we will necessarily achieve our internationalisation goals” (Betty Leask, 2003).¹

The Overseas Students’ Association, as the peak representative body for international students at the University of Adelaide, gleaned through personal experience, conversations with its membership and general observation that the level of interaction between local and international students at this University is not as high as it might be and that international students desire an increase. This issue was deemed by the council to be of major significance to the welfare of international students, therefore the decision was made to explore it through research, a survey of students, and by subsequently holding a forum to bring together key University staff and students to discuss the issue and identify some possible action outcomes. The final part of the process is to report, that is, to collect what information has been captured and to present it to the University community, especially those in positions of leadership. The OSA hopes that this report will stimulate discussion around the issue of interaction between local and international students and, most importantly, inform decisions that aim to increase interaction.

2. Discussion

The opportunity to interact, and make friends with, Australian students is one of the reasons that international students choose to study in Australia. These interactions allow students to acculturate to their new social and academic environment, enhance English language skills and provide a support network. In short, interaction with local students gives international students a sense of ‘belonging’. The OSA has long recognised the importance of interaction to international students. Its secondary mission is to bridge the cultural gaps that may exist between international students and the local student community in the University of Adelaide. However, some of the experiences of international students involved with the OSA, along with academic literature in Australia, reveal that interaction between local and international students remains is relatively low. An exploration of the literature and discussions with students also reveal the reasons for increasing interaction, barriers to interaction and suggested ways for increasing interaction. These are summarized below and some references are given to enable further investigation. A list of useful references is provided at the end of this report to further facilitate this.

Reasons for Increasing Interaction

- International students perceive a lack of interaction and see this as a problem²
- Increased number and proportion of international students³
- Improve English language skills of IS which aids academic progress⁴

¹ Leask, B. (2002). *Crossing the bridge from both sides- strategies to assist International and Australian students to meet each other half way*. P5

² Hikada (2002), found in his research, that 30% of the Japanese students who answered his survey found it difficult to make friends, and he suggested that this affects the students’ welfare; Robertson et al. (2000).

³ University of Adelaide. *Future Directions. Draft Strategic Plan 2004-2008*. October 2003. Page 16, University Targets- “By 2008 the University of Adelaide will: 1. achieve...an international student load of not less than 4000 EFTSU”.

- IS can have a cultural experience and join in Australian student activities
- Increase confidence of IS i.e. in class presentations, tutorials
- Increased cultural awareness of Australian and international students
- Decrease incidence of racism and discrimination
- Develop global perspective in students
- Links formed between countries
- Internationally focused graduates
- To move forward in the process of internationalising the University⁵
- Develop oral communication skills in students
- Students better equipped to live in heterogenous world
- Socio-cultural adjustment for IS
- Decrease social isolation and loneliness of IS⁶

Perceived Barriers to Interaction

- Different leisure activities preferences - 'Drinking and partying culture' of some Australian students
- Language problems
- Cultural differences
- Not enough opportunities to interact outside class
- Local students are not interested in interacting
- International students prefer to stick together
- International students don't make enough effort
- Too busy working and studying
- Less time spent on campus
- Negative stereotypes and ethnocentric views⁷
- Shyness
- Lack of social interaction skills
- Lack of cultural – social connectedness
- Not enough acceptance that interaction across cultures is a 2-way process⁸

Ways of increasing Interaction

- Develop a diverse range of strategies as the factors affecting successful interaction are diverse.
Need to focus on both international and local students and on internal & external factors⁹
- Peer-mentoring schemes at orientation, for extended periods and in departments¹⁰

⁴ Li, R. Y. and. Kaye, M. (1998). Understanding Overseas Students' Concerns and Problems. *Journal of Higher Education Policy and Management* 20(1): 41-49.

⁵ Leask, B. (2002).

⁶ Almost two thirds of students reported feeling isolation in a study titled, *The Social and Economic Security of International students in Australia: Study of 200 student cases, Summary Report*, 2005, by the Monash Institute for the Study of Global Movements.

⁷ Volet, S. E. and Ang., G. (1998). Culturally Mixed Groups on International Campuses: an Opportunity for Inter-cultural Learning. *Higher Education Research and Development* 17(1): 5-23.

⁸ Leask, (2002).

⁹ Kudo, K. (2000). *Intercultural Contact and Adaptation of International Asian Students in Australian Universities*, The Otemon Journal of Australian Studies 26: 159-176.

¹⁰ Quintrell, L. N. and. Westwood., M.J. *Peer-pairing programmes for Overseas Students: The Flinders University Experience*; Miller, V., Oldfield, E. and Gregg, G. Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS):

- Mixed small groups in class that work on structured and unstructured tasks¹¹
- Set tasks that require intercultural interaction for successful interaction and make expectations and assessment criteria clear for the task¹²
- Coffee and tea social times run in lecture and tutorial breaks
- Social activities that encourage interaction
- Increasing student and staff cultural awareness and understanding
- Language and Skills Exchange Program¹³
- Clubs that attract international and local members
- Internationalising curriculum to encourage IS to share home examples in class
- Develop intercultural communication skills¹⁴
- University-sponsored cultural events e.g. M-Week, cultural evenings etc.
- Change attitudes of students away from monocultural stereotyping¹⁵
- Teach basic planetary literacy (i.e. geography, religions of countries)¹⁶
- Putting a policy and curriculum framework in place¹⁷
- Teaching arrangements which require and reward interaction¹⁸
- Stimulate motivation to interact
- Assist staff in becoming more culturally sensitive
- Create the right learning environment in class so that NESB students will speak¹⁹
- Support for staff and students in developing communication skills
- Promote living arrangement that see international students sharing with Australians
- Buddy systems within courses or online buddies
- Engage the wider university community in promoting and facilitating interaction
- Research the suggestions made in the academic literature in the area
- Investigate the strategies used by other Australian universities
- Support Non English Speaking Background (NESB) students to develop social English skills

3. Survey

3.1 Introduction

The survey was conducted to examine the real and desired level of interaction between international and local students at the University of Adelaide, the barriers to interaction that these groups identify, and the perceptions that each group holds of its outgroup, that is how

Facilitating effective learning in a student directed environment. Faculty of Biological & Chemical Sciences, The University of Queensland, Brisbane, Qld 4067, Australia; Kudo, K. (2000).

¹¹ Volet and Ang (1998).

¹² Leask (2002)

¹³ At Auckland University in New Zealand a successful exchange program is run by the Student Learning Centre that matches students for language, cultural and skills exchanges - <http://www.sl.c.auckland.ac.nz/LEX/index.php>

¹⁴ Eg. Hellmundt, S., Rifkin, W. and Fox, C. *Enhancing Intercultural Communication Among Local and International Students in a Tertiary Setting: A Reflective Report from a First Time Tutor in Business Communication* 1-18

¹⁵ Morris, S., and Hudson, W. (1995). International education and innovative approaches to university teaching. *Australian Universities' Review* 2, p.73

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Leask, B. (2002).

¹⁸ Ibid.

¹⁹ Ibid.

local students perceive international students and vice versa. Students were also asked to recommend ways that interaction might be increased.

3.2 Method

Two surveys were developed: one for international students and the other for local students. The surveys were only different in that the one for international students asked the respondents home country and language and asked questions about interaction with local students, whereas the survey for local students did not ask questions about home language and country and asked questions about interaction with international students.

Two methods were used to get survey responses, one of which was snowball sampling. OSA Council members were asked to pass some surveys on to their friends to complete. Random sampling was also used to gather responses. Students sitting in the Mayo Café and in the Cloisters on the North Terrace campus at lunchtime were approached.

3.3 Results

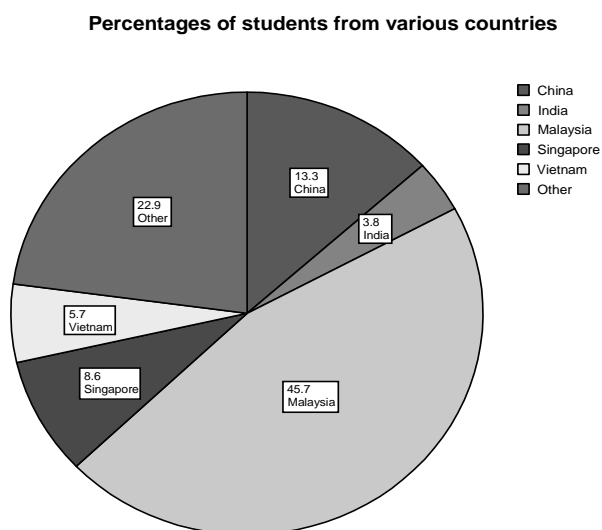
The results presented are those that are statistically significant.

Description of Respondents

219 students responded to the survey: 105 international students, 114 local students. 47.6% of the international student respondents were female and 52.4% were male. 48.2% of the local student respondents were female and 48.2% were male.

75.7% of the 105 international student respondents spoke English as a second language. The international student respondents were from 24 different countries. The country with the greatest number of respondents was Malaysia (45.7%), with China having the second greatest number (13.3%) (See Graph 1).

Graph 1: International Student Respondents' Country of Origin



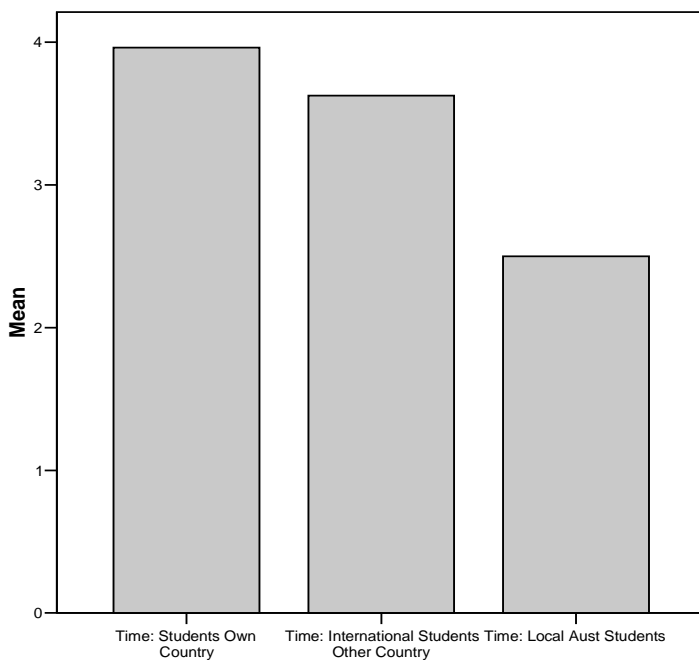
Friendships

42.9% of international students had over 10 local student friends, while only 14.3% of local students had over 10 international student friends. International students had more local student friends than local students had international student friends (4.17 versus 2.84 friends, on average).

The time that international students spent interacting with international students from their own country and international students from other countries was not significantly different. However, international students did spend significantly less time interacting with local students than they spent with international students from their own or other countries (see Graph 2).

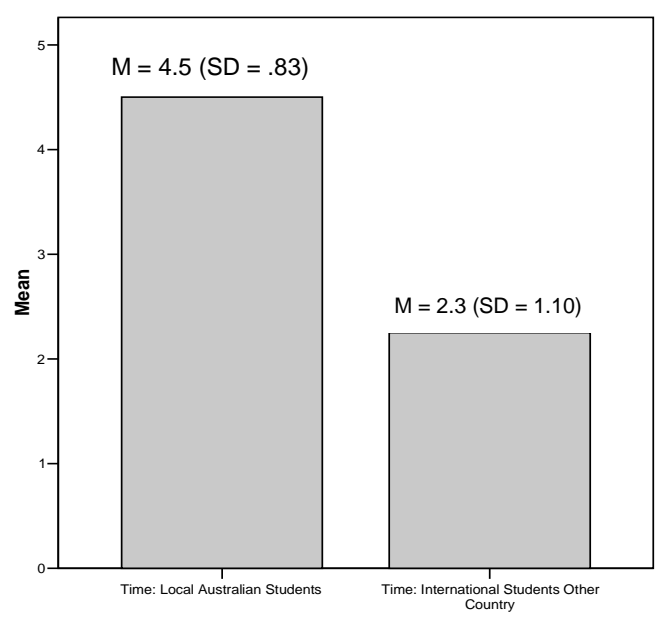
Local students, like international students, spent more time interacting with their ingroup, in this case that is local students, than they spent interacting with their outgroup, international students (see Graph 3).

Graph 2: International Students' Interaction Time



Mean 1 – Mean 2, $t(104) = 2.01$, $p = .047$
Mean 1 – Mean 3, $t(104) = 8.05$, $p < .001$
Mean 2 – Mean 3, $t(104) = 8.07$, $p < .001$

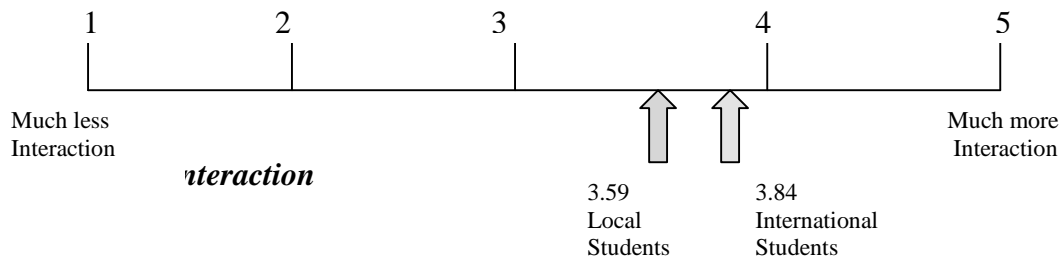
Graph 3: Local Students' Interaction Time



A paired t-test indicated the difference was significant, $t(111) = 16.44$, $p < .001$.

When asked to mark their desired level of interaction with their outgroup on a 5-point scale, 60% of international students wanted 'more' interaction with local students and 34.3% said that they would like 'much more' interaction with local students. Local students also desired an increase in interaction; however, international students desired an increase in interaction more than local students (3.84 versus 3.59, on average) (See diagram 1).

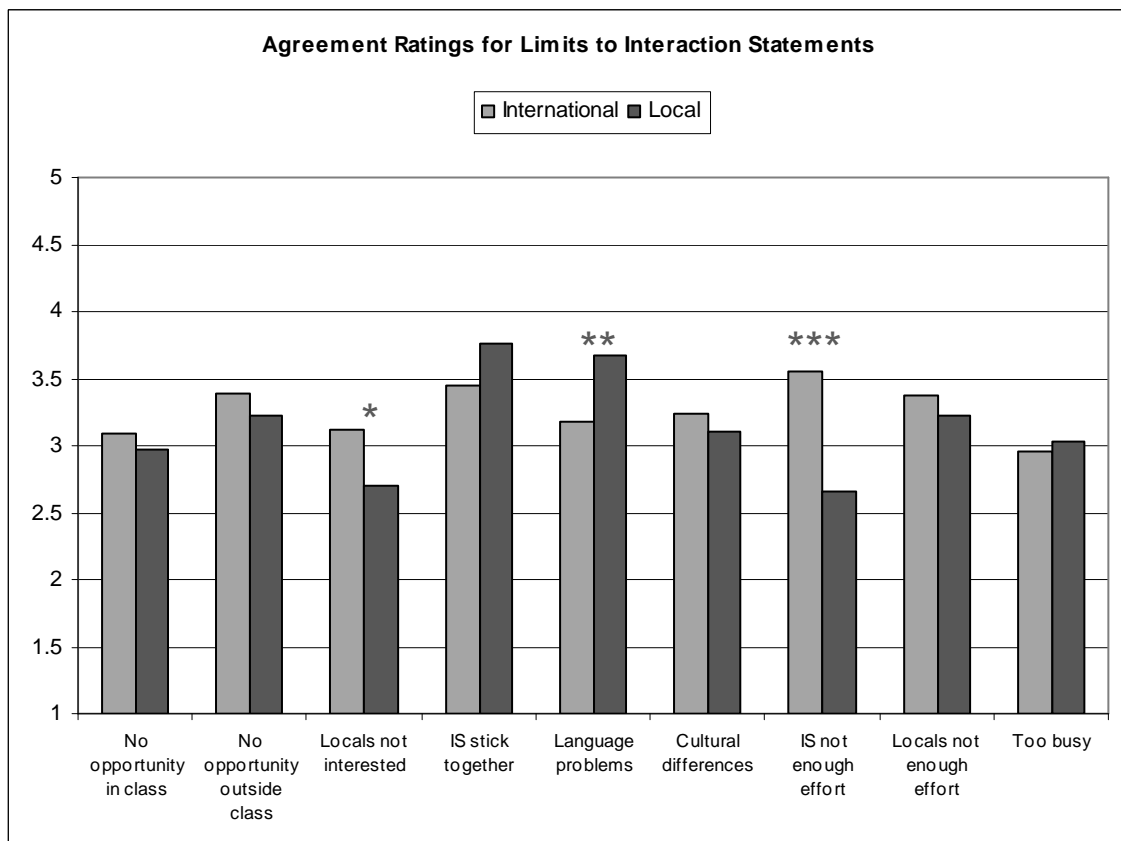
Diagram 1: Desired Level of Interaction – Local and International Students



The survey asked the students to agree or disagree with the suggestion that there are barriers that limit interaction between local and international students. 67.3% of international students believed that there are barriers that limit to interaction, while a significantly greater number of local students, 83.6%, believed that barriers exist.

International and local students marked on a 5-point scale whether or not they believed certain factors were responsible for limiting interaction. On average both student groups believed that barriers to interaction include: ‘no opportunities outside class’, ‘international students stick together’, ‘language problems’, ‘cultural differences’ and ‘local don’t make enough effort’. Of notable significance is that while international students, on average, believe that they are not making enough effort, local students disagree with this. Local students see language as more of a barrier than do international students. Local students disagree with the idea that they are not interested interaction with international students, contrary to the perceptions of international students.

Graph 4: Barriers that Limit Interaction

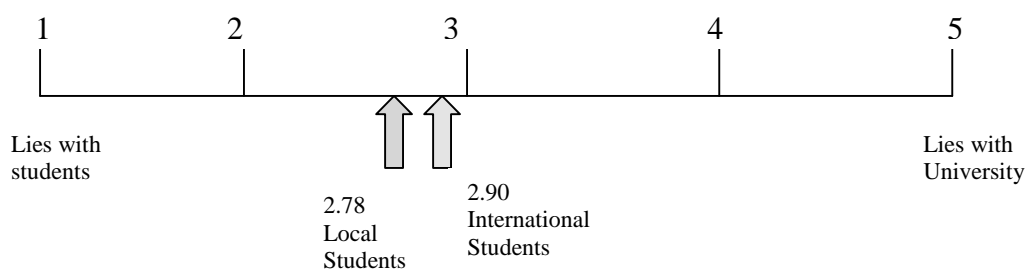


* significant at .05 level, ** significant at .01 level, *** significant at .001 level.

Responsibility for Interaction

The clear majority of international and local students surveyed, approximately 85%, believed that the responsibility for interaction rests with both international and local students. International students and local students both believe that responsibility for interaction lies slightly more with the students themselves than with the University; however, the University was seen by both groups as having some responsibility for interaction between local and international students (this can be seen in Diagram 2, below).

Diagram 2: Division of Responsibility for Interaction



Perceptions

The local students surveyed were asked to describe their perceptions of international students (Table 1, column A). To contrast with this, international students were asked to provide comments on the perceptions, they believe, local students have of international students (Table 1, column B). The responses were coded and the most common ones are displayed in the table below. Local students were asked to describe how they believe international students perceive local students (Table 1, column C.).

Table 1: Perceptions of International Students & Local Students

A. Local Students' View of International Students	B. International Students' View of how Local Students see International Students	C. Local Students' View of how International Students' see Local Students
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Hard-working / study-oriented (27)* •Keep to themselves (25)* •Quiet / Shy (21) •Nice (14) •Friendly (13) •Smart (13) •Difficulty in communicating (12)* •Interesting (7) •Rich (6)* •Polite (5) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Have bad English / trouble conversing (15)* • Different (culture, background) (13) • Stick together (8)* • Hardworking (6)* • Rich (5)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Lazy / not hard working (16) •Don't interact / unwelcoming (15) •Relaxed / easy-going / laid back (13) •Rude / uncouth / relaxed morals (8) •Loud (10) •Like to party and drink / social (10) •Unhelpful, not understanding, indifferent (5) •Arrogant (5)

* The asterisks in column A. and B. in Table 1 indicate descriptors that are common to both columns: local students believe that these descriptors are accurate for international students and international students also believe that local students see them in this way. However, the number of times that specific descriptors were used varies between the columns.

In Table 2, below, some sample statements from the comments made on perceptions of international and local students are provided.

Table 2: Sample Statements on International Students & Local Students

A. Local Students' View of International Students	B. International Students' View of how Local Students see International Students	C. Local Students' View of how International Students' see Local Students
<p>“(Interaction is) quite limited. Definite distinction between European / American students who include themselves in Aust. social life, compared to Asian & African students, who seem to have trouble connecting with locals or may be more focused on study”</p> <p>“They’re here to study and aren’t really interested in a lot of social interaction”</p> <p>“Friendly, interesting, hardworking. Sometimes hard to have conversations with because of language difficulties”</p>	<p>“They think that we don’t understand them or cannot speak English, Makes them reluctant to start a conversation. Annoying!!”</p> <p>“International students are perceived as more conservative, more study oriented & perhaps less likely to assimilate into social life here”.</p> <p>“That they are different and they are not sure how to approach these students”</p>	<p>“Lots are very overweight. Drink far too much alcohol and brag openly & loudly. Do not put as much effort into study, research. Dress offensively (females). Use foul language, swearing, raucous behaviour.”</p> <p>“That local students know each other and already have a circle of friends (most don’t by the way)”</p> <p>“Loud, friendly, like a good time”</p>

From the perceptions of international students and local students expressed in the survey, it is visible that dichotomous stereotypes are held:

International Students	vs.	Local Students
Study-oriented	vs.	Party-goers
Quiet & polite	vs.	Loud & rude
Dedicated	vs.	Lazy, laid-back
Shy	vs.	Outgoing
Poor English	vs.	Good communicators

Suggestions for Ways to Increase Interaction

International and local students were asked to suggest ways that interaction between international and local students might be increased. The responses were coded and the most common suggestions are listed in Table 3.

Table 3: Suggestions for Ways to Increase Interaction

A. International Student Suggestions	B. Local Student Suggestions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Events and Activities Outside Class (SAUA / OSA / Uni) (45)* •Increase Cultural Awareness (11)* •Events and Activities within clubs (5)* •Improve Communication / English Skills (5)* •Events and Activities within class (4)* 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event and Activities Outside Class (19)* • Joint Projects / More Interaction within class (8)* • More opportunities to Interact (4)* • Cultural Awareness (M-Week) (14)* • Pub / Pub Crawls (4) • Better English (4)* • Buddy System (3) • Clubs (3)*

* The asterisks in column A. and B. in Table 1 indicate suggestions that are common to both columns.

3.4 Conclusion

The survey revealed that while international and local students currently spend most of their time with students from their own group, they desire increased interaction with students from the other group. Students recognise that there are barriers that hindering the level of interaction, which include lack of opportunity, international students sticking together, language problems, cultural differences, and local students not making enough effort. Another significant barrier may be the current stereotypical perceptions held by international and local students of each other. While the students agree that responsibility for increasing interaction lies predominantly with the students themselves, they believe that the University also has a role to play. Students suggest that more events both within and outside class, an increase in cultural awareness, projects that require interaction in class, and improved communication skills would help to increase interaction between local and international students.

4. Forum

4.1 Introduction

Following the survey, the OSA hosted a forum titled on ‘Increasing Interaction between Local and International Students’ on the 8th of September. The aim of the forum was to bring together

key stakeholders in the University to discuss ways in which interaction between local and international students might best be promoted. An audience of students and academic and support staff from the University attended.

4.2 Summary

Kasumi Takeda, the Education and Welfare Officer of the OSA and forum organiser, gave an introductory speech that introduced the issues surrounding the challenge of increasing interaction. A key points from Kasumi's speech were:

- International students expect to make lasting friendships with Australians while studying here but instead feel isolated
- More interaction is beneficial for students and the University. International students improve their English, understand Australian culture and gain a sense of belonging. Local students gain a global perspective, form international networks and get enjoyment. The University internationalises in the true sense.
- International students find it difficult to interact with local students and local students are reluctant to interact with international students. There are many real and perceived reasons for this.
- The reasons behind the lack of interaction need to be understood before solutions can be found. It will be a long journey to uncovering ways to improve the lack of interaction, but the University community has the collective experience and know-how to make steps in the right direction.

Hedley Reberger, an international student advisor for the International Student Centre, kindly took on the role as facilitator of the forum. Hedley directed questions to each of the forum speakers. The questions and a few key points from the answers are provided below (The speakers were asked to supply summaries of their response, however where these have not been provided the OSA has summarised the response from notes taken during the forum).

1. Andrew Bain, Senior Executive, Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International)

Can you please explain how interaction between local and international students fits into the University's internationalisation plan and what goals and targets are in place to support interaction?

- Not specifically in the Internationalisation Plan
- Believes interaction between international and local students is desirable
- Programs for increasing interaction could differentiate the University in the international education market

2. Patricia Anderson, Manager of the International Student Centre

Do you think increasing international student numbers lends to cultural isolation between students and what role does the International Student Centre play in promoting interaction?

- Student volunteers, some of whom are local students, assist in the orientation program run by the International Student Centre.

3. Barbara Wake, Lecturer for the Centre for Learning and Professional Development (CLPD)

Do CLPD have a role in providing skills for staff and students to promote integration within the academic environment?

The CLPD does have a role to play. The various roles it takes relate both to students and staff in the university.

- In relation to students, the CLPD-Language and Learning Service (LLS) offers a range of academic workshops specifically for international students. International students can also take advantage of all other LLS workshops as well as the daily Helpdesks. In 2004, over 50% of students accessing LLS workshops and Helpdesks were international.

- The CLPD-LLS has offered for several years' English conversation tutorials for international students for social conversation and more recently sessions for international students to talk about their academic work.

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/LLS/>

- Also, the CLPD-LLS offers a volunteer program, in conjunction with the conversation tutorials, to provide language support for students from non-English speaking backgrounds. In this program trained volunteers are matched with one or more students, and volunteers and students arrange their meetings to suit their individual needs and time availability.

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/volunteers/opportunities/clpd/>

- In relation to staff, the CLPD will be hosting a conference on 28 November, 2005 - Internationalisation of the Curriculum - Secondary and Tertiary Perspectives - for education professionals interested in engaging with international education

<http://www.unisanet.unisa.edu.au/IEAAconference/default.asp>

- The CLPD offers The Cultural Awareness Program which is designed to provide ample opportunity for staff of the University of

- Adelaide to raise issues, engage in discussion and gain information and skills for interacting effectively with

- students and colleagues from a wide variety of cultural and language backgrounds

<http://www.adelaide.edu.au/clpd/orgdev/cultaware/>

4. Reece Kinnane, Local Student Delegate and SAUA Volunteer

What do culturally diverse students bring to the social activities and other events that SAUA organises? What do you think that you might gain from interaction with international students and what would encourage you to spend more time with international students? Can student media play a role?

- There are opportunities for SAUA and the OSA to work together
- There needs to be better communication between student organisations
- Local students are interested but don't know how to bridge the gap

5. Leo Cheong, President of the OSA 2004-05

What difficulties are faced by international students who would like to interact and make friends with Australian students?

- There are not enough opportunities for interaction
- International students are unsure what the first step is in meeting local students

6. Dr. Cheng Chew Lim, School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering

How does your school encourage interaction between all of its students and what are the challenges?

- The School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering has a peer-mentor program established to support international students in adjusting to study in Australia.
- This program could be used as a model of best practice to roll out to other schools

7. Chelsea Liu, International Student Delegate

Some people say that all the Chinese students stick together all the time, is this true? And what do you think would make you feel more comfortable in interacting with local Australian students?

- The frequently quoted "cultural difference" is not a real barrier to interaction (example of my "bear-drinking, footie-watching, pie-eating" friends and myself), rather, the concept of "cultural difference" is made to be a barrier by people believing it to be!!
- I think is the real reason for the lack of interaction is: The initial period in which international students arrive in, and orientate to Australia and the University is the most important period for establishing friendships and building networks, unfortunately most of international students, on their arrival in Australia, tend to stick with people from their own country, who share their own background, face similar problems, and, most importantly, speak their language. Therefore, there is often an instant bond formed between people from the same country. Once this social norm is established, students will have very little incentive to go out and meet new people and make new friends. (This particular phenomenon has little to do with culture / nationality, its just a social behaviour). The transition period should not be underestimated as it is then when the friendship network is formed and then that international students should be introduced to Australian students and the community.

10. Brenton Schulze

Considering academic outcomes and graduate attributes, how important do you think interaction is?

- At an international careers conference that I attended in 2001 in England Dr Madeline Atkins Pro Vice Chancellor of the University of Newcastle on Tyne said that in order to compete in the contemporary workplace graduates will have transferable skills in international cultural diversity, a second language, ethical understanding, a capacity to cope with complexity and ambiguous situations, the ability to work in conditions where there is no rule book to be followed and excellence in networking.
- For example, in a recent weekend Australian newspaper there was a vacancy in the Australian Government Office of National Assessment for a China Economic Analyst and among the desirable qualities sought are: relevant overseas experience or a good understanding of the Chinese economy, and if possible, other East Asian economies, Proven ability to work effectively in a team environment, Highly developed oral communication skills.
- Increasingly international companies and indeed government agencies are crying out for managers who are multilingual and culturally fluent with experience in managing diverse teams. "Managers who are capable of getting the best out of a workforce that's becoming increasingly diverse and aware of the challenges that accompany diversity are in huge demand" says London based Jane Fiona Cumming a director with Article 13, a global business consultancy specialising in corporate governance, social and environmental risk.

- As the world becomes smaller and increasingly borderless through technology, communication and the world economy, the ability to generate new ideas and creative approaches are being encouraged through the cross fertilisation of ideas and approaches by people from different countries and cultures.
- In the more than 5 years that I have managed the Careers Service I have had contact with hundreds of local and national and some international, employers and have seen hundreds of graduate vacancies and I am aware that increasingly employers are not only looking for good academic qualifications but well rounded graduates with a variety of qualities and abilities.

At the conclusion of the question and answer session, the forum was opened up to the audience as well and the issues were discussed further.

4.3 Action Outcomes

To conclude the forum, the forum speakers provided suggestions on strategies and initiatives for increasing interaction. The audience was then invited to participate in a collective brainstorming session. The action outcomes that were identified are summarised below.

- Make increasing interaction between local and international students a strategic objective in the Internationalisation Plan including delegation of responsibilities at all levels i.e. support services, teaching and learning and in curriculum development.
- Make increasing interaction an explicit goal in the University and build a framework for actualising the goal and invest resources into making it happen. The initiatives listed below might be part of the plan for increasing interaction. Supporting interaction provides the University with a way of differentiating itself in the international education market.
- A diversity of strategies is needed to engage students who are not a homogenous group and therefore will respond to different things.
- Develop program for assisting local students in getting experience of international students and other cultures.
- The benefits on interaction, such as networking, career building, knowledge, new perspectives, must be emphasise and effectively sold to students and staff. This means acknowledging the human capital available.
- Standardise programs for communication, cultural induction and interaction across the Faculties by adopting the effective programs developed in Engineering etc.
- Develop peer mentoring
- Develop an e-buddy system, whereby international students can correspond with local student buddies, perhaps in their future Faculty, before they begin their course and during their study. It is also wise to engage international students before they arrive by making resources available by having an electronic door open so that their expectations are realistic.
- Encourage all students to join clubs
- Encourage local students to get work experience overseas and international students to get local work experience in order to develop cultural awareness and communication skills
- Lecturers can introduce international elements to courses and utilise the knowledge of international students in assignments and discussions.
- Make use of first weeks when students are new to the University to maximise chances for interaction by having strategies in place that provide the opportunity for interaction and the development of friendships
- Project work allocation in class that allows international and local students to work together

- Student organisations to take up challenge by designing activities that appeal to both international and local students. For example ensure that O-Week is more than a beer party by involving international students in the design of diverse events.
- There were many suggestions around the idea of educating both local and international students in communication and learning in a diverse educational environment, and in cross-cultural awareness and the benefits of interaction. Specific suggestions included a ‘Transition to uni’ module, workshops for international students that focus on acculturation and ‘how to interact’, simple briefings for local students on cultural diversity in the University and communication and international education.
- Communication and cultural skills handbook could be supplied to all students. A local student and international student version might be provided.

5. Conclusion and Recommendation

Increasing the level of interaction between local and international students in the University is in the interest of the students and the University. International education is important to the future of the University of Adelaide, and for it to be a success requires internationalisation of all aspects of the University including the curriculum, teaching and learning methodologies, support services and, of course, the student cohort. While the level of interaction among international and local students is low the potential benefits of internationalisation are not realised. There is much to gain and precious little to lose in identifying ways to increase the level of interaction. Universities across Australia are also confronting this challenge and have developed initiatives to promote interaction. The University of Adelaide is in the position of being able to learn from the experiences of other universities and explore the suggestions for increasing interaction made by students and staff that are documented in this report to develop an action plan for addressing this issue. It is the hope of the OSA that increasing interaction between local and international students will be seen by the University community as an opportunity for growth.

Recommendation : That a working party be convened by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (International) to explore how the interaction between local and international students be included in the Internationalisation Plan, and that an action plan be developed that contains practical initiatives and implementation strategies for improving interaction between local and international students at the University of Adelaide

The working party should include staff from the International Student Centre, the Research Officer of the Overseas Students’ Association, the SAUA and OSA Presidents and two general members representing both the OSA and SAUA councils, the Senior Executive of the Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor, a lecturer from the CLPD, and a staff member involved in the international peer-mentor program in the School of Electrical and Electronic Engineering and Associate Deans international.

6. Useful References

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