

Preparing Students for Global Citizenship: The Victoria International Leadership Programme

Universities around the world face the challenge of developing programmes to help their graduates thrive in today's globally networked economies, societies and polities. Ideally, such programs should inspire students to become critically engaged global citizens, while being institutionally distinctive, involving the entire university community and engaging external stakeholders.

This presentation offers a case study of one extra-curricular programme which pursues these inter-related goals. The Victoria International Leadership Programme (VILP) is an internationalisation initiative open to all students at Victoria University of Wellington and structured around themes of global leadership, global connectedness, sustainability and cross-cultural communication. The programme seeks to enhance students' leadership skills, international knowledge and cultural awareness, as well as encourage meaningful interaction between international and domestic students.

The VILP is based on three pillars: seminars, speaker events and experiential activities. The seminars and speaker events provide opportunities for students to broaden their knowledge of a wide range of global issues and to reflect on global leadership challenges. The experiential component requires students to develop international leadership by crossing ethnic and cultural boundaries, engaging with persons or groups who possess a cultural viewpoint different from their own, and learning more about intercultural communication and leadership in international contexts.

Drawing on the VILP experience, this presentation will:

- Analyse the challenges of establishing such programs and suggest ways of overcoming them;
- Assess costs and benefits of such initiatives;
- Highlight how to ensure such programs are globally relevant while reflecting and enhancing institutional distinctiveness;
- Illustrate synergies between 'internationalisation at home' and enhanced student mobility.

Above all, the presentation will seek to encourage reflection and debate about how best to inspire students to think and act globally.