

# **Enhancing interaction between domestic and international students: Creating opportunities through the student exchange programme**

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Previously, the Victoria Overseas Exchange programme (Vic OE) held separate events for outbound exchange students and returned exchange students. There were no events specifically for inbound exchange students, nor university organised events that specifically encouraged social interaction with domestic students. This presentation discusses how Vic OE is bringing together all these groups of students to share knowledge and support each other, thus creating a gateway to increase and enhance interaction. The Vic OE initiatives seek to encourage not only interaction between the various exchange student groups, but also with the wider Victoria domestic and international student populations.

The introduction of a variety of events, emphasis on the importance of an exchange 'community', increased use of social media, initiation of a student-run club and collaboration with other university groups, has created a suite of events offering many opportunities for both domestic and international students to get involved with and engage in meaningful participation. Access to such opportunities enables students to not only cultivate new friendships, but also broaden their global awareness and enhance cross-cultural communication skills.

Drawing on the Vic OE experience, this presentation will:

- Analyse the challenges of gaining participation from students and suggest ways of overcoming them;
- Present ways to facilitate interaction and how to market these opportunities;
- Provide tips on how to create a welcoming community for interaction to take place;
- Discuss future ideas to enhance and sustain student interaction.

## **Key Words**

Interaction, student exchange, participation