

From widening participation to widening internationalisation.

Peter Komsta¹ & Sebastien Robin²

1 University of Tasmania, Student Centre, Locked Bag 1345, Launceston, TAS, 7250, Peter.Komsta@utas.edu.au

2 University of Tasmania, Student Centre, Private Bag 45, Hobart, TAS, 7001, Sebastien.Robin@utas.edu.au

The University of Tasmania supports the transition to university life of a cohort of approximately 800 culturally and linguistically diverse (CALD) students; comprised of ‘globally connected’ Australian citizens, permanent residents and humanitarian visa holders. Although they may sometimes come from the same countries, CALD students differ from international students who are in Australia on temporary student visas. The program uses a relationship-based approach to support the cultural, social and academic transition of its students, with an emphasis on developing the self-sufficiency required for university success, career realisation and lifelong learning. The CALD Program takes a holistic approach, in which the broader settlement / migrant / cultural experience of students are central to service design, delivery, and development.

The CALD Program has successfully expanded beyond the deficit-based support model towards a valuing diversity model. Moreover, in recent years the program has expanded to include careers support, cross-cultural engagement and training, community outreach initiatives, and alumni engagement. All these have positively contributed to key Divisional priorities and supported the University of Tasmania in its effort to be ‘Open to the World’. In essence, this has meant a transition from a widening participation for CALD students focus, towards a holistic approach that contributes to the broader university globalisation agenda. To a large extent, this has been achieved through collaboration between specialist and generalist Student Advisers, as well as with broader university staff, students and community.

Subsequently, international students have benefitted by accessing careers workshops for CALD and international students; curriculum embedded cross-cultural competence modules; the Report It Network (a harassment & discrimination network); campus/community social engagement opportunities; the creation of preparation for PEP sessions in Nursing etc. We now seek broader university sector engagement, support and applications, in an effort to create an environment where cultural diversity further enhances the educational experience of all students from all disciplines, aiding acquisition of global graduate attributes in the process.

Key Words

CALD, globally connected, cross-cultural engagement, valuing diversity model, specialist and generalist Student Advisers.