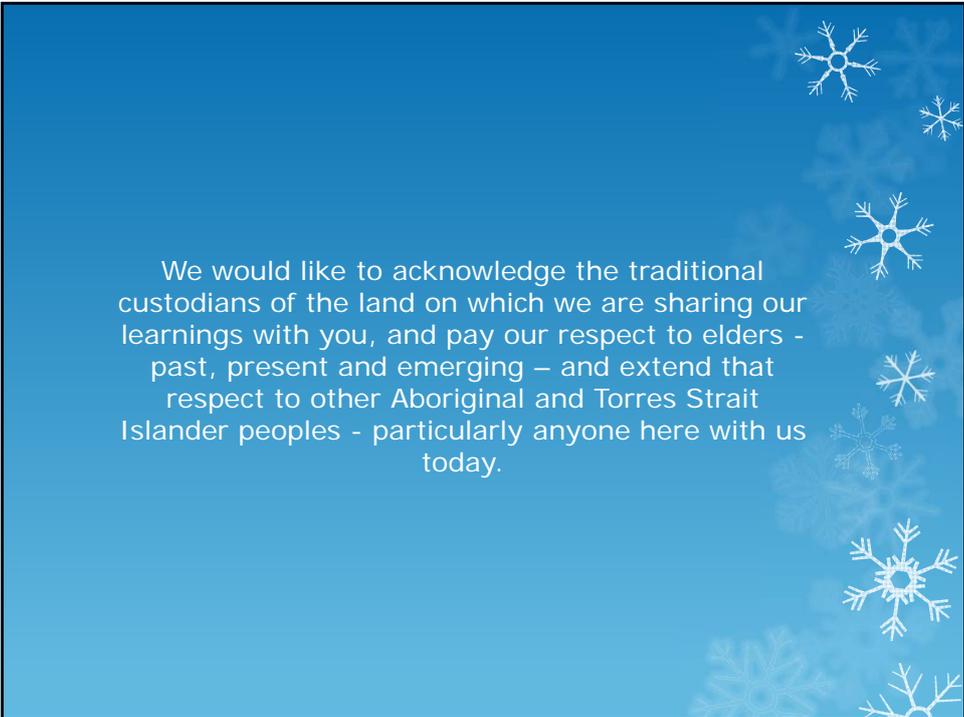




US college student expectations of studying in Australia or New Zealand: Insights from down under

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We would like to acknowledge the traditional custodians of the land on which we are sharing our learnings with you, and pay our respect to elders - past, present and emerging – and extend that respect to other Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples - particularly anyone here with us today.

Background

- study tour in the US in March 2014 as part of the ANZSSA/NASPA Exchange
- guided tours to 5 US colleges (privately and publicly funded) in the Maryland/Pennsylvania region
- visited two other university campuses in Maryland
- attended International Symposium in Baltimore, MD, and presented the Australian and NZ perspective
- attended/presented at the annual NASPA Conference in Baltimore, MD (largest ever at over 5000 delegates)



Same but different

- differences in the higher education systems of Australia/NZ and the US
- differences in the place of student support services (Student Affairs), and in who works in these roles
- possible expectations of US private college students studying in Australia and New Zealand on exchange, or as postgraduates
- implications for those providing student support and development services in Australia and New Zealand for US students

Context

Higher education systems (universities):

US	Australia	New Zealand
4,599	43	8
either colleges or universities public universities private universities liberal arts colleges community colleges	40 universities 2 international universities 1 private specialty university	8 universities (also 18 ITPS & 3 wananga)
21 million students	1.2 million students	180,000 students



43,000 students
 Business and Government
 Criminology and Law
 Education
 Engineering
 IT
 Environment, Planning, Architecture
 Health
 Humanities, Social Sciences, Languages
 Music
 Science and Aviation
 Visual and Creative Arts

22,000 students
 Architecture and Design
 Business
 Education
 Engineering
 Humanities and Social Sciences
 Law
 Science



50,000 students
 Art and Design
 Arts and Social Sciences
 Built Environment
 Business
 Engineering
 Law
 Medicine
 Science
 Australian Defence Force Academy



GOUCHER
college

1,481 students.
Selective, private, co-ed,
liberal arts



2,600 students.
Selective, private, co-ed, liberal arts and
sciences



2,100 students.
Fine arts
Undergraduate and
postgraduate



6,000 students.
Jesuit Catholic
University. Arts,
science, business,
management,
education



**PRINCE GEORGE'S
COMMUNITY COLLEGE**
40,000 students
(21,000 studying for credit courses)
Arts, science, applied science,
education

Study Tour



Strategic Goals
Enrichment
Pathways
Cultural
Responsive Learning
Partner
Partnerships
Priority
Collaboration
Enrichment Institute



The journey of a thousand miles
**BEGINS WITH ONE
SMALL STEP**
Lao Tzu



CCSJ Center for
COMMUNITY
SERVICE
JUSTICE

GOUCHER
college

A bit more about colleges in the US

Private:

- 3 per cent of US students attend small private liberal arts colleges
- fees can be \$50K or more per annum (price signal as a proxy of quality)*
- students pay on average around \$26K due to financial aid packaging (based on parents income); and scholarships – some pay \$0
- low staff: student ratio and “high-touch” support
- most private colleges rely on huge endowments – so model is threatened by financial factors (eg GFC)
- premium on “international experience” and “community based learning” to widen perspective
- fee waiver (or subsidy) for college staff or their children (therefore staff may stay on for years)

*The King of Tibet (18yo) studying at Gettysburg College

A bit more about colleges in the US...

Public:

- publicly funded colleges (eg community colleges, MICA) receive funding from state and county budgets, and fees
- students may do first two years at publicly funded college then apply for private – or the reverse (to save on fees)

A search on Youtube using terms US colleges returns 224,000 results eg,

- [America's Best Colleges 2014](#)
- [2015 U.S. News Best Colleges Rankings](#)

A bit more about colleges we visited...



Differences relevant to the Student Experience

- high level of financial commitment (colleges that is), student loans, years of debt
- high level of parental involvement/expectation (related to above)
- residential component of "student life" very high (and throughout the duration of the UG program)
- small sizes and subsequently high hands-on pastoral care (also related to Points 1 & 3)
- legal drinking age 21 - and implications for "playing up" on college campuses (Greek Houses, student conduct etc)

Differences relevant to the Student Experience (cont)

- far fewer international enrolments – (although this is changing) so less exposed there to multi-cultural perspectives on campus
- smaller campuses, generally, with smaller range of programs on offer
- experiential learning opportunities
- identity/affiliation with particular institution much higher – brand building pervasive - role of sport/mascots; alumni donations

Differences relevant to the Student Experience (cont)

- college 'life-stage' more an extension of adolescent life-stage than an entry into self-directed learning or autonomous living
- less attention to date on graduate outcomes- although this is changing
- early recruitment for Student Affairs careers (annual NASPA Conference Employment market for aspiring Student Affairs professionals to link up with potential jobs)

Implications for Student Services professionals

- nature of professional preparation for student affairs work in the US - many have it as a 'life profession'- has implications for professional associations etc
- professional preparation for student affairs work in NZ and Australia tends to be from the 'human services' training perspective (social work, welfare, psychology, education etc) - moves to do more here for specific qualifications or training
- exchange students who have come from the college system in the US may have very different expectations of student support and engagement here in Australia and NZ (and may be disappointed, frustrated, or possibly relieved with the 'hands-off'/'you're an adult' approach here)

Implications for Student Services professionals (cont)

- reciprocal issue - NZ or Australian students on exchange in the US (particularly if they attend a college) - expectations - less diverse campuses (at least for now)
- US students used to high involvement from staff – teaching/support staff. Issues of entitlement from consumerist perspective given high fees.
- investigation of professional development for student affairs work at ANZSSA level - driven by Directors of Student Affairs network (and soon to be formed DoSSV interest group in ANZSSA)

Impact of cross-cultural understandings on our own practice

- 'Like' but 'not quite the same'- the strange jolt one experiences when you think you are dealing with something familiar/similar but then realise some deep differences
- Our experience similar to students who study abroad: insights into our own cultures resulted from exposure to another (Forsey, Broomhall and Davis 2012)
- The exchange assisted us in viewing student's experiences and our own work in a new cultural context (Nguyen 2012)

Impact of cross-cultural understandings (cont)

- cultural diversity issues similar but different: issues of race (First Peoples, black, hispanic) are particularly sensitive in the US. In Australia and NZ Indigenous issues much more central.
- conflation of religion and race similar but different, with issues of threat and suspicion much higher in the US

Questions for discussion

- Would a student affairs professional qualification be of value in Australasia?
- Are there advantages in having student support staff from a range of discipline backgrounds?
- Parental involvement – how much is too much? Or too little?
- As universities in Australia and NZ move more towards “intrusive” support (ie analytics driven advising), what are the implications for traditional support and development services?
- Higher education system in Australia (not NZ) heading down the track of deregulation, so fee increases and increased student debt may be issues affecting enrolments. What may be learnings we can glean from the US re “consumerist mentality”, business models etc?

Questions?



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