

Conceptualising Cultural Difference:

International engagements with the “typical Australian”

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10 October, 2016

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1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This research project was developed as part of broader initiative titled *Intercultural Learning at Home* (ILH), which was designed by Professor Loretta Baldassar and funded by the University of Western Australia's (UWA) Alumni Annual Fund Grant. ILH seeks to understand and promote engagements between local and international students on the UWA campus, whilst also promoting and furthering the qualitative research skills of postgraduate students.

The research discussed in this report explores the described experiences and conceptions of one UWA social club, through the form of one focus group. The focus group consisted of five male committee members aged 18-21, and was conducted in a UWA study room on Thursday 15th, 2016. The research predominantly focused on the extent that this group were motivated to engage with international students, whether they experienced any sense of responsibility to engage with international students, and their perceptions on whether they could benefit from internationalisation on campus.

The main findings of this research project can be summarised in the following:

- Participants expressed mutual feelings that there is “no discrimination” within their social club.
- Participants simultaneously expressed feelings that they have no responsibility to engage with international or local students.
- Participants expressed strong ideas about what Australian culture is, and how it might promote or restrict engagement with international students.

2. INTRODUCTION

As part of the ILH project, this research seeks to examine a Western Australian university social club's conceptions of their engagements with international students. More specifically, the research attempts to gain an understanding of the club committee's perceptions of international students on campus, including: the extent that they are motivated in, or feel responsible for, engagements with international students; whether they feel like they can benefit from international students from campus and within their club; and how they verbalise any barriers to engagement that may occur. The research was conducted and analysed by a UWA anthropology and sociology honours student, with the guidance of Professor Loretta Baldassar.

UWA is a research-intensive university that aims to be counted within the world's top 50 universities by 2050 (The University of Western Australia 2016). The university has 20,851 students, with 27% of those being international students (Times Higher Education 2016).

The president of the club, Corey¹, played a significant role in the organisation of this research. Corey organised the participation of the committee members, and the setting at which the focus group would occur. Including Corey there were five participants, all Australian males aged 18-21. The complete committee contains 36 members, with only 8 girls.

¹ All names are pseudonyms

A copy of the focus group schedule is annexed at Appendix A. All participants gave consent for the focus group to be digitally recorded and transcribed. The transcript can be viewed at Appendix B.

3. BACKGROUND

Australia has experienced two decades of growth in international student enrolments (Burdett and Crossman 2012). Subsequent interest into the experiences of those international students has followed (Kusek 2015; Burdett and Crossman 2012), however the local student's lack of motivation to connect with international students is often overlooked. It is mostly agreed that enhancing the educational and social experiences of international students on campus is the collective responsibility of a variety of key parties, including the international students themselves (Tran and Vu 2016). However some literature notes that the primary responsibility for engagement is associated with the students (Burdett and Crossman 2012), and others focus on the role of the university, and even the role of the government (Paltridge *et al* 2012). The engagement between international and local students has been widely cited as having a great potential to contribute to enhancing intercultural competence, yet that it continues to be "far from satisfactory" (Tran and Pham 2016: 561; Amit 2010). In order to understand international and local connections within universities, the research and literature must reflect both the international and the local students' perspectives.

4. METHODOLOGY

The focus group was conducted on the 15th of September at 11am in a quiet and private study room at a university library. It was originally intended to be set within the group's clubroom, however due to unexpected renovations the location was changed (about 45 minutes before the planned time). Corey assured me that he had the participants organised, so I had very little communication with the participants prior to the focus group, apart from to send them the information and ethics sheets. Corey arrived at 10:50, two participants were coming from a lecture and arrived at exactly 11am, one participant arrived around 11:05, and the last at 11:15. The late arriving participant, John, who was replacing another member who cancelled, entered loudly and disruptively, making comments about the club president making him be there. Although the focus group was anticipated to last one hour, it lasted only 31 minutes. The participants completed a brief survey prior to the recording, in order for the researcher to collect demographic information. The focus group ended abruptly, with all participants leaving the room as soon as the recorder was switched off, leaving no opportunity to debrief.

Overview

The purpose of this study was to examine and describe the engagements between a local club and international students by focusing on themes of motivation and responsibility.

Design

This research was designed with a face-to-face qualitative methodology, and based on the seven stages of interviewing: thematisation, designing, interviewing, transcribing, analysing, validating, and reporting (Brinkmann and Kvale 2015). Since it is sometimes claimed that qualitative research does not have a set of methods of its own (Denzin and Lincoln 2011: 6), it should be clarified that this research has used semi-structures interviews with 'what', 'why' and 'how' questions, and was approached with a flexible, relaxed and conversational nature in order to gain narratives of the collective lived experiences of the group. A phenomenological approach was used to allow the group's viewpoints to be valued and validated as their experiences. Brinkmann and Kvale (2015) determine the main purpose of focus groups as bringing forth different viewpoints on an issue, however it is also practical in its ability to gain numerous insights in a time-efficient manner. Given the lack of existing research on this specific topic and the explorative nature of this study, a focus group was determined as the most effective apparatus.

Recruitment

Through word of mouth associations, I was able to connect with Corey on Facebook. From here Corey independently recruited four other committee members to attend the focus group.

Composition

All five participants were Australian males (two aged 18, two aged 19, and one aged 21), studying science or engineering, had never lived out of Australia for

more than one year, and did not speak another language. Please note that these were not requirements for their participation.

Data Collection

With permission from the participants, the focus group was digitally recorded and then manually transcribed by the researcher. Additional notes were collected before, during, and after the focus group, mostly noting group dynamics, non-verbal languages, tones, and relevant behaviours such as using phones during the focus group.

Position of the Researcher

My position as a young female researching five young, male participants must be noted. I set the interview stage by being open, relaxed, and conversational, attempting to relate to the participants rather than exert my authority as a researcher.

5. RESEARCH FINDINGS AND ANALYSIS

Composition and Dominating Voice

The initial research sought to understand how this specific group perceived their engagements with international students. This research reflects five male subjects within their collective sociality, with John (the late arrival) dominating the majority of the conversation in a loud and often sarcastic manner, often interrupting others. While Corey presented mostly 'politically correct' comments, John appeared to have very few confines on what should be said or

how. Two participants, Mark and Nick, spoke minimally, although predominantly agreed with John and Corey's comments. Finally, Mark spoke only 27 times throughout the group, mostly to agree with other comments, or responding with non-descriptive or irrelevant remarks. This can be compared to John who spoke 139 times with mostly long statements. The male-dominance of the group was discussed by John early in the focus group where he stated that "just because of its focus on drinking and its lack of focus on study, it does tend to attract more boys", noting that girls "tend to be more sensible".

Theme Analysis

After the completion of the transcription, the transcribed notes were analysed for theme similarities with the purpose of identifying the key or points of discussion. In order to make sense of these themes, they were then categorised into two main categories: responsibility to engage, and conceptions of culture. These categories and themes are listed below:

Category 1- Responsibility to Engage

Despite all participants being committee members, which could in some instances imply an onus of responsibility, the committee members expressed that they had little responsibility. James said "Oh I have absolutely no responsibility for anything", Alex agreed saying "very little responsibility". This lack of responsibility also associated with the group's laziness about "being bothered to reach out and get them to join us". Later in the focus group the researcher asked whether they could appeal more to international students,

James dominated with his answer but received verbal and non-verbal support from all of the other participants.

“...We’re not physically going to go around there and be like ‘international students hey!’ like do a little promo speech. Once again like if you’re gonna come into the country then it’s your job to make the step to actually accept that invite”.

This demonstrates how the group has not only rejected any sort of responsibility to engage with international students, but additionally begun to place some of the onus of responsibility onto the international students.

Theme 1- Leisure: fun and enjoyment

The group’s lack of responsibility was further justified through their collective values of fun and enjoyment. They didn’t want to go specifically out of their way to “badger” international students if they are not interested in that. Alex said “You want them to be keen”, followed by Corey “They’ve got to be willing”, and then Nick stated “You want them to come because they want to come”. James gives some clarification on what the group’s ideas of ‘fun’ and ‘enjoyment’ are:

“Like our parties generally are pretty... everyone goes there, everyone’s keen, and they’re drunk, and they go and dance, and they have fun, and we don’t want people who have been forced to go because they’re just gonna kind of sit around and be like ‘why am I here?’”.

Theme 2- Non-discrimination

The participants began discussing how they are giving discount event prices to the students in the colleges, “And like, that’s where all the like international

students typically stay is in the colleges so, it's really how to reach out" (Corey). This began a theme of 'non-discrimination' discourse about how they're "happy to welcome anyone and that they "don't really like discriminate when trying to get different people involved. Well we try to get everyone involved in the club" (John). With Corey also asserting "we don't discriminate, pretty much anyone joins". However as illustrated above in Theme 1, the participants only specifically want people who "are willing" and "want to come". It was also clarified that although the committee do sell tickets to the college "that's not to say that we prefer them to a... above an Australian" (John).

Category 2- Conceptions of Culture

Throughout the focus group the participants, particularly John, referred to the "typical Australian" and "Australian culture". John referred to this concept of 'culture' as something that "the other international students like" "...except for the Asians". When asked to clarify on what Australian culture was to them, responses included "ladsy", "mateship", "relaxed" and "laidback". None of the participants referred to alcohol in their answers, despite it dominating the conversation at that point of the discussion.

Theme 4- Alcohol

Alcohol was a major theme throughout this focus group, being mentioned at the very beginning and repetitively throughout. John frequently referred to alcohol consumption in the context of being Australian, or being part of the culture. Despite referring to non-alcoholic drinks in this quote, it was very clear through

his sarcastic tone and responses by other participants that he was, in fact, referring to alcohol.

“I think a lot is very typical Australian. We’re all down there with um, uhh... Emu lemonade... (laughter), non-alcoholic drinks, and we’re just sitting there like going off, like having a sausage, having a barbeque, like yeah here have a sausage sizzle. Yelling at each other...”

It’s understood by the researcher that alcohol consumption is a significant factor in this groups’ conceptualisation of Australian culture.

The group reasoned that it was this ‘culture’, which included being “very loud, very drunk” and “obnoxious”, that deterred local engagement with Asian students. John described how “Most of the Asian students from overseas like leave pretty quickly. When they realise what’s going on.” This can help us identify how cultural differences about what counts as ‘leisure’ and ‘enjoyment’ might impede on social interactions between local and international students.

Theme 5- ‘Visitor in your home mentality’

The group conceptualised how international students come to Australia to learn about and participate in Australian culture, and not for locals to experience the international’s culture. John expressed the view that if he were to go to another country he would completely ignore his own culture and follow theirs: “Well anyway that’s just how I really believe that people should act in other people’s countries”. It was not clarified whether they expected international students to participate in the drinking aspect of the culture identified above. However there was a collective belief that many international students, except for ‘Asian

internationals' come to Australia to experience Australian culture: to get drunk, to go out, to party, and to have fun.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

This research is most useful as a toolbox of ideas for future studies to anchor from. Due to the explorative nature of this study, and the researchers' lack of preparation for the unexpected participant responses, no significant points were investigated into deeply enough to form clear or powerful suppositions. Despite this, the themes emerging from the study are important. A project specifically inquiring into how Australian university students conceive their culture, and 'international' culture should be devised. How do they conceive internationals? How do they speak differently of Canadian internationals as opposed to Chinese internationals? The group's idea of leisure was defined by strong conceptions of their culture associating with being drunk and partying. Thus it would be beneficial to create a study that asks, "what counts as leisure?" to different social groups, in order to determine the best ways to promote local and international engagement. It would additionally be beneficial for this same study to be reproduced with a male researcher.

7. CONCLUSION

This study found that, in the specific group in question, local participants felt very little responsibility to engage with international students, and expressed rigid ideas of what Australian culture was and what international students

wanted from Australian culture. Although the participants expressed that they did not discriminate, the research found there to be passive discrimination. While the participants did not show much motivation to engage with international students, they also did not show much motivation to connect with other local students. This lack of responsibility was at one point correlated with laziness. Ultimately, this research illuminated a variety of barriers to meaningful engagement between local and international students, which should be further researched, taking note of the advised recommendations, in order to gain deeper insights.

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9. APPENDICES

APPENDIX A. FOCUS GROUP SCHEDULE

Understanding Engagements Between International Students and UWA Clubs

Pre-session checklist

(Prior to arrival)

- Email Participant Information Sheet and Participant Consent Form to participants for them to read through prior to focus group
- Ensure recorder device is charged, working and won't run out of recording space

(Upon arrival)

- Setting up
 - Organise seating - ensure people are seated comfortably, in a comfortable position from which they have good eye contact with you and each other
 - Spread out surveys for participants to fill in when they arrive
 - Set up recorder and place the recorder in an unobtrusive position in the middle of participants
 - Set up notepad, questions/checklist.
- Introduction
 - Thank participants for their involvement; introduce myself; explain purpose of research and reasons for discussion
- Briefing
 - Duration will be between 60-90 minutes, feel free to help yourself to the water or snacks provided
- Permission and Confidentiality
 - Explain conditions of anonymity and confidentiality, and what will be done with the research data
 - Give Participant Consent Form for signing, and advise that they can withdraw from the focus group session at any time.
- Settling in
 - Ask if they have any initial questions; let them know they can ask me questions at any time
 - The idea is for everyone to participate- there are no right or wrong answers, and all contributions are valuable and appreciated
 - Check that there are no last objections to the audio recording, and then turn the digital recorder on

During session:

- **Note-taking:** identifying each speaker by their initials and the first few words that they say; noting bodily expressions (such as nodding).
- **Listen:** Listen attentively to what your participants are saying. Try not to put words in their mouth or talk for them. If you don't understand, ask for clarification and don't worry if it doesn't all make sense straight off. Trust the process. Try to make a note of any new issues your participants raise that you wish to follow up, so that you do not need to interrupt. Wait for a pause in the discussion and then ask.
- **Group dynamics** - It is likely that some participants will dominate the discussion, while others will remain quiet. Think about how you will deal with these dynamics. When and how will you intervene?
- **Silence:** Never insist on information, some issues are met with silence, analyse why this may be the case.
- **Emotion:** Be prepared to deal with emotional reactions gently. Be ever ready to end a focus group if the group is too worked up.
- **Sharing:** Think about how you can make the focus group a dialogue or exchange rather than simply information coming one way, from participants to you. You may decide to share something of yourself where appropriate but beware not to take over the focus group or set your own agenda.
- **Help:** If the focus group process has clearly upset participants significantly, be prepared with relevant information for how they might seek support and help.

Focus Group Questions

Please note that indented questions are optional follow-up questions should they be necessary.

1. I would just like to begin by asking what draws students to join this club?
 - a. Is there something specifically about this club that has motivated each of you to become committee members?
2. Do you think that your club attracts a particular type of student?
 - a. Does your club have a wide variety of students or does it appeal to a specific demographic?
3. I'm particularly interested in international students. Are there many international students in your club?
 - a. Why do you think that there are/aren't many international students?

- b. Do you specifically try to engage with international students?
4. In what ways do you think that you, as committee members, could facilitate more international students into your club?
 - a. Do you share any feelings of responsibility to engage international students into the club?
5. What incentives are there for international students to join your club?

Post-interview checklist

- Check interview schedule to ensure everything has been covered
- See if focus group has any questions
- Debriefing-
 - Thank participants for their time and involvement
 - Confirm my contact details
 - Invite them to contact me if they think of anything additional comments or questions
- Transcribe recording
- Send transcript to participants if they have asked for it

APPENDIX B: TRANSCRIPT

Alicia- Okay, so I'm going to start pretty much by getting straight to it by asking what draws students to join the club? Just a bit of an ice-breaker.

Corey²- Well these two are all freshers so they're probably the best to answer that.

Nick- Ummm. When did we join? We got bullied into it.

Alex - *Laughs* Not really, we, we kinda got drawn down...

Nick- We knew Chloe who was on committee at the time and we were in a lecture and she was kinda just messaging us going oh like come down, like you're pretty much guaranteed to get elected, it's a lot of fun, um they're like a family so, like come join the family basically is what she told us.

Alicia- Mm hmm

Nick - Um, what would you?

Alex - Um, just fun. I would say...

John- Free alcohol

* laughing *

Alex - Yeah free alcohol... it's a lot of fun

Mark- But this was once you turned 18

Alex - Oh yeah of course I was 18 for all the drinking

Alicia- Just to clarify for the record, of course!

Alex -Unlike some people * laughter *

John - Yeah we don't condone underage drinking.

Alicia- And what, um, is there something specifically that's motivated you to become committee members, rather than just going to the parties?

John - Free alcohol.

* laughter *

² All names are pseudonyms

Corey - For me it was like yeah, everyone was just my friends, like I was friends with everyone on committee

John - (interjects) I like most people on committee... some people

John - Parties are like the tip of the iceberg for our committees. The actual hangouts we do is like, bi-weekly, we all like will go out to bars and stuff and go drink and that's really only for the committee,

Nick - And the retreat... retreat

John - Oh yeah the retreats too are pretty fucking fun

laughs

John - Are you guys going?

Everyone- Yeah

Alex - When do you need the money by?

John - I don't know ask Tyler

*laughter *

Alicia- Okay...

John - Oh shit I need to check that (takes out phone and starts using phone)

Unknown- laughter, oh my god, laughter

Alicia- So do you think your club attracts a particular type of student?

Corey - Um, just sort of relaxed people, that are, aren't really primarily here just to focus on their degree, but more to just * laughter * enjoy uni

Nick - Have fun, yeah

Alex - Yeah

John - Yeah students that want to study lots... nah I'm joking, not at all. Uh.

Alicia- Does your club have a wide variety of students or does it appeal to a specific demographic?

Corey - Mm. Nah, we don't really discriminate, um, pretty much anyone joins

Everyone- yeah

John - When someone joins some people cop more stuff, when they join

Everyone- yeah

Mark - Banter

Alex - Whole different degrees

John - Yeah all different degrees

*Laughter *

Alex - To be clear it is kinda seen like a boys club though, like mostly boys

Alicia- You think it is?

Everyone- Yeah

John - It traditionally was a boys club, um, obviously in recent years it's not a boys club anymore, um, we don't encourage it to be at all, however, just because of its focus on drinking and its lack of focus on study, it does tend to attract more boys, um because a lot more boys are kinda keen for that. Whereas girls tend to be a bit more sort of sensible. Um...

*Laughter *

Alicia- Okay

John - Um yeah it's about 20 something years ago when it started, that it was actually a boys club and it was intended to be but... * mumbling * now we don't really care if it is or isn't, it's just whoever sort of wants to engage and have fun

Alicia- Yep, perfect. So obviously my particular interest is in international students

Everyone- * quiet laughter *

Alicia- Are there any international students in your club?

Corey - Um, last semester we had like a pretty big international students with even one of them joining our committee, um, it varies like with each international, like each group of international students that come in, but this semester we haven't really had much contact

John - *inaudible *

Everyone- *laughter *

Corey - My girlfriend was an international student last semester.

Alicia- Mhmm

Corey - Yeah, um, I dunno, like last semester in particular you guys hung out with um Evan a lot

Alex - Evan, yeah she got, she was um good friends with Chloe, and so we all kinda just formed around her. Um. I think that's it.

Corey - We've had um, at our events last year we had like a heap of international students come in, like at our quiz night we had like I think 15 tables or something and I think a couple of them were international students, 3 or 4.

John - Mm. They got a bit offended though.

laughter

Corey - Just one table

John - Then they left

Corey - No they left to go to Cap S

John - Oh did they?

Corey - Yeah

Alex - Ohhh

Nick - Were they international students?

John - Ohh * inaudible *

Corey - No they went to go to Cap S

* laughter*

John - Oh man I don't blame them, Cap S is cheap

* laughter *

John - Especially on drugs

Alicia- So why...

John - *inaudible, and taking over me *

Alicia- It sounds like there is not a lot of international students in comparison to local students, why do you think that is?

John - Well because they live overseas. It's kinda hard to engage...

Corey - * to John * No...

Alicia- * to John * No, the students that are here.

John - Oh so like, oh, oh, so you're not just talking about like the, you know PI (Perth International) students that are like, like the Perth Internationals

Alicia- I'm talking about students here that are from places other than Australia

John - Ohhh

Alicia- That are on campus, that are living here temporarily or...

Corey - Like Caitlin and stuff

John - And Rocko

Corey - We do have like um, students that live in Australia permanently from other countries as well that hang out with us a fair bit.

John - Like Rocko's a Soviet isn't he?

Corey - Uhh, Croatian.

Mark - Oh I thought it was Bosnian

Corey - Um, I say the reason that they probably don't get involved is because, like our membership is like for a whole year, so unless someone comes in in first semester doesn't really see the benefit... someone that comes in second semester it's kinda hard to get involved with the club when it's already sort of...

Alicia- How much is your membership for a year?

Corey - \$5

Alicia- Mm

(silence)

Alicia- So what were you saying about second semester?

Corey - Um, it's sort of hard like, uh, like the committee's more formed as a group, so like closed off. A lot of people that like come to our events have been coming to our events all year, so it's a lot... what would you say?

Nick - More close knit

Alex- Yeah

John - Also we got loads more... *inaudible*

Nick - Yeah

John *inaudible *

Alicia- Also what?

John- Oh we get loads more lazier with being bothered to reach out and get them to join us. Like at the start of the year we've just had the big holidays, um, we might go away and work, so like, so everyone's pretty happy to see each other. Really pumps up the committee.

Alex - * starts talking but is interrupted *

John - As the year goes on we all hang out still but

Alicia- Yep

John - Generally most of just realise that kinda oh our lives aren't going anywhere and we kinda start to actually work

*laughter *

Alicia- So, another follow on question I have is: Do you specifically try to engage with international students?

Corey - Um, over the past like year we've sort of tried to target college students a lot more because they're such a big market and those kids always wanna come get drunk

John - Also there's places to crash really close

Mark - Aren't we um, aren't we giving cheaper tickets to our next event to... the college

Corey - Yeah that's actually how we've been trying to like reach out to them as we give cheap tickets to them, like \$5 off here and there and stuff

Alicia- Mm hmm

Corey - And like, that's where all the like international students typically stay is in the colleges so, it's really how to reach out

(Silence)

Alicia- (looking at Nick, Alex, and Mark) Anything else to add?

Nick - I don't think so

Alex - No

John - Uhh. I don't know, we don't really like discriminate when trying to get different people involved. Well we try to get everyone involved in the club.

Nick - If someone's interested we're happy to...

John - Yeah, like so like we won't have a specific focus in a way that we like want international students, because well we're always just trying to go out and get everyone, like if someone's a nice person I'm always here just to tell them to just come along to our next event

Alex - Just have fun

John - Um, just ...

Alex - Just to have fun

John - It's just about ...

Alex - ...And enjoying yourself yeah.

John - I guess we do, we do sell tickets to the college students, but, I mean that's not to say that we prefer them to a... above an Australian.

Alicia- Mhmm

John - We don't mind either way. But we just think that they'd enjoy it since it's so close to university. So I don't particularly mind if they're international or not.

Alicia- Perfect. How do you think that as committee members you could facilitate more international students into your club?

Corey - We could...

*laughter *

Alex - I don't know

Nick - I don't know really

John - I'd stop...

*laughter *

Mark - I don't know

Corey - It's kinda hard to, to contact

Mark - We can sort of try and do something collaborating with PI

Nick - With PI yeah

Corey - Yeah Perth International is like a really big up and coming club... within the past year

Alicia- Perth International?

Alex - Yeah, it's like the international student club

Alicia- Mhmm. Okay, do you think... umm, do you think that when you do have international students they're generally more Western international students as opposed to international students from Asia?

Nick - Probably yeah

Alex - Typically, yeah

John - Not many international students *inaudible*

...

John - They're just not very... *inaudible *

*laughter *

Alicia- Umm, do you share any feelings of responsibility to engage international students into the club?

John - Oh I have absolutely no responsibility for anything

*laughter *

Alex - Very minimal responsibility

Nick - Yeah we...

John - We like to keep free of responsibilities as much as we can

*laughter *

(silence)

Alicia- So it's up to other people to find you guys?

John - Well, look. If we think that say PI will work with us, we'll send them a message, if they send back something that's really long or they send back something that's you know going to take us a while then we're not really gonna bother with it. Um. Like, yeah, we'll do a bit but like we're not, we'll do a bit as far as we can be bothered, which, like, it's, ah ok, we will put in effort but we won't take responsibility over the fact, over the work here.

John - I like the idea of international students coming. So yeah, we'll put a message out. But.

Alicia- How do you usually, um, get people to join?

John - Um

Alex - O-day

John - We sit there really loud and just until people come up...

Alicia- O-day?

Alex - Yeah, O-day is like the big club

(Everyone agreeing)

Mark - Yeah signups

Nick - Yeah

Corey - It's when we get like our memberships, but really the people that we spend most of the year with like our closer friends of the club, particularly me throughout like the first few weeks of semester one at Sundowners

Mark - That's definitely how I got

Corey - We just go

Mark - Into Leisure... was the Sundowners... on the foreshore

John - Yeah so, first semester we basically pay for unlimited soft drinks down at the foreshore and put lots of sausage sizzles on

*laughter *

John- Yeah it's not soft drinks

*laughter *

John - Um if you're... we accept anyone down there except for vegans. Um.

*laughter *

John - If you're vegan you're not really welcome

Alex - No they're welcome, there was some celery there last time

*laughter *

John - Oh yeah that's right... oh yeah I bought some celery and I went up and threw it at vegans

*laughter *

John - Ah. But yeah ah. We're pretty happy to welcome anyone. Um. They come down. Most of the Asian students from overseas like leave pretty quickly. When they realise what's going on.

*laughter *

John - Ah, but,

Alex - It's quite useful for networking

Alicia- Why do you think...

John - Because we're very loud, very drunk,

Mark - Obnoxious

John - Very obnoxious... which they don't like that much.

Alex - Um...

John - ... Um but the other international students generally like it, um, I think a lot is very typical Australian. We're all down there with um, uhh... Emu lemonade...

*Laughter *

John - Non-alcoholic drinks, and we're just sitting there like going off, like having a sausage, having a barbeque, like yeah here have a sausage sizzle. Yelling at each other like

Mark - Having a well-cooked sausage *laughter *

*Laughter *

John- Yeah like they find it very interesting. And like they find it very funny as well. A lot of them, when they say come over to Australia, like if you ask someone, a lot of them, what they think of Australians as a culture who does this, and they actually do find it quite endearing, but, yeah great they try and come and join in. Um. Yeah just all except for the Asian students.

Alicia- Okay

John - *inaudible *

Nick - It's just that, yeah they're just such a cultural

Mark - Yeah, like yeah they see the event on Facebook and they sort of assume that it's more like a networking , so that...

John - Yeah, it's really funny, like some of them rock up in like shirts and stuff

*Laughter *

Alex - Like um, like proper like

John - Yeah

Nick - Like proper business attire

Mark - Oh yeah

*Laughter *

Alex - Yeah not really quite getting it, yeah

Mark - Yeah

*Laughter *

John - And we're pretty obvious *inaudible, coughing *

John - Guild does stop us from saying much about alcohol, so they could actually play out as a networking event

Alex - Imagine... oh pfft imagine networking

Nick - Ayyyyy

*Laughter *

John - ...It's a bar with a bunch of drug dealers

*Laughter *

Alex - God

*Laughter *

Mark - I can't...

*Laughter *

Alicia- Um

*Laughter *

Corey - Oh my lord

*Laughter *

Mark - It's just what we do

*Laughter *

Alicia- So you think that, the, because The Guild makes you advertise in a particular way

Nick - Yep, it does come off a bit differently

Alicia- It comes off differently.

John - So when we used to advertise, when I started with Leisure like 4 or 5 years ago, 4 years, when I started with Leisure, and I started a long time ago, but when I joined it, we tried to advertise, we'd be like, it would be like you know a badly censored photo of people having sex at the top and like, you know lots of things just about alcohol, you know like, come and get really drunk at our events and you know

Alicia- How long ago was this?

John - Oh, 4 years. And since then just the whole, like that was before the whole you know like politically correct culture came up this much. And as soon as that came up it's just been like

Nick - We've really changed. We haven't done anything

John - Well we haven't been

Nick - Anything politically correct since then

*Laughter *

John - Oh god

*Laughter *

John - Um yeah. Like it used to be very chilled out. But now just everything you put up they actually have people that just go through and critique it. And they just go through and say 'oh that's bad why are you doing that' and 'that's bad, that's bad' and it's just like

Alicia- Sorry, from Guild? Or elsewhere

Everyone- Yeah from Guild, just Guild

John - Um, and if we put up, a lot of things if we put them up, even as jokes, they just get like shot down so we have to make our event descriptions just really like

Corey - Tame

John - Tame.

Corey - *inaudible*

John - Or really, really, really subtle references which obviously a lot of the international students wouldn't get. So. Um. It could come across that way.

Alicia- Including on Facebook?

John - Yep

Alex - Yep

Nick - Which

Alex - I, I...

John - ...We mainly advertise on Facebook

Nick - Yeah mainly on Facebook

Corey - We had to move uhh, I think one of our advertisements was 'come down and hang out with Dr Ink', like DR dot INK, like drink, but um

*Laughter *

Corey - But we got told to take that down pretty quickly

Alicia- Really?

Everyone- *agreeing*

John - Yep, see I, even with things like that, even though it's just, I mean really it's just us doing whatever we want, I mean we're not on uni camp, we're on the foreshore, so we're in our own, it's in our own times, we're on the foreshore, we're not doing anything against the uni.

Mark - It's just because it's a club affiliation...

John - *inaudible*

Mark - ... with The Guild, yeah

John - Dude, um,

Nick - It's not an actual club event

John - Yeah it's not an actual club event it's just like come and hang out with us and come out with us and, DR INK, I dunno, just yeah. Which is, in my opinion kind of ridiculous because, I mean first off us advertising all of our events, look liquor licensing based there is a few, there are a few crows about that that you can't quite just do whatever you want, but you aren't allowed to advertise the fact that the actual intention of the night is to come and drink.

Alicia- Mm

John - You're allowed to do that. But with Guild you're not. Which I think is quite misleading for students. Um. I'd rather if someone didn't want to drink they knew that it was about drinking and just didn't rock up.

Alicia- Yeah

John - You know. Um. Rather than have a whole bunch of Asians rock up in shirts and ties.

*Laughter *

Alicia- Um, so...

*Laughter *

Mark - You're so racist *laughing *

John - What... but when they rock up you're just like oh no I feel so bad, and they come in and there's like...

Alex - What is this?!

Corey - It would be good if we could advertise to them like explaining what it was more so that they would come down expecting, you know, to have a drink with...

Participants agree

Nick - Yeah so they know what to expect when they come down

Alex - Yeah

Nick - Yeah it's fine but...

John - ...Yeah we have no issue with them but the issue is that we genuinely feel bad about ourselves having them there, and just seeing that like they're not having a good time at all.

Nick - Yeah

John - It's just like, you know we don't earn money off this, like we don't, all we get is like a small amount of free alcohol... which to be honest is a lot for us.

*Laughter *

John - But, the reason we do this is so that future students, and current students can actually enjoy our parties. Like if our parties don't profit then literally it just means that we put more money in the next party

Everyone- Yeah

John - That's all that happens

Alicia- Mhmm

John - Or our tab will actually be paid off

*Laughter *

Alicia- So I guess, um, my supervisor has created this overall topic: the focus is internationalisation at home which is basically like if you were to go on exchange and go travelling somewhere else, you would get all these, um, like a variety of cultural experiences that you would gain, and you could take home, and would be beneficial supposedly for future employers. Right? So the internationalisation at home idea is that you have students that come to campus and then you can benefit from them being here, um, so....

John - Yeah, I definitely get that. Um. I think Angus definitely benefited from international students at university.

*Laughter *

Alicia- Say that again?

John - Oh, Angus learnt a lot of American things

Alicia- American students?

John - Off an American student, um

*Laughter *

Corey - He's just making a joke

John - I'm not. I'm actually being serious.

Alex - You're not serious.

Inaudible- talking over each other

John - You know a lot more about American culture

Corey - Right, ok. Fair enough.

John - Um, and, I guess some of us learnt about the international students. But they come over here to experience our culture, not for us to experience theirs'. Um. So. So I guess well they're coming over here, say a Japanese student comes over here, I don't want them taking me out to a Japanese restaurant. I want to go to a pub. Get a steak. And get drunk.

*Laughter *

Mark - Yeah

John - Perpetually

Nick - Sounds right

Alex - Yeah

*Laughter *

John - Um, look I just, yeah. Also the whole um visitors in your home mentality.

Alex - So like exchange

John- So if I go over to someone else's country, I'm not going to expect them to follow my culture, or to follow what I'm doing. So I'm actually just going to completely ignore my own culture...

Mark - Yeah

John - ... To follow theirs'. Um. Well anyway that's just how I really believe that people should act in other people's countries. Um. Not to the full extent of do whatever you come here with. But like say someone comes over here and goes like ooh... well in my culture I do this, I'd just turn around and go... well yeah thumbs up to you.

Alicia- Mm

John - Like, I'm just gonna kind of continue, I'm busy enough as it is I don't really want to be bothered with you.

*Laughter *

John - Um...

Alicia- What does everybody else think on this topic? Like do you think you can, like that as part of this club you can learn from having international students in your club? Or benefit?

Corey - Umm. It was good having like like sort of um their view on how the club acted and how like the club came across so we could like sort of grow from that and um change our image slightly to be, like appeal to a wider audience

John - Also Gilly helped us all cheat our French exams

*Laughter *

Alicia- What sorry?

Corey - Um one of the International students from Canada helped a lot of our committee with their French units

*Laughter *

John - Just cheated all of them

*Laughter *

John - It was great

Corey - But yeah, at the same time I agree with John*, a lot of them came over here and they didn't want to sort of tell us all about their culture, they came here to experience Australian culture

Alicia- Mm

John - And a lot of them literally came over here with the intention that they wanna go out, they wanna party, they wanna have fun, because that's, especially from their home country, that's still why Australia is a prized destination, people wanna come over here because, even though it's fucking expensive over here, they wanna actually come over here because we've got that whole culture and they wanna experience that. Um, they come from places where the culture is very modest, I'd say.

Alicia- Who are you referring to now?

John - Molly

Alicia- Which international students?

Corey - Uh so, one of our friends from Norway

John - Norway. Yeah she literally came over here with the intention of just like I wanna get drunk, I wanna go out I wanna party, I wanna have fun, um and she did. And she had a great time. She. It's not really like that back in her hometown so she, that's kind of why she saved up to come over, I mean like the amount of money it costs for them to come over here. I mean especially putting it into hourly pay, what did she get?

Nick (or possibly Alex?)- And it cost her like thousands of dollars to come here. She spent like...

John - ...She saved up for four and a half years without spending any money at all to come here. She came over here with the full intention just to experience Australian culture. Well. I don't really want them to come over here and me to be like 'oh cool, you're international, lets go do what you do at home' you know like it's, we get paid a lot compared to other countries.

Alicia- Yeah

John - And it costs an evil amount, like.

Alicia- When you say Australian culture, and if anyone else wants to speak as well because... um... with Australian culture how are you defining that?

Nick - The way I see Australian culture is, a lot of people say Australia doesn't really have a culture but I feel like it's more of a ladsy, mateship,

Alicia- Mm

Alex - It's really relaxed

Nick - Laidback

Mark - There's a lot of diversity, so we have a lot of other cultures come here, especially as James says, that's kind of our culture I guess

Alicia- Yep

Corey - Yeah that's about it

Alicia- So I guess if I'm going to, um, summarise a little bit... just to clarify some things, so you don't advertise specifically to anyone?

Alex - Yeah

Corey - Yeah it's just really broad advertising

John - Yeah we prefer diversity

Alicia- You would... if you didn't have Guild um, like, changing all of your advertising...

Corey - ... We would be a lot more honest

Alicia- You would be more honest?

Alex - Absolutely

Nick - Yeah

John - Like um. If we had freedom with advertising we would just be straight forward.

Corey - We have. ..We would get like, at all our events like our two ones that we run the bar at like Toga and Rave we try and get our drink prices as low down as cheap as possible, like \$4/5 a drink, um and we can't actually advertise cheap drinks, we're not allowed to say that. But that's...

Nick - We have to say uni-priced drinks

Alex - Student-priced drinks

Corey - yeah student-priced drinks, but we don't feel like that's really fair because you know like a lot of people, a lot of bars and clubs advertise student-priced drinks and they're drinks are like \$10. So, just in comparison,

Alicia- Mm.

Nick - Yeah, it doesn't really work.

Alicia- Um. And going back before actually, you were saying that students come here and they want to experience Australian culture, um...

John - Talking to them they literally want to come over and party.

Alex - Yeah.

Alicia- Yeah, so couldn't you maybe try and appeal to that more? Like appeal to the international student side of things...

John - ... We do. We do, we always send out messages to be like, well not necessarily to PI, but we always send out messages to the commoners, and like come get involved, and come do this or this. Like come down and like, and yeah some of them do

Alex - And like

John - I guess

Alex - And everyone who's already said they're coming to the event will like invite all their like friends, like, even just from college, yeah like everyone who lives at college will invite everyone from college, so... if the international students are there then they'll probably come.

Alicia- Mm

John - Yeah um, and there's also we do put up the invite but we're not physically going to go around there and be like 'international students hey!' like do a little promo speech. Once again like if you're gonna come into the country then it's your job to make the step to actually accept that invite. It's only gonna help. Um, you can come or you don't come. Don't really care either way like we're always happy to have lots of students, like we do appreciate it, but...

Alicia- Everyone agrees with that?

Everyone- Yep

John - We're not going to go out of our way to try and get international students when you know there might be other students who are... we prefer to just get a broader outreach and have more people hear about us.

Mark - And you want...

John - ... Rather than focusin on some people and trying to get as many...

Mark - You want people to come that are...

Alex - You want them to be keen

Corey- They've gotta be willing

Nick - You want them to come because they want to come.

John - Yeah, you don't want them to be like, you know asleep, broken down over a few weeks of us badgering them and then they're like finally 'ohh fine I'll come to the event' and then just rock up and not really be, have their hearts in it. Like our parties generally are pretty... everyone goes there, everyone's keen, and they're drunk, and they go and dance, and they have fun, and we don't want people who have been forced to go because they're just gonna kind of sit around and be like why am I here.

Agreeance

Alicia- Um, ok so going back in terms of advertising as well

John - *sighs*

Alicia- So, you said that you go to the college, do you physically go over to the college?

Corey - Um well we kind of, and only this year we've kind of gone over to the college to put up posters, but in the past we usually message, like we have a friend at each college and we kind of message our friends and we get them to post on their college page with um, if we're doing like online tickets with a promo code for their college. Something like that.

Alicia- Um, so posters are a big way of advertising?

Nick - Those are our main two, like Facebook and posters right?

Corey - Yeah

Alicia- Facebook and posters... and where do you put the posters?

Corey - Um, so...

*Laughter *

Corey - The only place we're really allowed is... we give 40 to Guild and then they put them up around Guild Village, but then...

John - ...Where we actually put them is very different

Corey - ... We put them like just everywhere we can

John - Yeah, but then Guild gets really pissed off at us but we just pretend it wasn't us

*Laughter *

John - They have absolutely no idea that it was us.

Mark - I have an idea...

John - What is it? I think she'd like to hear? ... What is it?

Mark - Oh it's just that... you know the diver, like um

John - Yeah

Nick - Ayyy

*Laughter *

Mark - Leisure, just get all Leisure shirts, sunnies, a huge sign,

Corey - Yeahhh

Alex - Love it

John - Good plan

Alicia- So...

John - Ohh Miranda, Eliza, what is it?

Alicia- Do you guys...

John - Oh down at the boat house...

Alicia- Do you guys have like a table down by Guild that you sit at between 12 and 2 or some sort of hours...

Alex - Yeah... like yeah Tav!

Nick - Yeah, which day...

John - Yeah there's a bench at the Tav...

Alicia- Bench at the front of the Tav?

John - Oh no no no no...

*Laughter *

John- You know those little like um, those couches and the circle thing with the table there

Nick - At the Tav

John - Yeah generally we've got one of those there

Corey - If we're doing ticket sales we'll either be on Oak Lawn between 12 and 2 we've got like our own little table, um...

John - ...Or we'll be at the Tav

Corey - Yeah

John - We don't really mind about going to the Tav and doing ticket sales just because like we are 18+ like all our events, um, so like...

Alex- Yeah like

Nick - Yeah like all of them

Alex - Yeah so we're not like Sober? or someone who all run um all ages events. We're always 18+

Alicia- Oh okay, yep

John - So we don't cater to underages... mainly because I have to do the liquor licensing and I fucking hate doing it for underages... although I had to do Sober's last time as well

Corey - We sometimes you um, like our common room

John - Oh no we never use our common room for anything

*Laughter *

Corey - We definitely don't drink in our common room or anything like that

*Laughter *

Corey - Definitely no alcohol

John - Definitely don't sleep in there... no one's ever had sex in that common room

*Laughter *

John - Definitely not

Alicia- Perfect, alright, that's great, that's plenty. Thank you for your time guys!