Would you like $2500.00?

Some students think that exchange study does not count towards your degree. This is not so – you are only able to go on exchange if you can find an enrolment which is accepted by your course coordinator to count towards your degree.

In order to qualify, undergraduate students need to have completed at least one year with results averaging out to a GPA of 5 (credit grade). Postgraduate requirements vary according to length of the course.

Each semester our campuses are enriched by students of a wide range of nationalities visiting us on exchange from partner universities throughout the world. Similarly, our own students leave for one or two semesters study overseas.

All students who go on exchange come back full of excitement about their experience and with a real enthusiasm for the benefits. They are unanimous in stating that living and studying in a country cannot be compared with just travelling through. To quote David Weiskopf who studied on exchange at ACU for a year: “It is a character building experience that will help you build life long relationships with friends from around the world. Furthermore, studying abroad will complement your resume while looking for employment after your studies.”

Because most exchanges are only for one semester, it is a very intense experience. Students have no time to lose and must participate fully in student academic and social life as soon as they arrive, in order to make the most of their short stay. As an exchange student, you are also an AMBASSADOR for Australian Catholic University.

Take a look at the international link on the ACU homepage and then click on “Education Abroad” for more details. All enquiries most welcome.

Herta Derrij, Exchange and Study Abroad coordinator

Australian Catholic University offers its students the opportunity to study one or two semesters on exchange and an associated travel grant of up to $2500 to assist with the airfare. All local and international students on all campuses are eligible to apply!

I come from Sichuan province in China, where the focus of earthquake was. I am lucky as my family is still ok so far. Sichuan has never suffered an experience like this before and I cannot believe the disaster so close to me and my family. So many people died, so many children orphaned, so many houses destroyed! And there are still many people alive in the black underground covered by stone hoping to be rescued to live again in the beautiful world.

I keep calling my family every day. When I called my mum this afternoon, she was still crying. I feel guilty as I can’t do anything to help. Now the government has rushed troops and medical teams to dig for survivors and treat the injured. Please pray for them!

2008 is really both a catastrophic year and an exciting year for China. There was the snow disaster in Jan and Feb; the Tibet rebellion in Mar and Apr; a threatened Olympic boycott by western countries the Sichuan Earthquake in May... as a Chinese, I really feel sad about my country.

Chinese people are not afraid of difficulty! We all will stand with our government to face it! Hand in hand we will make the rescue operation smooth and do our utmost to help reach aid there as much possible.

Lin Huang (Continued pg 6)
Andres Junca  
Diploma of visual arts.  
Melbourne

Colombia is 14,475 kilometres from Australia; it takes more than 18 hours and at least two airlines to fly there. It is some sort of “exotic” trip because it is so far and belongs to the “Latin Americas”, and it is definitely very exciting. I have experienced that it is “exotic” for people from Australia to see someone from Colombia as well; but I am beginning to notice that the first image that a lot of people from outside America have about Colombia is drugs and crime. This is just not true!

The funny thing is that when you tell people that you are from Colombia, they say: “Colombia? Oh cool… my next trip will be to Colombia for sure. But… Is it really safe to travel there? There is a lot of crime and drugs there right?.” People have heard about all the dark side of the difficult situation that Colombia was going through a few years ago, but everything is so different now. There is crime in every country in the world and it is just a matter of being careful about the places you go to and the time you travel.

There is much more to Colombia than what you hear in the news! It such a beautiful country with fantastic natural features, two oceans, fantastic historical places and very kind people that would be very happy to host you in their home.

It is also great to mention that the very famous singer Shakira was born in Colombia and started her career there. There is also Juan Pablo Montoya, the F1 ex-world champion, and many other world-wide recognized places and people that have never been mentioned in the other countries.

The best thing about Colombia is the happiness and joy that Colombians are renowned for. The colourful carnivals, parties and the variety of dances are the most common cultural representation. It is said that Colombia is the capital of the Salsa dance.

So, there is nothing to worry about when planning to go to Colombia. It will be well worth the long flight and you will love it!

Continuing on with the Colombian theme, I guess many people know that the capital city of Colombia is Bogota … right? But what else do you know about it?

Apart from being the capital city, Bogota also has the largest population in Colombia. The estimated population in 2007 was 8.3 million people.

When people think of Colombia, they think of a tropical country, and technically, this is correct because it lies very close to the equator. Usually you would expect this to be a hot place. Whilst this can be true of other areas of Colombia, it certainly does not apply to Bogota.

At an altitude of 2640 metres above sea level high in the Andes mountains, Bogota is the 3rd highest city in the world. As such, temperatures are quite mild compared to other equatorial countries. It can actually get quite cold in Bogota, which many people are surprised about.

The urban layout of the city is based on the focal point of a city square, or plaza, which is typical of many Spanish-founded settlements.
Racism: How do you cope?

The slaughter of millions of European Jews during World War 11 should have taught all of us, forever, that racism is an evil that can cause unimaginable horrors. In the face of the Holocaust, all of us should have relinquished, forever, any tendency towards racism.

Sadly, the pervasive experience of racism in present-day Australia has been illustrated by many studies. In a 1995 nation-wide survey of 2031 international university students, 73% of respondents reported that they had experienced difficulty with prejudice and discrimination while studying in Australia. Similarly, a 1997 study found that approximately 50% of Taiwanese students had experienced racial discrimination, most commonly verbal abuse, but 15% had experienced physical attack. Further, while 24% had encountered racism on the streets, 42% had been the recipient of discrimination at their educational institution (see ‘Racism and Prejudice’, position paper of the Australian Psychological Society, 1997, p.26).

A few years ago, I was walking through the campus of a major Melbourne university when an Aussie screamed out a racist remark to a group of Malaysian students. In my mind’s eye, I can still see their pinched, distressed faces. I, for one, was stunned, and I worried over the event into the early hours. I wished that I could have said to the Malaysians: ‘He doesn’t speak for me’.

The Catholic Church has affirmed, again and again, that we must all hold the inheritance, language and way of life of different cultures ‘in great esteem’ (See Austin Flannery, Vatican Council II, 1975, p.843). Australian Catholic University, like all Australian universities, promotes a culture in which all members of the University community, ‘understand, value and have informed respect for cultural diversity in all interactions between and among students; students and staff; and staff’ (Cultural Diversity Policy, 2004, p.4).

Yet, racism exists, and, I have been asked by the Editorial Group of ISV-The Voice to outline for you some ways of coping:

You have a right to be here and you bring a great gift to the University and to Australia. We learn so much from your customs, beliefs, languages and religions, as well as from the human pain that you bear. A racist remark says something about the person saying it, not something about you. There is no fault in you. It indicates the refusal of another to embrace difference, perhaps, or their fear of the unknown. If you can remember this, you will be somewhat immune in the face of verbal attack.

You do have a right to make a reply to a racist comment, and, when you are not risking harm to yourself, you could do so. I was born in Tasmania and for the two-score years I’ve been in Victoria, I’ve had to endure remarks about Tasmanians having two heads (‘Where’s your scar?’) and about marrying within families (‘Did you wed your brother?’) Sigh. I respond sometimes by saying, ‘For forty years, I’ve been bored silly by these same two comments, can’t you be more creative?’ Or I might say, ‘I wonder what your remark says about you?’ (As you already know, racism can occur within cultures.)

Talk over your experiences with someone you can trust – fellow students, international student advisers, counsellors, course coordinators, etc. ACU has a Student Grievance Management Policy, too, through which you can make formal complaints about the behaviour of students and staff, and, out of which every attempt is made, through the use of mediation, to resolve your grievance (see ACU website). Australian law, also, covers a wide range of unlawful discrimination areas, including those of race, colour, national or ethnic origin, nationality and religion.

Fourthly, think about establishing groups on campus which encourage tolerance and reduce prejudice and racism. Commit a certain amount of time per week to work on these issues. Form friendships and alliances with people from a different ethnic group to yourselves as a step towards overcoming racism.

The wish of the Jews in the Nazi death camps, their last wish, was: ‘know what has happened, do not forget, and at the same time, never will you know’. The truth, that is, was always more atrocious, more tragic than what would be said about it (See Gillian Rose, Mourning becomes the law, 1996, p.120). This last wish of the victims is a call to action. You are right to act against the evil of racism; to voice your protest; and to attempt to ensure, as all of us must do, that all men and women, from all corners of the earth, are treated with equality and justice.

Rosemary Williams
Counselling psychologist
Counselling Service

Racism is a form of discrimination which is illegal in Australia. It is unlawful to discriminate against any person on the grounds of race or nationality.

If you feel that you have been discriminated against on the grounds of your race or nationality, there are government departments in your State to deal with this.

Please contact the International Student Adviser or a Harassment Adviser on your campus.

ISV The Voice
Sri Lankan Fish Curry with Tomato

Sharmalie Wijesinghe
Nursing
Melbourne

500 g Fish steaks (Spanish mackerel)
1 teaspoon Ground turmeric
1 teaspoon Salt
1 Large onion, roughly chopped
3 cloves Garlic
2 teaspoons finely chopped fresh ginger
1 Medium size ripe tomato, chopped
2 tablespoon Oil
1 tablespoon Sri Lankan curry powder
1 teaspoon Chilli powder
2 cups Coconut milk
Oil for frying
Salt to taste

Method:
Wash and dry fish well and rub all over with turmeric and salt. Cut each steak into serving pieces. Heat oil in a frying pan and fry the fish until golden brown on both sides. Drain. Put onion, garlic, ginger and tomato in container of electric blender and blend to a smooth paste. Heat oil in a saucepan and fry the blended ingredients for a few minutes, until oil begins to separate from mixture. Add the curry and chili powders and about a teaspoonful of salt and the coconut milk. Bring to the boil, stirring. Simmer for a few minutes. Then add the fish and simmer for 10 minutes. Serve with rice and accompaniments.

You can buy Sri Lankan curry powder from Indian food stores. Normally Sri Lankan women make curry powder at home and keep for about 4 or 5 months. For Sri Lankan curries, to get the real Sri Lankan taste it is better to use Sri Lankan curry powder. Recipe as follows:

Sri Lankan Curry Powder
2.5 tbsp coriander seeds
1 tbsp cumin seed
1.5 tsp fennel seeds
pinch of fenugreek
2.5cm piece cinnamon stick
3 cloves
2 green cardamom pods
6 black peppercorns
Simply grind everything together and store in an air-tight jar

A delicious dish with beef, spices and tomatoes. Serve over rice with fried crispy plantains called ‘patacon’ and a simple salad with a twist of lime and olive oil, salt and pepper.

Carne Guisado - Colombian Beef Stew

Ingredients:
1/2 Kilo Beef steak
2 tablespoons vegetable oil
4 cloves of garlic
2 teaspoons ground cumin
6 Roma Tomatoes
2 medium onions
2 beef stock cubes
2 cups water
1/2 teaspoon salt
1/4 teaspoon pepper

Directions:
Heat the oil in a skillet and sauté steak until browned. Remove from the skillet and sauté chopped tomatoes, thinly sliced onions, minced garlic and cumin until the vegetables are tender. Add the steak, water, stock cubes, salt and pepper. Allow to simmer on low until tender and meat pulls apart with a fork. Pull the steak apart into bite sized pieces.

Allow the sauce to cook down to desired thickness for serving on rice, or add more water depending on how much it has cooked down.

Try it out. It’s simple and delicious. And you can say that you have tasted something of the “exotic” Latin Americas talked about on page 2!
Away with the Pixies in Oz Land

Mary Hemant
Education
Melbourne

Ever heard someone tell you, "Aw, good on you, mate," followed by a reassuring pat on the shoulder? Well, the first time I heard an Ozzie say that to me, I had to look again – at what I was wearing, I mean. You see, back home that would be a compliment meaning, what you are wearing "looks good on you" or suits you.

Of course, I wasn't particularly dressed to kill that day. So I presumed that was not what the person meant. It took me a long while to gather that the idea was only to let me know, "Oh, good for you, my mate," or in other words, well done. This month, I decided to share with you some of these amusingly colourfull phrases that people use in everyday talk down under (here in Australia).

For example, if you are a conchy (conscientious) person, you wouldn't chuck a sickie (take the day off from work with the excuse of being sick). In that case, beware of a dobber (tell-tale) who does somebody in (informs on another person). You might also want to stay clear of someone with a stickbykeak (a nosy or inquisitive person) or one who keeps earbashing (nagging with non-stop chatter).

A new washing machine costs big bikkies (is expensive), but you can't help buying one if the old one is cactus (not functioning). Meanwhile, you'd do well to take good care of your chooks (chickens) so they don't end up on your barbie (barbeque) grill! However, don't be surprised to find an instruction on your neighbour's BBQ (or party) invitation asking you to bring a plate. It certainly doesn't mean the hostess is short of crockery! She only wants you to BYO (bring your own) food to make things easier for her and more fun for you.

When a person doesn't like something, you'll hear them say, "That is not my bowl of rice" (instead of not my cup of tea). A veggo (vegetarian) will have her tucker-bag full of veggies (vegetables). The blokes (men) got together for a Buck's night (stag party for the groom on the night before his wedding). Now don't ever make the blue (mistake) of calling someone a bludger (a lazy person who relies on others to do things for them or lend to them). Just as bad if you say, "He doesn't know Christmas from Bourke Street" (meaning, he's a bit slow in the head). He might just tell you to mind your own bizzo (business) and bail out (depart, usually in anger).

Someone who is fair dinkum is true or genuine. You might want to give a bloke a fair go (a fair chance) even if he's got kangaroos loose in the top paddock (intellectually inadequate). A bushie is someone who lives in the Bush or outback (anywhere interior that isn't in the heart of town). And if you're happy as Larry (extremely happy), you could afford to go away with the pixies (daydreaming).

Confused or worried when you are with someone? Out of sheer concern they might ask, "You right, dear?" (meaning, may I help you or do you need anything). If you are invited to Tea at 6 p.m., don't express surprise when they serve you dinner. When it's finally time to leave, they will say Ooroo to bid goodbye. You might as well be polite and say Ta meaning thanks, for the loving meal.

As for me, I'm really beginning to enjoy hearing the unusual slang of Oz land now. Here's hoping you'll feel the same in time to come.

A Visit to the Ballarat Campus

John Crowder
ISA
Melbourne

In May of this year I went to the Ballarat Campus to visit our international students there and answer some visa-related questions they had.

The Ballarat Campus is located just on the outskirts of the City of Ballarat. It has a very homely feel about it and the international students who attend classes there have all enjoyed their time there immensely.

One student, Isumi Kochi, from Japan has already been there for a few years and thoroughly enjoys the quiet, country feel of the campus.

The campus is only a one hour drive from Central Melbourne (just over 100 km away) and is accessible by train.

One of the advantages, I have been told by our international students who study there, is that they get extra PR points for studying in a regional area. Well...that is certainly something worth considering!
Shaken to the Core - China and Burma

May 2008 has gone down in history as a time of tremendous pain and suffering and tragic loss of life.

The world has looked on in horror and disbelief over the past few weeks at the immensity of two natural disasters that have literally shaken a country to the core and blown the other away.

On Friday May 2, Cyclone Nargis hit the Irrawaddy Delta region of Burma (Myanmar) with shocking force. Winds of up to 240 kph tore across the country razing buildings and smashing up streets. Tens of thousands of people have been killed and tens of thousands more are still missing. The scale of the disaster has been compared to the Boxing Day’s Tsunami in 2004.

On Monday May 12, an earthquake measuring 7.9 on the Richter Scale hit Sichuan province in Western China. This is the biggest earthquake to hit China since the Tangshan earthquake in 1976 which killed over 240,000 people. This latest earthquake has killed over 62,000 people and left over 5 million people homeless.

Since that time, the area has been rocked by aftershocks, the latest, which occurred on Sunday May 25, has destroyed a further 70,000 homes and killed at least 2 more people.

The entire ACU community stands alongside our Burmese and Chinese students and mourns their losses with them. I have had many Chinese students writing to me telling me of their feelings about the earthquake and what it is to be so far from home during this time of great national tragedy. These pages are dedicated to expressing these feelings and paying homage to the brave souls who have endured such immense loss.

What has been evident throughout the tragedies is the resilience of the people of these two brave countries. Amidst the stories of death and destruction are miraculous stories of survival and heroism.

A lesson for us all to learn from these tragedies is the insignificance of trivial differences. We can all learn from the strength and fortitude of the Chinese and Burmese people who have stood together and got on with the task of rebuilding their lives and reaching out to others in need.

Let us all make this our goal! Reaching out to the wider community and helping where we can.

Comments from our Chinese Students

12th May 2008. A normal day like usual for all Chinese students, but a day that will never be forgotten. That morning I received a message from my girlfriend who is living in the Northern part of Sichuan province telling me she would go to Chengdu for 3 days holiday. She told me she would not be able to chat with me online as usual during that time. I replied and wished her a nice time and that I was waiting for her return. I didn’t realize that I would spend the saddest time in my life in the following 24 hours after the earthquake! I still remember on that Monday, when I finished my tutorial at 5pm and turned on my computer to search for some news about my country. I suddenly found the news about the earthquake and even worse I found that my girlfriend was right in the epicentre of the quake! At that time I lost all my words and I tried to phone her but the answer was always a cold sound telling me the mobile is not in service. I was so worried about her safety. But fortunately, the next afternoon I was relieved because a message from my girlfriend told me she was safe. She told me that there were still aftershocks happening and the town where she was had been destroyed. I felt so sad when I heard this and I don’t know what I can do to help them. I have contributed half of my weekly salary to Sichuan Province and wish this could be a little bit useful to the people who are living in the disaster.

WANG, Zhiyu.

I just want everyone to know, Chinese people are not afraid of any difficulties! We all will and should stand with our government to face it! Let’s go hand in hand to make the rescue operation smooth.

Lin Huang

As a Chinese, I am extremely sad about the earthquake. All the victims affected by the earthquake should be strong and overcome difficulty with confidence, courage and strength because our party, army and all the people are supporting you.

Liu Yi

I’m a student from China, I was so shocked when I knew the news from internet website. I am still sad and worry about there still thousands of people in the rubble. I think it is a trauma for every Chinese.

Zheng Qiaomin
More Comments from Students

I do not know if I can send this email or not. Just try. I come from China. These days my friends told me lots of news about the earthquake in China. When one of my friends was working at a hospital, one of the patients shouted “earthquake!” All the patients went out of the building as quickly as they could. The patients who needed Q2 therapy did not care about their oxygen marks. They just left their beds and ran out of the building. My friend is working in the hospital as nurse and she told me all the staff stayed there to make sure the patients could get out of the building. The patients run, but the staff could not. My friend told me at that time, her responsibility was to make sure the patients are all safe. They do not think of their own safety at all. That’s our responsibility as a health carer. Many friends applied to go to Sichuan to save more lives. One of my friends who works in the emergency department in the hospital got a reply and he will go there later. Also one of my friends who is a soldier went there on 13/05/08, the day after earthquake. One week later, there is still no message from there. We all worry about him. He will marry his fiancée at the end of this year. We hope he will be fine. I miss him. China is strong. Chinese are stronger than we think. Be strong, be brave. We will overcome this earthquake, overcome everything. Nothing can compromise the Chinese spirit. The earthquake is ruthless, but the Chinese are resilient. One world, one dream. One China, one heart.

Fan Yang

I am one of the Chinese students studying in ACU. I feel so sad every time when I read the news on the internet, especially those devastating pictures of the collapsed schools. I don’t know how other people feel about the tragedy that happened in China, but I do feel it is so so, so terrible. For the students who died in the tragedy with ages varying from elementary school to high school, they were the source of happiness for their families and the hope for China. They haven’t got chance to experience their colourful lives and they are now buried in the collapsed schools with their school bags and books all over their bodies. My friends in Shanghai are trying to become volunteers to be life savers and some went to donate blood to save lives. I love China from deep in my heart and I feel proud that I am living in such a country where people are willing to help each other. Even though I can’t go there to help, I can feel how terrible the earthquake really was. I will join the donation held by Chinese students in the city from next week to help. So I hope people can be aware how bad it was and I really want to help. Finally, thank you for caring. I believe China will get through and they can, anytime.

Olivia Wang

I watch and listen to the news everyday from TV and radio. I also skim the Chinese website to search for any news regarding the earthquake. Every time when I read about the miserable scene, I’m very sad and want to cry. A lot of parents lost their children in this disaster. More than 10 thousand corpses have been buried under the rubble. A number of people are suffering severe injuries. Some teenage students have had limbs amputated. The video shows a school student begging the doctor not to cut off his forearms as he couldn’t hold a pen if they removed his hands.

Pu Ning

Volunteers and other countries.

Fan Yang.

Human beings appear powerless when they are facing natural disasters even if they have developed sophisticated modern medicine. We are doing nursing and are supposed to save life but we can’t do anything now as we are here doing study. However, we will find a way to help our compatriots.

Olivia Wang

Thank you for caring about our Chinese students’ feelings. My name is Fan Yang. At the present, I am feeling really sad about the devastating tragedy that happened in our motherland. Although I come from Shanghai which is quite far from Sichuan, I still felt so heartbroken and can’t help crying when I see all the news and videos about the earthquake. It was so cruel that many innocent kids died during their study in school. Some of them were still holding pens and books when they were dug out by soldiers.

For me, I really didn’t know what should I do now. Maybe just keep praying that more and more people could be rescued from the earthquake and it is really thankful for all the help from Chinese soldiers, volunteers and other countries.

Fan Yang.
On behalf of the staff at the International office and all the International students, I sincerely thank Naomi Wolfe, the coordinator of the Jim-baa-yer Indigenous unit for organizing a "Morning tea" for International students. It was a nice get together and we had the chance to meet a lot of other International students from various countries with different cultural backgrounds.

After the Morning tea I had the opportunity to interview Naomi and would like to share this with our readers.

ISV - “Naomi can you tell us why you wanted to organize this get together?”
Naomi: Often Aboriginal & Torres Strait Islander staff and students experience similar feelings of isolation, disconnection and sometimes prejudice/racism that International students feel. We wanted to make international people feel welcome and to give everyone an opportunity to learn about our cultures. There are many myths about our peoples and we wanted to have a time where we could educate and share our culture as well as learn about other cultures throughout the world. So we thought the best way was to invite you to our place, Jim-baa-yer to get to know you and for you to get to know us.

Firstly we wanted to let people know that there are many Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students from different communities and we all have slightly different cultural ways of doing things. We also all look and sound very different.

We may not look like the stereotypical ‘Aboriginals’ and we wanted to let you know what being an Aboriginal or a Torres Strait Islander person was about – that it was about our history, our culture and our connection to the land, rather than looking a particular way (e.g. dark skin, curly hair etc).

We all had a laugh when one of the ACUcom lecturers thanked an International student because she thought she was Aboriginal. It’s a common thing that affects all students, not just international students.

ISA - “Are you happy with the response on that day?”
Naomi: We were overwhelmed and very happy that so many International students and staff came. We want to thank all of you but especially John Crowder, who followed everyone up and came along as well. I’d also like to thank my admin assistant Kristy Lillyst and the Indigenous students who attended the morning tea.

ISV – “Do you have a plan to organize this event again in future?”
Naomi: We hope to make this an annual event. We’d like to invite you to participate in any of the events run by Jim-baa-yer. We advertise these through emails and flyers on notice boards. We’d love to have your input.

Please feel free to make contact with me if I can give you any information. We encourage you to contact Jim-baa-yer if you are planning on purchasing Aboriginal art because we want you to buy authentic things from Aboriginal artists. That way you are taking home real things not mass produced fakes from elsewhere.

Enjoy your time at ACU. We look forward to sharing more of our cultures with you and hope to learn more about your culture.

ISV - “Thank you very much Naomi for spending time with me to share this information with the International students.”

When talking about cultures I would like to add as an International student, my personal belief is to respect other cultures as you respect yours. I also believe respect each other is the key to lead the life in any society.

Naomi’s contact details are:
Naomi Wolfe (Coordinator)
Jim-baa-yer Indigenous Unit
Ph. 03-9053 3004
Email. n.wolfe@patrick.acu.edu.au
Located at the southern tip of Malaysia, Singapore is a small independent island nation, with a population of 4.6 million people. It was founded and colonized by the British from 1819 to 1942. It was then ruled by the Japanese for 3 years, merged with Malaysia briefly in 1962, and finally became an independent nation called the Republic of Singapore, on 9th of August 1965.

Home to 3 main official ethnic groups, the Chinese (76.8%), the Malays (13.9%), Indians (7.9%) and 1.4% of other races, this cultural mix of Singapore can be seen by the various customs and festivals of the different ethnic groups throughout the year. Although everyone on the Island thinks of themselves as Singaporeans, regardless of race or culture, every ethnic group still bears its own unique character. Each racial group has its own distinctive religion and there are colourful festivals of special significance all year round. Although the festivals are special to certain races, it is nonetheless enjoyed by all.

Celebrations start with Chinese New Year, which usually falls early in the year. It is a celebration for all Chinese, regardless of religion, and in Singapore, it is a 2 day celebration for everyone. The days leading up to Chinese New Year are busy and shops especially in Chinatown are crowded with people doing their last minute shopping before the New Year. With vibrant lion dances all throughout the country, large family reunions where everyone wears an item of red clothing (a lucky colour for the Chinese), the collection of Hong Bao (red packets containing money), and lots of delicious food, it is not only a celebration enjoyed by the Chinese, the 2 days of holiday are celebrated by the Malays and Indians too!

Hari Raya Haji and Hari Raya Puasa are 2 official holidays allocated for the Malays, who are almost always Muslim. The end of the fasting month of Ramadan is celebrated by Hari Raya Puasa while Hari Raya Haji, is the day where Muslims go on a spiritual journey to Mecca. These 2 holy days are big celebrations for the Muslims. ‘Malay Village’ in Singapore is a small area of the country, which is decorated and brightly lit with Hari Raya decorations in green (the colour of Islam). During the month of Ramadan, food stalls are set up along Malay Village for individuals who fasted for the day, to break their fast with a wide range of food. Many home made cookies are also sold to people to purchase and distribute to family and friends on the day of Hari Raya Puasa. These 2 days are celebrated by all Muslims donning their traditional clothes, the Baju Kurong or Baju Kebaya by women, and the Baju Melayu by men. Young children are given green packets with money for Hari Raya, a tradition adopted from the Chinese. It is a very common sight in Singapore to see large Malay/ Muslim families clad in their traditional clothes, tailored in similar colour schemes.

Indians in Singapore are usually Hindus, although small minorities are Muslim or Christian. Deepavali is the Hindu celebration known as the ‘festival of lights’, and usually falls in October or November every year. This festival is celebrated by all Hindus visiting friends and family, dressed in their traditional clothes, usually a Sari or Punjabi Suit worn by women, Kurta, worn by the men and Paavaadei worn by little girls. The highlight of Deepavali is when all children receive blessings and are given money packets by elderly members of the family. This tradition is unique to Singapore as it was adopted from the Chinese tradition of giving Hong Bao to young children, due to many generations of Indians living in close proximity to the Chinese and Malays.

Given Singapore’s recent history and small size, it is impressive that the people of Singapore have been living harmoniously since independence. With many countries in the world today having problems with people of their own race and culture, they should look at Singapore’s success in multiculturalism and aim to learn to live in harmony with everyone.
My ANZAC Day Skydiving Adventure!

Kunal Mehta
MBA (Accounting)
Melbourne

The word sky diving sends shivers down the spine of most people. Some people think it’s almost crazy to do such a thing, I think that even I fall into that category of which people describe it as crazy.

I went sky diving on 25th April. My two other friends accompanied me. One of my friends decided to come along and watch us sky dive. It takes around 90 minutes from Melbourne to Torquay, the place where sky diving happens. It is near Geelong or more famously near the place where sky diving happens. It takes around 90 minutes from Melbourne to Torquay, the place where sky diving happens. It is near Geelong or more famously near the place where sky diving happens. It is near Geelong or more famously near the place where sky diving happens.

We left in the morning around 8.30 to avoid the early morning traffic due to the Anzac day parade. On reaching there I felt more excited than nervous. In fact, I didn’t feel any nerves at all, may be because I had always wanted to do it. The dive cost $400, but I also opted to get a DVD of my skydive. That cost me an additional $125. The dive is actually in tandem. That means that you are strapped to a professional skydiver. When we got on the small plane, it took us to the height of around 10,000 feet. On reaching that altitude, I was then strapped to the professional skydive.

Then came the inevitable final moment of jumping out of the plane! You may be thinking that this would have made me nervous, but I still didn’t feel any nervousness. It was just an adrenaline rush, and the jump out of the plane was just so amazing. We were in free-fall for around 40 seconds, but those 40 seconds were just so beautiful! Everything looked so scenic from the sky. Now I know how the birds feel when they fly so high.

Then my parachute opened. This made my fall really slow compared to the free-fall. But I was still enjoying it and I was even allowed to manoeuvre my parachute.

After around 4 minutes I safely landed on the landing area and not on any electric poles or trees!! (just kidding). These parachutes are also pretty safe, so in the worst case scenario, if the manual parachute does not open, then there is another parachute, which automatically opens after a specific time frame thus ensuring that the safety of the skydivers is taken care of.

Featured Student: Luis Garcia - Mexico

Nicole Badry
Exchange
Strathfield

Sitting cross-legged on one of the three beds in his room, Luis Garcia looks comfortable. He’s finally back at the place where he started living when he arrived in Sydney from Mexico in February. Four months and four moves later, he shares a bit of his Australian exchange story.

“It’s been kinda rocky… it’s been hard,” he starts out. “I’ve struggled a lot here in everyday life.”

Garcia says his major difficulties were accommodation issues. After finding a flat in Bondi, Garcia left the lodge where he’d been renting. It was only a matter of weeks until he was looking for another place to live.

“The place was disgusting,” Garcia recounts. “The owner who was also a flat mate, threw parties and then would leave the mess for others to clean up. Garcia shared a bunk bed with a female stripper and there was a total mess of bottles, drugs, weed, cocaine, and everything around.”

Garcia soon decided that he needed to move out. When he tried to give the owner a few days notice that he was leaving because conditions had not been met, the owner refused to pay back the bond. Instead, he tried to get Garcia to clean up a mess that was not his own and even asked him to move around furniture and put a new rug in. “I was like ‘No way am I gonna do that stuff!’ It wasn’t fair.”

Garcia went to the police for help, but says they told him there was nothing they could do because there was nothing written down. “It was his word against mine,” explains Garcia who now strongly recommends all students ensure they have a written agreement with their landlords.

As if his accommodations were not enough, Garcia nearly had to depart early because of deportation. Three months after studies commenced, Garcia decided to check his ACU email. “One day I was just missing around and I was wondering ‘Oh, what could I find on the school’s email?’ When I got in I found I had four or five emails with a very serious warning that I might lose my visa because I had not registered my address.” Garcia quickly resolved the issue after some assistance through more emails.

Garcia Adams he withholds information from his parents for fear they will worry about him. “I try not to tell them about all the bad stuff,” said Garcia. “I try to tell them about the good stuff… they don’t know much of the stuff that has gone on here.” And it’s cost him a lot. The price of one banana in Australia could buy him a whole kilogram in Mexico. He estimates he spent around $10,000.00 on his exchange experience so far. The lifestyle and basic living is more expensive than he is used to, so Garcia says he is now “more thoughtful” about how he spends his money.

The best part of this whole experience has been the people he has met. Garcia says he always had a desire to come to Australia. “When you go on an exchange you want to meet local people and know about the true lifestyle of local people.”

And though he is a bit disappointed that he never got to do all he had planned, he says he has grown and learned a lot. “I learned to be more selective or careful when dealing with people,” he said. “Otherwise, other people are going to take advantage of you.”

Being in Australia has also helped Garcia appreciate and realize many beautiful places in and around Mexico.
Taiji Quan (Taichi)

Taiji Quan translates as "supreme ultimate fist" or "boundless fist," or "great extremes boxing". The concept of the "supreme ultimate" in both Taoist and Confucian philosophy represents the fusion of Yin and Yang into a single ultimate.

In Chinese traditional philosophy, everything has two aspects: One is ying (black - negative), while the other one is yang (white - positive). They are together and can not be separated. For example, winter is ying and spring is yang, which represent the seasons of one year. They are together and if there is no winter, there is also no spring. After explaining this, we go back to discuss this philosophy relating to taiji quan. Taiji quan means the balance of the ying and yang. You feel like you are drawing a circle just like the shape of a taijitu, when you are doing a taijiquan.

When we have some basic knowledge about taiji quan, some benefits for our health will be seen. Most taiji quan is typified by exceedingly slow movement which is called "moving meditation". It can make you focus your mind solely on movement resulting in mental relaxation and stress relief. Also, it can increase internal circulation, such as breathing, blood flow and in the lumph nodes because this movement is slow, gentle and measurable. Moreover, studies have shown that pain, stress and anxiety may be reduced if you practise taiji quan.

Finally, I want to remind you that you need loose, comfortable clothing and flat-soled shoes to do taiji quan. Also, it is important that you take your time when practicing Taiji and not rush it.

Being an International Student

Park Sejin
Diploma of Nursing
Brisbane

I have interviewed one of my classmates, Gayetri, about being an international student. Actually she is bit different from the other students because she is living with her family here. However I found that she has similar opinions to other overseas students and we had terrific time during this interview.

ISV - How long have you been staying in Australia and what made you to come to Australia?

I have stayed in Australia for about 8 months and the reason I came here is that Australia is the country of opportunities. Actually my whole family is also here and we have all thought that we can have a better quality of life in Australia. Indeed, I’m having a better lifestyle in Australia.

ISV – Are there any benefits of being an international student?

Yes, there are a lot of beneficial things but the biggest one is that I can have a broader opportunity to face different cultures. I have friends from many countries and I have learnt many things which are different from my own culture. This, I feel is the greatest benefit of being an international student.

ISV - Have you had any experiences of discrimination? How did you deal with that problem?

Unfortunately yes, I have no idea if she was Australian or not though. It occurred when I was at Mc Donalds. That lady was talking about my colour with her friends and I felt really upset. I tried not to listen to their conversation and ignored that kind of people. I have been thinking that people who judge others by skin colour are uneducated, so I do not mind it anymore.

ISV - What are some difficulties of being an international student?

Actually, in my case I have my family here so I do not have the problem of missing them, but I do miss the people in my country. Because of the fact that I am an international student, mostly I have temporary friends here. Even if I could make a best friend from another country, it does not mean that I can stay with them forever which is different from my friends in my country.

ISV - What do you think about Australia? Is there huge cultural gap between your country and Australia?

I have been thinking that Australia is such a fantastic country and this opinion has not changed yet. However, the cultural differences are an unavoidable matter to consider. I have come from a Hindu cultural background and Australia has a Christian cultural background and the two are extremely different from each other. I had a huge culture shock when I arrived here first time but, now I am completely over it.

ISV - What do you think about having a relationship with different nationality?

To be honest, I have never had a relationship with someone of a different nationality; however I would like to have one someday. Like I said, I have a huge interest in different cultures and if I have a boyfriend from another country, that might be a good opportunity to learn about a different culture.

ISV – Would you recommend your friends to study overseas?

Yes, I strongly recommend it! This opportunity that I have now is such a fantastic thing in my life time. The education system is better here and the chance to open your eyes and learn about a truly multicultural society should not be missed!

ISV - Do you have any comments which would help international students?

I believe that studying in another country is not an easy decision to make; however, we have already chosen to study in Australia. As we have already made this decision, we must try our best to get the most out of it. Every overseas student has a hard time and goes through difficult periods that makes them feel upset, however, if we consider where we might be in the future, it will help us all to keep trying.

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Domestic violence is on the rise and seems particularly prevalent amongst certain groups of international students. This may be due to the fact that different cultures view domestic violence differently. Many cultures still believe that “what happens in the home, stays in the home” and is no one else’s business. This is not the case in Australia and the law here provides protection for victims of domestic violence.

If you are a victim of domestic violence, you need to be aware of your rights and how those rights fit in with the rights of others because there is a wide range of legal rights and obligations that are part of living in society.

Domestic violence and child abuse cannot be tolerated under any circumstances. There are many different causes of domestic violence, including alcohol abuse and poverty, which are the most common causes of family violence in Australia.

Domestic violence has no boundaries as it can happen within any age group, any profession, between boyfriends and girlfriends, in all suburbs and all family types. Domestic violence needs not be physical; it can be verbal, financial, psychological and emotional or sexual assault or threats to a spouse or children.

The Victorian Parliament enacted the Crimes (Family Violence) Act 1987 to provide for intervention orders in cases of family violence and this intervention order may be brought by a member of the police force, yourself or the aggrieved person or any other person with the consent of the aggrieved member or with leave of the Court. Each state has its own equivalent Act to cover such crimes.

An intervention order takes the form of any restriction or prohibition that appears necessary or desirable in the circumstances as to future behaviour, access to the person’s home or workplace etc. The duration of the order is specified by the Court. This order may be varied, revoked or extended upon application to the Court while the order is still in force. If there is a breach of an intervention order, the defendant is guilty of a first offence and liable to a penalty and/or two years imprisonment. A member of the police may arrest and detain a defendant who he reasonably believes to be in breach of an intervention order. Basically, an intervention order can be taken out against the person who is abusing you in a relationship. You must be assured that you have the full support of the law in cases of domestic violence and you should NOT just sit back and accept this kind of treatment.

If you are involved in a domestic violence issue, you should seek legal assistance immediately. You can visit a Family Relationship Centre in your State or other services including the Family Relationship Advice Line (1800 050 321 or www.familyrelationships.gov.au). Your International Student Advisor or Counselor in particular, may assist you in seeking legal advice from a private lawyer, Legal Aid or a Community Legal Centre. As a last option, you can see a duty lawyer at Court on the day. But don’t wait until the last minute! Of course this information is not a substitute for proper legal advice, which can be obtained from a lawyer, community legal centres and legal aid.

Please see the following list of websites for free legal advice in your state.

Legal Aid in your State
www.legalaid.nsw.gov.au
www.legalaid.vic.gov.au
www.legalaid.qld.gov.au

Free Community Legal Centres
(Find one in your state)
www.naclc.org.au