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FAST-TRACK WAUF \nORIENTATION \nWHERE ARE THEY NOW?

POSTCARDS FROM PERTH \nAND MUCH MORE...

Celebrating our 20th Year of International Education

SEPTEMBER 2006
From the Principal’s Desk

This is a relatively quiet time in the year for the College as most of the College’s programs are operating. Except for the international students commencing the 15-week Bridging program in October, all other international students have their heads down working solidly. This is particularly true for those international students studying in WAUPP or TEE programs. Their final examinations are just over two months away. The Semester 1 results indicated that the majority of the international students can look forward to achieving results that will allow them to enter their chosen university program in 2007. A few under-performing students have been assisted to improve their work habits and attitude. Hopefully this will get them back onto the road to success.

The College hosted an Education Expo in late August. The Western Australian universities and TAFE colleges were each represented at the Expo and were able to advise students about what they can expect regarding their chosen courses and university life. This provided an excellent opportunity for students to do some research before applying to the universities later in the year.

About thirty students commenced the 18-week Bridging program in July, and all seem to have settled in well. The small group of Fast-Track students, who commenced in June, are progressing well and their performance in class augers well for the group achieving excellent results.

The staff in the International Student Office (ISO) has settled into their new offices in the extended and refurbished Student Service Office. The redeveloped Centre is really comfortable and student friendly. The ISO is providing students with even better services now, which is hard to believe given the comprehensive and enthusiastic support the staff have always given to the international students.

As I indicated before, the College year is just rolling along effectively and happily at this time of the year as all students, including the international students, prepare for their final examination, graduation and a happy return to their families during December.

John Anderton
Principal

Scholarship Presentation

In earlier years the scholarships were presented at an off-campus venue, however more recently it was decided to celebrate the remarkable achievements of the winners at the colleges where they were studying. Therefore, in 2005 the ceremony was held at Tuart College – and so in 2006, it was Canning College’s turn to host the presentation.

On Wednesday 17 May, Tuart College’s nine scholarship recipients were escorted by the Principal, John Anderton, and ISO Manager, David Hulls, to Canning College where they joined the other scholarship winners. To begin with, photos were taken. Then the Guest of Honour, Ms Norma Jeffery, the Executive Director Policy, Planning and Accountability for the Western Australian Department of Education & Training, spoke to the group before presenting each of the students with their certificates to commemorate their scholarship. More photos were taken and then a light afternoon tea was served to complete the afternoon.

The students have since been given photos of themselves with the Guest of Honour and also of their College group. All smiled beautifully all afternoon – and have happy memories of their outing.
In 1997 the Tertiary Institutions Service Centre (TISC) approved the establishment of a Fast-Track WAUFP that would begin in late July and conclude in early December and allow students to gain an Australian qualification for university entrance at the same standard as the qualification gained from the full year WAUFP. It was intended for students who had completed their secondary education overseas with better than average results. In 1999, nine students became the first ‘Fast-Trackers’ at Tuart College. The following year twenty-seven students enrolled, as greater flexibility was given to the College with regards to selecting students suitable for the program. Since then, even though the number of students has varied from year to year, the program itself has been a highly successful one. The greater percentage of students go on to study their preferred course at their chosen university.

This year the Fast-Track Program has been made longer because of changes required by DIMIA. Thus the students arrived in Perth in the early part of June for their Orientation and began classes on Monday 12 June.

Seven students, including two brothers whose parents were also able to join us, attended the orientation. Apart from completing the standard tasks of learning about the program, enrolling in their chosen subjects and opening bank accounts, the group also did some ‘out of College’ things. For example, they had dinner with two of last year’s Fast-Trackers and their ELACS teacher, shopped at Karrinyup Shopping Centre which was especially helpful for the four students who were moving to Tuart Mews after orientation, had a farm experience at Tumbulgum which included feeding kangaroos and taking a hay ride, and went to dinner at a local Vietnamese restaurant. Unfortunately, the other two members of this year’s Fast-Track class were not able to arrive in Perth in time for orientation.

Despite arriving at different times, each student has quickly found a niche that has allowed them to feel supported and encouraged by others in the group – just like all other ‘Fast-Trackers’ before them. All have settled in well to College life and are responding positively to the challenges of living in a new city.

To participate in Fast-Track is always a very special experience, both for the students and the staff. Because the group spends such a lot of time together, close and lasting friendships are often formed. It is definitely a program that achieves results!
As well as the Fast-Track Orientation held in June, another orientation was held in July for the new 18-Week Bridging students. Most of the latter group had already done some English language studies in Perth and were ready to begin an academic program at Tuart. A few had come straight from their home countries, such as Indonesia and Zimbabwe, where their English had already been developed to a reasonable level. The new arrivals included two sisters from East Malaysia. They have joined their cousin who is already a Tuart student. Most of the 18-Week group will be studying the WAUPP in 2007.

During the orientation the students divided their time between the College, some of Perth’s tourist attractions and their accommodation at the Hotel Grand Chancellor. At College, they not only learned important details about what their education would involve, but also met the Recreation Officer and played some badminton and basketball and enjoyed some of the delicious food prepared in the refectory, including a wonderful barbecue lunch.

At the hotel one evening, two current, successful Tuart students joined the new group for dinner and later shared some of their experiences to assist the new students adjust to this new phase of their lives.

Despite some heavy rain one afternoon, the students visited Tumbulgum Farm, where they willingly participated in the ‘farm show’ activities such as swinging the billy, cracking the stock-whip, milking the cow and feeding the lambs. This outing was also a highlight of the Fast-Track Orientation. On the last day of the orientation, the 18-Week group went to Cottesloe Beach for a morning tea stop on their way to Fremantle. A few students decided to have cake and coffee at a café and were very impressed with the size – and taste – of the cakes they chose. Others waited until they were in Fremantle before having a traditional fish and chip lunch at Ciccerello’s.

All in all, both orientations proved yet again how valuable it is to be a part of the introduction to Tuart College before commencing classes.
Keeping in Touch

A number of the students who choose to study at university in Perth (or even interstate) after graduating from Tuart College like to return to the College to catch up with their lecturers and the ISO staff. Some even meet past lecturers for a meal. In July, Sandy Taylor had lunch with Matt, Fay & Danni whom she taught in 2003 and who are all doing Commerce at UWA. Recently, College and ISO staff were visited by Su Ling, who is now studying in Tasmania, and Joanne who is at UWA. They were both students here in 2004. William (UWA) and Budi (Curtin), who graduated from Tuart last year, also dropped in on another afternoon. It's always wonderful for us to be visited and to hear what the students are now doing.
Patrick Tan

Patrick arrived in Perth in December 1989 for an intensive English course at Tuart College before starting Year 12 in 1990.

He says, “It was an exciting time in my life as it was the first time I’d left home by myself, and the first time I’d made my own decisions for my life. To be honest, I quite resented living in Australia because everything was so different from Kuching - my hometown. I could not wait to go home. 1990 was, metaphorically, the longest year in my life. Having said that, Tuart College helped me find the perfect home-stay, which gave me the environment to fully concentrate on my study.

“Tuart College also provided me with the space to fully express myself in my study. I got to do very well in my Tertiary Entrance Examination (TEE) and as a result, was accepted by the University of Western Australia into the Commerce Faculty with a scholarship from AIDAB.

“The atmosphere at Tuart College was friendly, open, cohesive and caring. I formed great relationships with my lecturers – even attending the wedding of my English teacher at St Mary’s Cathedral in Perth. I dearly missed such close relationships when I went to university. Tuart was also the place where I was introduced to the Australian way of living. Having the support of the extraordinary staff in the ISO made that transition so much easier.

“I had time to do many wonderful things during my time studying at Tuart, including go to different places in Perth with my home-stay family. I also had the chance to meet their Australian friends.

“I believe Tuart College is the ideal ‘transitional’ education institution for overseas students who would like to further their studies in Australia. Surrounded by quiet residential suburbs and a busy shopping centre nearby, it gives students a very homely environment to help them concentrate on their studies and lay the foundation for their future tertiary education.”

Since his Tuart College days and his time at UWA, Patrick has become a permanent resident. He married and has children, and now is concerned with Business Development at Blue Travel Pty Ltd. During the July Orientation he was involved in presenting an interesting information session with the new students entitled ‘Calling Australia Home’. It was very successful and it was also wonderful to have Patrick return to Tuart to share his expertise with new international students.

Rajat Hans

Rajat came to Tuart from Kenya and studied the Western Australian Universities’ Foundation Program in 2002. He lived at Tuart Mews and enjoyed his year both academically and socially. He studied ELACS, Applicable Mathematics, Chemistry and Human Biology and was successful in gaining entry to Murdoch University. This is how Rajat describes his Tuart experience.

“Studying the Foundation course at Tuart College was an extremely good and valuable experience for me. The staff at the College were exceptionally helpful and caring, which made everything a lot easier. By the end of the year I had learnt more than enough about living in Australia and how to deal with stresses that most students encounter. As I am interested in a research-oriented career, I chose to do a double major in Molecular Biology and Biomedical Science at Murdoch University. At the moment I am doing Honours in Biotechnology and hopefully I can start my PhD next year.

“I find living in Perth is somewhere in between fast paced and laid back, which gives one enough time to work and still carry out leisure activities.

“My advice to the international students would be to take the opportunity to learn about other cultures and communicate well with the staff at the College. Tuart College helped me develop plenty of academic and social skills and it also left a long-lasting and good impression.”
A Word from David

One very positive part of working in the International Student Office is our work with agents. Not only do we get to meet lots of ‘nice’ people with many becoming our friends, but in a real way, we share a genuine concern for the welfare of students – our clients.

Having just returned from a rather exhausting trip through China and on to Hong Kong, I am very mindful of our roles and responsibilities. Tuart deals with a number of agents throughout the world. Some agencies are large organisations and some are rather small operations. In either case, the ISO at Tuart seeks to work closely with all agents to ensure that we can tailor our programs to suit the needs of the individual student.

This was very true in Hong Kong. I am always amazed when I am told that only 19% of students can actually go on to university. At present, this fact means that 67% of students who finish Form 5 need to find an alternative pathway to continue their education.

Agents are crucial in matching students to programs. A large part of my time in Hong Kong was spent in agents’ offices and at exhibitions with agents talking to students and their parents. In many cases, my time was spent not just explaining what the options were but why one option was the better option given the student’s individual circumstances.

One key benefit of selecting Tuart College is the fact that the people who do the overseas marketing are also the people who run the College on a day-to-day basis. If a problem should arise after a student arrives, I am likely to be the person who will deal with it. That can be very reassuring for a parent. We also know that student problems may sometimes involve the cooperation of the parents and the agent. Our rapport with our agents can be an essential ingredient to successfully assisting students who encounter difficulties.

In China, the situation provides a different explanation for the motivation of looking for educational opportunities. The ‘One Child Policy’ has resulted in the child’s educational future being the number one priority for a family -- and often for the extended family. Our work with the family (either here or there) is to meet the family to discuss their child’s progress and to assist their deliberations. We see this as part of delivering a quality service.

While we work in an endeavour to assist families, we realise ultimately the agent also plays a critical role in shaping the student’s decision. Our agent visits allow us to provide up-to-date information to counsellors, meet new staff and obtain briefings about the market situation or other agency matters.

So, let me say a thank you to all our agents. We couldn’t do what we do well without your on-going support. Naturally, we always welcome your input and ideas as to how we can better serve our clientele and to enhance our cooperative efforts. Rest assured you will always receive a warm welcome here at Tuart.

David Hults
Manager, ISO

Friends Bearing Gifts

Earlier in the year, Tuart College was visited by a group of Market Management Services (MMS) agents. Even though most of the group had been to Perth many times before, they still enjoyed spending time with the ISO staff and seeing our new offices, and also seeing a few other features of the College and its environs that had not been highlighted at other times. Something different was a visit to the local shopping centre where many of our students shop. This allowed the agents to see first hand the variety of stores and services available, the quality and the prices of the produce, and the pleasant surroundings of the centre.

We also went to the home of one of our local homestay providers, whose home is very close to the College. Currently two girls from China live in the homestay and they are both very happy there. The agents were impressed by the comfortable atmosphere of the home and by Margaret’s warm and open manner with them.

Another highlight was a visit to an ELACS classroom where Jacki Caldwell was using one of the College’s new interactive whiteboards with her class. The agents were able to talk briefly to the students and get an idea of how they view their studies in the College.

Tuart Mews was also visited. One of the students who is living at Tuart Mews, Tey Nian Chee, invited us in to see her home. She was also able to catch up with her agent, Vivian, who helped her with her application to Tuart. Nian Chee and Elizabeth Ma, another East Malaysian and Tuart Mews’ resident, later joined the agents, Tuart College’s Principal, John Anderton, and the ISO staff for morning tea in the refectory.

Tan Soh Har, Executive Director of MMS, presented John Anderton with a beautiful painting by Ramsay Ong Liang Thong A.B.S., a renowned Sarawak artist. It has been framed and will hang in the new ISO entrance as a colourful reminder of a very pleasant and successful visit that will hopefully result in the agents being even more informed when they speak to parents and students who are considering Tuart College as an educational destination.
Introducing Ann

Ann Bignell is the longest serving member of the ISO staff. She is our Student Registration Officer – though that title does not suggest half of what she does.

Ann assists the students in all manner of ways. She is the face they see when they step into the ISO area and is the first person to answer their questions. At times she will direct them to the person they need to speak to, though often she will be the one they’ve come to see. Sometimes they need help with their visas, their medical cover or getting a letter so that a parent can come and visit them in Australia. At other times, they may wish to see a doctor or find their way to a destination in Perth they’ve not been to before – or sometimes they want an idea for what they can cook for dinner. Ann always has an answer for them.

The students remember her long after they have left Tuart College. When they come back to visit they always want a photo taken with Ann – and if she’s not at work when they visit, they are most disappointed and insist that she be told that they miss her. She is one of those rare people that once you have met her, you will not forget her – and hence she is a significant member of the ISO team.