

CHAPTER SIX

THE FUNCTIONS OF TAFE WA IN DEALING WITH OVERSEAS STUDENTS

Introduction

Chapter Six provided an analysis of the background to overseas students who have studied in TAFE institutions in Western Australia (TAFE WA). The students were either ‘sponsored’ or ‘private’ students, with these classifications being based on the manner in which the costs of their tuition and living expenses were paid. In the mid-1980s, however, the Western Australian State Government gave full support to the Commonwealth Government’s proposal, led by Federal Education Minister Dawkins, that there be only one category of overseas students, namely, those who paid the full cost of their tuition. The Dawkins’ proposal saw new structures emerge in TAFE WA, devised to manage the influx of overseas students who came to study in its institutions not long after the new measures took effect.

This chapter now provides an analysis of the contemporary functions of TAFE WA in providing for overseas students. It is in three parts. The first part describes the functions performed within the organisational structure that has been established to provide for overseas students in TAFE WA. The next part of the chapter analyses the functions performed by TAFE WA personnel within the new structure. The chapter concludes with a set of propositions aimed at informing future policy with regard to providing for overseas students in TAFE WA, with particular reference to overseas students.

The Organisational Structure for Providing For Overseas Students in TAFE WA

The organisational structure that has emerged in TAFE WA since 1985 for providing for overseas students involves the Minister for Training, the Western Australian Department of Training (WADOT), TAFE International Western Australia (TIWA), and individual colleges in the TAFE WA network. Individually and collectively since 1987, these government entities have established many functions aimed at maximising overseas students' educational experiences in Western Australian. These functions have been refined and enhanced over the years, to the point where they now form an integral part of the overall structure and operations of TAFE WA institutions and the work of many TAFE WA personnel.

Since 1987, the 'international activities' that have formed a significant aspect of the operations of TAFE WA fall into two broad categories. One of these is recruiting overseas students to undertake conventional, long-term award courses as well as English Language Intensive Courses for Overseas Students (ELICOS) in TAFE colleges in Western Australia. The second category is to obtain commercial projects under contract with international business clients to deliver specially designed education and training programs to overseas students, either in TAFE colleges in Western Australia or in locations overseas. These international business clients might include private or foreign government enterprises, other training organisations, Australian firms who specialise in obtaining and managing overseas education and training projects, and multilateral aid funding agencies such as AusAid, the Asian Development Bank, the World Bank and various agencies of the United Nations. While these two broad types of international activities have been identified and

pursued by the TAFE WA network of institutions since 1987, by the end of the 1990s there still remained a need for a clear stipulation of the relationship between TIWA and the colleges in seeking to generate increased enrolments of overseas students in technical and vocational education and training in TAFE WA.

This chapter now goes on to describe the functions of TAFE WA which were instituted to provide for overseas students. These functions are set out under two sub-headings, namely, 'Description of the Functions of TIWA' and 'Description of the Functions of Individual TAFE WA Colleges'. It is necessary here to briefly explain why these headings were chosen. The term 'TAFE WA' refers to a network of State government agencies and institutions. One of these is WADOT, the umbrella government department responsible for all technical and vocational education and training in Western Australia, whether provided by government or private-sector organisations. WADOT has delegated responsibility for that part of technical and vocational education and training provided by the government-controlled TAFE WA colleges to a government entity especially formed for that purpose, TIWA. TIWA does not have a teaching role. However, on behalf of WADOT, TIWA has full authority to develop policy, as well as direct, influence and monitor the work of colleges in regard to providing for the educational experience of overseas students. TAFE WA colleges have the responsibility for providing for the teaching and learning environment for overseas students. Accordingly, in order to describe the functions of TAFE WA as an educational system or network, it is appropriate to describe separately the functions performed by two discrete entities, namely, TIWA and the TAFE WA colleges as a single group.

Description of the Functions of TIWA

In regard to negotiating and arranging education and training under the student recruitment program, and as part of individual commercial contracts, Western Australian Government policy is that TIWA has the sole responsibility for representing the collective and specialised interests of individual colleges in the TAFE WA system. This responsibility is established within the terms of the Western Australian Vocational Education and Training Act (1996) (Western Australian Parliament, 1996), the principal legislation that enables overseas students to study in the State's TAFE institutions. Under Section 8 (d) of the Act, the Minister for Training has as a function “ to enter into commercial activities both within Australia and overseas, to generate revenue for, and otherwise benefit, the State training system.” Further, under section 9 (2)(1) of the Act, the Minister has the power to “enter into contracts and arrangements with overseas organisations for the provision of vocational education and training and related services.” Clearly, the intent of the legislation is that international operations, including the recruitment of overseas students, be co-ordinated by a centralised approach through the Ministry.

The Minister for Training has established TIWA as the vehicle for carrying out his role. The colleges themselves are not empowered to make direct representations overseas, either directly or indirectly. However, while TIWA is responsible for negotiating on behalf of TAFE WA colleges in pursuing overseas work, it is expected to involve the relevant colleges in such negotiations.

Specifically, the functions of TIWA are:

1. To make arrangements for and facilitate the provision of vocational education and training and related services either directly or through any agency to overseas students in or outside the State and to persons or organisations outside the State in conjunction with a college or otherwise;
2. To participate in initiatives involving the whole of the State training system and to collaborate with colleges and educational institutions to ensure the greatest effectiveness and economy in expenditure and the most beneficial relationship between the institution and colleges and educational institutions throughout the State;
3. To co-ordinate or arrange for the provision of vocational education and training by the use of any technology that may be available for the purpose;
4. To enter into arrangements for the development of curriculum and related materials and services for the purposes of vocational education and training under the Act; and
5. To publish or arrange for the publication of works for, or on behalf of, the State training system.

In order to assist this work of TIWA, the Minister for Training, under Section 57 of the enabling legislation (Western Australian Parliament, 1996), has made a series of Administrative Orders relating to TAFE WA's work in recruiting overseas students. These Orders are: Vocational Education and Training (TAFE International WA) Order 1997; Public Training Providers Guidelines (No.2) 1997; and, Colleges (Additional Functions) Order 1997. In conjunction with these Orders, TIWA has also developed a set of Operating Procedures for Overseas Markets.¹

¹ Source: Minutes of the Inaugural Board Meeting of TAFE International Advisory Board, 4.6.1977.

An Advisory Board oversees the operations of TIWA and confers with the Department of Training on matters of policy, strategic direction and marketing. The Chief Executive of the Department of Training is the chairperson of the Board, whose other members are representatives of the managing directors of TAFE WA colleges, the Managing Director of TIWA, and industry and business delegates with wide experience in target markets in South East Asia.

TIWA competes in the marketplace through an established network of overseas agents and through its own marketing and sales efforts. This involves assessing the overseas student market, choosing those overseas countries where the marketing and recruitment effort will be carried out, selecting and monitoring local recruitment agents in those countries, and recruiting overseas students. Another source of overseas student recruitment comes from inquiries made by visitors to TAFE WA representatives who attend trade fairs in selected countries. At these fairs, prospective students are interviewed and given advice about studying in the TAFE network of colleges in Western Australia. After a student has decided to enrol in TAFE WA, and an offer of a place to study in one of its colleges is made, two essential functions are required of TIWA. These are to recommend that a visa be issued through the immigration authorities and to ensure that a student purchases appropriate health insurance. TIWA has the overall responsibility for receipt of the enrolment application, registration of the student, advice about arrangements for payment of fees, allocation of the student to a college, and overall administration of the student welfare system. Another practice that TIWA carries out in this first phase of placing a student in a TAFE WA college is an assessment of the English language level of the student. This includes deciding whether, and how much, additional pre-course

English language training is required to ensure that students will be able to cope with their studies.

TIWA is headed by a Managing Director, who holds a senior executive position in the State Public Service. This signifies the importance attached to international activities (of which the overseas student program is a major part), of the suite of technical and vocational education and training activities available through TAFE WA. The Managing Director is responsible for the strategic planning and overall development of TIWA, and for co-ordinating its financial and human resources. The position is supported by two Assistant Directors, one of whom is charged with managing the overseas student program. Again, these Assistant Directors occupy senior public service positions, in keeping with the significance of the duties to be carried out. Also, an Overseas Student Adviser is available to assist students who have problems with their studies, with living in Western Australia, or who have other personal difficulties. The Overseas Student Adviser is also able to assist students who wish to discuss further study opportunities within TAFE WA or other education sectors.

Where specialised professional counselling rather than general advice and assistance is necessary, TIWA employs an Overseas Student Counsellor, who can be consulted either in the TIWA office or on site at the student's campus. Overseas students are introduced to the Counsellor early in their sojourn in TAFE WA because he or she organises an orientation program for each new intake of overseas students. The program aims to welcome students and familiarise them with the requirements and available support staff to make their entry to and sojourn in TAFE WA smooth. At the orientation session, students are given information on such matters as safety,

transport, health care and college requirements. The remainder of the TIWA team includes the ELICOS Program Co-ordinator, an overseas student liaison officer who deals with general inquiries from students, and a number of administration and finance specialists. With the exception of the Overseas Student Adviser and the ELICOS Programs Co-ordinator, none of these positions in TIWA requires essential qualifications or experience in education for appointment, although such attributes are considered to be highly desirable.

At the TIWA orientation gathering, new overseas students also meet the Overseas Student Co-ordinators, one of whom is located at each of the TAFE WA colleges that overseas students will attend. The Overseas Student Co-ordinator is the person in each college responsible for the overall welfare of overseas students. To provide a high quality service to overseas students, each overseas student co-ordinator works closely with TIWA in the formation of operational guidelines and practices for the administration of overseas students and in overseeing and carrying out the range of activities required to support them during their enrolment in TAFE WA. Accordingly, tasks related to placing overseas students in TAFE WA colleges and advising them along the way have resulted in a division of duties between personnel at TIWA and in the colleges.

Description of the Functions of TAFE WA Colleges

Within the individual colleges of TAFE WA, the arrangement that currently supports the work of each overseas student co-ordinator depends on the size of the college and the number of overseas students enrolled in it. In the largest college in Western Australia, there is an International Centre housed in an attractive dwelling that is a

restored heritage building situated very prominently on the main campus. The overseas student co-ordinator at this college has the title of Manager of the International Centre. This position reports to the senior executive team in the college through the Assistant Director responsible for training services. The Manager of the International Centre is directly responsible for the work of two overseas student advisers who deal with inquiries from students concerning accommodation, health-care, visa requirements, withdrawals from courses, refunds, and student concession cards. They also arrange social and sporting activities for the overseas students and act as 'agents' of other government bodies, such as the Federal Department of Immigration and Ethnic Affairs. These bodies are intent on ensuring that overseas students fulfil the requirements of their student visa by attending classes regularly and returning home at the end of the visa period. Also, some general clerical and administration personnel are located in the International Centre. Although not under the Manager of the International Centre's direct responsibility, each college's counselling staff, who are trained psychologists available to all students, are also accessible to overseas students when relevant professional advice is required. As mentioned earlier, the TIWA-based Overseas Students Counsellor is also available for this purpose and students can choose whom they wish to approach.

In the suburban and country TAFE WA colleges, which have significantly fewer overseas students, the 'international centre' commonly consists of a separate small office for the overseas student co-ordinator, accompanied by a small general meeting area. This space usually contains some lounge chairs, a table and some basic cooking facilities, such as a microwave oven and tea and coffee-making implements. One college also has a prayer room for Muslim students adjoining these facilities. This

room was specially built for this purpose after the overseas student co-ordinator, having perceived the need among Indonesian and Malaysian students in particular, approached the college managing director for a specific allocation of funds for it. Organisation and management of special-purpose facilities for overseas students is in the hands of the overseas student co-ordinator who operates alone, sometimes with part-time clerical assistance.

In colleges with a small number of overseas students, the overseas student co-ordinator performs all of the same types of functions as those carried out by the full team at the central college. In addition, the overseas student co-ordinator at one smaller college organises for students who will attend the college to be met at the airport upon their arrival in Western Australia and to be taken to their accommodation in the local area around the college. This sort of service is, however, not yet an established aspect of the welfare of students in every college. As in the largest TAFE WA college, the overseas student co-ordinator in smaller colleges reports to a member of the college executive board. Also, overseas student co-ordinators need to spread their work time over all the separate campuses of the multi-campus colleges that are the norm in TAFE WA at the end of the 1990s.

The duties managed by the overseas student co-ordinator, who is the 'front line' in the provision of pastoral care and welfare services for overseas students in colleges, can be listed as follows:

1. Arrangement of accommodation, including homestay locations. This includes advertising, interviewing prospective families and placement of students into accommodation.

2. Assistance with health insurance issues, liaison with college staff, TIWA and other organisations as required.
3. Organisation and provision of a college and community orientation program and advice to students of community programs and organisations.
4. Arrangements of new enrolments and transfers to other colleges.
5. Liaison with lecturing staff and TIWA on individual student attendance and progress.
6. Establishment and maintenance of a central college database of all overseas students.
7. Referral of students when necessary to college or TIWA counsellors or to outside agencies as appropriate.²

In colleges, there are two ways by which additional funds become available to provide support specifically for overseas students. The process starts for all colleges when TIWA makes an allocation of funds, being a percentage of the fees it collects from students, on a *per capita* basis to the colleges that the students attend. Then, in some colleges, the overseas student co-ordinator present a regular budget request to the college executive council to fund all support for overseas students, including college orientation, modifications or additions to infrastructure if required, additional academic assistance within teaching departments, and social events. In other colleges, teaching departments receive a fixed amount on a *per capita* basis for each student enrolled. The department must then manage within that allocation the provision of additional academic support and administration activities, such as keeping attendance and progress records, in regard to their overseas students.

² Source: TAFE International Western Australia: 'Pastoral Care Policy Paper'.

Within all colleges, overseas students are attached to academic departments, each headed by a Program Manager, all of whom have won promotion to that position from within the teaching ranks. Some deeper explanation of the role and functions of program managers is required here. Almost all program managers interviewed as part of the research for the study reported in this dissertation were, until their latest appointment, long-standing, full-time TAFE WA teachers whose careers commenced in the 'traditional' period before 1987. Until 1996, when program managers were first appointed, heads of academic departments in TAFE WA were departmental teachers whose standard allotment of weekly teaching hours was slightly reduced to enable them to co-ordinate the small number of routine administrative tasks that needed to be completed in each teaching department. However, since 1996, program manager positions have become completely non-teaching posts as the volume and complexity of the educational administration work required of teachers and teaching departments in modern TAFE WA have increased significantly. Program managers, therefore, have a unique blend of experience in regard to overseas students, both as their teachers up to 1996, and now as educational administrators in charge of teaching departments in which they are enrolled. They are responsible for ensuring that for overseas students, indeed all students in the department, their general welfare is monitored, the correct curriculum is taught, effective teaching practices are used, classes are timetabled efficiently, students' progress through the course is recorded, attendance records are maintained, graduation from the course is confirmed. This means that program managers are uniquely placed to report on the functions and concerns of TAFE WA teachers that arise in providing for overseas students.

In the largest TAFE WA college, program managers appoint academic mentors from amongst their staff. These are nominated teachers who are granted relief from the usual allocation of teaching hours, according to the number of overseas students in the department. This relief period to support the students is usually for a maximum of two hours per week. Academic mentors are intended to support the overall role of the manager of the International Centre, as well as the program manager, by catering for the special academic needs of overseas students. Teachers who accept these positions are expected to act as the first person whom overseas students approach if they require assistance with their studies. Frequently, however, academic mentors find that they take on other, non-academic functions. For example, one Business Studies teacher stated how he had offered to go to the airport to meet the parents of an Indonesian student who flew to Western Australia following a road accident in which their son was severely injured. The teacher then took the parents to visit him in hospital and offered them accommodation. While he was pleased to be able to contribute in this way, he nevertheless acknowledged that the functions he performed were outside what he expected were required of him as an academic mentor. However, at the time he assisted as he did, there seemed to be no other administrative mechanism available to cover the situation.

Academic mentors at the largest TAFE WA college meet formally as a group at least once each semester in a meeting called by the Manager of the International Centre. The purpose of the meeting is to review the mentors' functions and activities, discuss the issues and concerns that have arisen in their work, and plan future strategies to enhance the experience of both overseas students and the staff who provide for them. Funding for the extra duties undertaken by academic mentors in supporting overseas

students is provided by the International Centre out of its budget allocation from the college. As noted earlier, the college's funds for providing for overseas students come from its share of the enrolment fees paid by overseas students, forwarded by TIWA.

In smaller colleges, the system of granting hours of relief from teaching to a teacher so that special academic mentoring can be provided to overseas students is not widely available. Rather, it is considered that the relatively fewer number of overseas students in each teaching department means that the extra tasks associated with their special academic needs can be subsumed within the full spread of duties undertaken by program managers. However, the number and complexity of a program manager's duties have continued to expand in the period from when overseas students began attending TAFE WA until the present time, and especially since 1996 when TAFE WA colleges began to move towards becoming autonomous institutions under the Vocational Education and Training Act, 1996. The fact that responsibility for the academic mentoring of overseas students has been merely 'added on' to the already full-time functions that occupy the already fully-committed time of program managers is a concern. It indicates that the extra functions required to enhance the academic welfare of overseas students in TAFE WA are not considered to be a major part of the work of academic departments, but merely another role to be carried out.

The academic program is most likely to be the strongest focus of an overseas student's sojourn in TAFE WA colleges. Teachers are the largest group of professional people who interact with overseas students in TAFE WA and the functions they perform arguably constitute one of the most relevant areas in the whole

sojourn of overseas students. Consequently, the work of program managers, academic mentors, teachers and other staff in academic positions in TAFE WA colleges is vital to the overall well-being of overseas students. For example, one important function which academic staff sometimes undertake is to negotiate with the managing director's office for the extra resources needed in order to provide additional tuition in specific or general topics for overseas students who require it.

While overseas students are attached primarily to individual academic departments, at two TAFE WA colleges they are also formally attached to an 'international centre'. The idea of forming special centres and institutes similar to how universities have done so over recent years, is a new experience within TAFE WA and it is noteworthy that among the first 'centres' was one for overseas students at one college. The centre is located in a clearly sign-posted, prominent location that serves as a 'hub' on campus for all overseas students. Several TAFE WA personnel reported that this facility, and the formal attachment of overseas students to it, creates a sense of solidarity and belonging for the overseas students and is expected to raise awareness among staff and other students of the special place of overseas students in the colleges' operations.

In all colleges, all traditional college functions are available to, and used by, overseas students. These include the learning resource centre (library), general computer facilities, counsellors, canteen, student services and recreational activities. If necessary, additional funds are often made available to add extra resources to these parts of the college in order to provide for the presence of overseas students. For example, a librarian with special responsibilities for overseas students was added to

the staff of the learning resource centre at the largest TAFE WA college. This position was partly funded by TIWA, and is a good example of a partnership between the college and TIWA to provide in a particular way for overseas students.

The final, formal part of the sojourn of overseas students in TAFE WA involves the issue of statements of academic record, followed by a graduation ceremony. These functions are the responsibility of the individual college that a student attends. However, current arrangements in this regard are such that most students are unable to receive their award in person. For longer-term award courses, the award is usually granted 'in absentia' because the graduation ceremony is generally held in Western Australia several months after the end of the academic year in which the overseas students graduate. By this time, the students have returned to their homes. Occasionally, however, awards are presented at formal functions in the students' home country. For example, two TAFE WA colleges have arranged award ceremonies in Sri Lanka and Malaysia. On the other hand, customised, special-purpose courses usually conclude with an award ceremony before the students leave the TAFE WA system. Also, in all TAFE WA colleges, graduates from ELICOS courses are awarded certificates at ceremonies conducted at the college, often marked by a special event with an international flavour, such as a banquet or presentation of arts with international themes. Arrangements for these graduation ceremonies are organised and paid for by individual colleges.

So far, the official functions of each part of the TAFE WA structure involved in the education and training of overseas students have been described. However, within

this structure, individuals perform and ‘give life’ to the functions. Attention is now turned to analysing the nature of these functions.

An Analysis of the Functions Performed by TAFE WA Personnel

An analysis of the data gathered in the research project being reported here indicated that the functions performed by individuals who work with overseas students in TAFE WA institutions can be classified as ‘ascribed functions’ and ‘achieved functions’. Ascribed functions can be defined as tasks or jobs that have been officially prescribed, as duties that must be performed. They constitute roles or duties that, in modern government bureaucratic organisations, are usually described as ‘essential’ in the ‘job description forms’ to which individuals respond when applying for positions of employment. Achieved functions, on the other hand, can be defined as jobs and tasks that are devised and carried out informally and whose performance is not prescribed as ‘essential’ in a document such as a ‘job description form’. Achieved functions evolve in the course of people working to accomplish an outcome as they modify routines or institute new ones. They might evolve or be developed by those entrusted with a job because the formal ascribed functions nominated for the purpose are found to be inefficient, ineffective, inappropriate or inapplicable. Such new or revised functions may be required to actually complete the outcome, or to do it more efficiently and effectively, or to fulfil it in a more enjoyable, meaningful and interesting way for the person charged with performing the function. However, achieved functions can also arise out of employees’ use of their imagination and creative powers, making fulfilling work for themselves.

The analysis can be taken a stage further by viewing ascribed functions and achieved functions as capable of being performed in three ways, namely, with enthusiasm, in a perfunctory manner, and with resistance. This classification can be illustrated as follows:

The functions of TAFE WA personnel and how they are performed in providing for overseas students who come to study at TAFE WA

HOW PERFORMED	TYPE OF FUNCTION	
	<i>Ascribed</i>	<i>Achieved</i>
<i>With Enthusiasm</i>		
<i>In a Perfunctory Manner</i>		
<i>With Resistance</i>		

Each of these six categories of ways in which TAFE WA personnel perform their functions with regard to the provision of education for overseas students will now be analysed. In doing so, examples will be provided from the interviews conducted during the study, from documents examined and from memoranda prepared. In considering this analysis, however, it needs to be kept in mind that no one individual necessarily fits totally into any one category. Rather, what is being offered here is a heuristic device such that we have a model that allows us to think intelligently about individuals in relation to their functions in TAFE WA with regard to overseas students. Thus, one might be inclined to think of a particular TAFE WA employee as being primarily associated with one of the boxes in the matrix shown above, yet carrying out some functions in a manner that also means that she or he also has some association with some of the other boxes.

(i) The Performance of Ascribed Functions with Enthusiasm

Many ascribed functions involved in providing support services for overseas students in TAFE WA are performed enthusiastically by most personnel. The nature of what is meant by enthusiasm in this regard can be illustrated by an example from the work of those involved in the area of marketing and recruitment. Western Australian government legislation requires that marketing and recruitment of overseas students is centrally managed by TIWA staff. The marketing and recruitment process requires TIWA staff, sometimes supported by college-based academic staff, to gather information about the academic content and capability of colleges to accept overseas students, prepare promotional materials, and give these to overseas students who make inquiries, mainly at trade and educational fairs in overseas countries.

Although preparation of promotional brochures and video films, and attendance at fairs is demanding work, those involved in this aspect of the function approach the task eagerly and willingly. These attitudes arise because of the opportunity the marketing and recruitment function gives to TAFE WA personnel to promote what they consider an important and fulfilling part of their lives, namely the work they do in their colleges. Also, the ability to travel to other countries as a necessary part of their work is an attractive element that draws an enthusiastic response from TAFE WA personnel in carrying out their functions. Moreover, academic staff who have been included in overseas marketing and recruitment initiatives have found the insights gained from first hand interactions with prospective students in their own environment especially beneficial. The Head of a large and popular department with enrolments of more than 140 overseas students a year, expressed the perceived general feeling in this regard, in saying:

Before I went on a marketing trip, I was never sure of what happened before the overseas students arrived, in terms of the academic advice given to them by [TIWA] marketing folk about what was actually involved in our courses. It was good to be able to talk directly to prospective students about the ‘nitty gritty’ of our particular courses.

Given the concerns about marketing that will be raised in the next chapter, the practice of training teachers to act as recruitment and marketing officers, or ensuring that they accompany TIWA personnel in these roles, is one that should be further considered for favourable promotion.

Another notable example of an ascribed function that was performed with enthusiasm was provided by the Canteen Manager at one TAFE WA college. In drawing up an advertisement inviting applications for a new chef for the college canteen, the Canteen Manager inserted as an essential criterion for appointment, “expertise in the preparation of Asian cuisine”. This initiative reflected the positive and progressive strategy to develop an ‘international’ outlook and flavour as an integral part of the operations of that college. The outlook stemmed from the efforts and foresight of the college managing director, who, upon his appointment in 1994, set out to inculcate an international theme within the college and broaden internal thinking about, as he put it, “the way we approach our business around here”.

There are many other examples of personnel at all levels in TAFE WA institutions who perform ascribed functions enthusiastically. These personnel include some managing directors, managers of overseas student centres, overseas student coordinators, program managers, overseas student academic mentors, teachers, ELICOS centre personnel, learning resource centre staff, and student services officers. Most TAFE WA personnel particularly welcome the presence of overseas students as

contributing a new dimension to their work, with the added benefit that it is a component that provides some financial benefits for their institution through allocations from TIWA.

(ii) The Performance of Achieved Functions with Enthusiasm

Many of the functions performed by TAFE WA personnel in providing for overseas students are achieved functions carried out with enthusiasm. A striking example of enthusiastic performance of an achieved function involved a college managing director acting in response to the initial opportunity offered by the decision of the Department of Training to allow colleges to accept overseas students. Having taken up the opportunity, as an initial act designed to set the tone for his college in the acceptance of overseas students, the managing director arranged immediately for a welcoming message in four languages, namely, Indonesian, Vietnamese, Arabic and English, to be displayed at the entrance to the college. This message now constitutes a highly visible sign of the enthusiastic acceptance of overseas students that runs through the college. It is noteworthy that this managing director was unique among his peers because he had many years of broad experience in educational administration in the Asia-Pacific region before taking up his appointment.

Another clear example of an achieved function carried out with enthusiasm was found when examining the range of tasks carried out by individual overseas student co-ordinators in meeting the challenges of their new and emerging duties in regard to providing for overseas students in TAFE WA colleges. The essential and desirable criteria contained in the 'job description form' for appointment as an overseas student co-ordinator are written in broad terms only and do not fully capture the range of

functions performed. In some colleges, a 'job description form' for the overseas student co-ordinator has not been prepared and the job has become essentially what the overseas student co-ordinator has made it. Irrespective of the nature of their problem or inquiry, overseas students seem to turn initially for advice and support to the overseas student co-ordinator. Consequently, they occasionally find themselves treading a line where they function somewhere between a social worker through academic counsellor to substitute parent.

One overseas student co-ordinator reported a case where she was contacted on a weekend by a hospital after her name was given to hospital authorities by an Indonesian student who had been severely injured in a motor cycle accident. The student's parents were on holiday away from Indonesia and were unable to be contacted quickly enough for advice about whether certain medical treatment should be approved. At this time in TAFE WA, there appeared to be no apparent procedure in place to provide for this kind of situation. After resolving the issue through persistent effort to contact the parents over the next few days, the overseas student co-ordinator continued to visit the student in hospital for several weeks and assisted him in his recovery and in relation to his future academic program with advice and practical help.

Providing general assistance to overseas students in matters concerning immigration, taxation, customs, police and other government authorities during their stay in Perth is typical of the achieved role which this and other overseas student co-ordinators have carved out for themselves. This same overseas student co-ordinator also provided help and advice to a married Sri Lankan student, who, having been in TAFE WA for

several months, sought permission to bring his family out to join him. This occurred because earlier, when discussing the length of his proposed course with TIWA personnel in Sri Lanka before leaving for Australia, the student misunderstood that in addition to the eight months of course work in TAFE WA needed to qualify for a certain classification of marine pilot's licence, it would be necessary to complete an internship lasting another four months. Upon learning about the extended stay necessary to complete his qualification, the student wanted to change his visa and bring his family to join him. In order to assist the student to gain the necessary approval from the relevant authorities, the overseas student co-ordinator undertook a range of new functions in the form of preparing explanatory letters and making personal approaches to support the student's case. This extra assistance which was not part of the usual duties contemplated for an overseas student co-ordinator, amounted to an achieved function performed enthusiastically.

Classroom teachers have also taken on achieved functions with an enthusiasm that is self-generated. One English-language support teacher 'sat-in' on a semester course in Commercial Law, part of the TAFE WA Diploma in Business Studies, in order to learn something about the field of study, in particular the special terms and definitions that underpinned the course content. She did so in order to prepare more completely to assist overseas students who often have difficulty in passing assessments in the business law area.

A further example of a teacher performing an achieved function in an enthusiastic manner occurred in a custom-made training program for Indonesian vocational college teachers at a suburban TAFE WA college. As part of the training, one

Indonesian trainee had prepared a large-scale fibreglass model of the hull of a sailing vessel. Unfortunately, the funds provided for the training program could not extend to paying to have the model returned to Indonesia as excess baggage. The TAFE WA teacher arranged through his own contacts in the maritime industry for the model to be transported free to Indonesia where it finally found its way to the trainee-teacher's college in eastern Java.

(iii) The Performance of Ascribed Functions in a Perfunctory Manner

Some ascribed functions that must be fulfilled by TAFE WA personnel in providing for overseas students are done in a perfunctory manner. The nature of what is meant by 'perfunctory' in this instance can be illustrated by an example. This example is in relation to the process followed by TAFE WA to ensure overseas students comply with the conditions of their Overseas Student Visa.

It is a condition of the Overseas Student Visa that overseas students maintain current health cover, attend classes at least eighty percent of the time, maintain satisfactory progress, maintain good financial standing and advise the Immigration Department within two days of any change of address. In Western Australia, TIWA, acting for the Federal Department of Immigration, has the overall responsibility for administering these conditions. In line with its work with the colleges to co-operatively provide for overseas students, TIWA requires individual colleges to institute a process to monitor that visa requirements are being met. In colleges, this function falls within the responsibilities of the overseas student co-ordinator. However, it is often very difficult for the overseas student co-ordinator to gather all the required information efficiently and then report it to TIWA. This is because within colleges, overseas

students are usually spread over various campuses and academic departments. Furthermore, individual academic departments vary in their approach to keeping records of students' attendance and progress. There is no standard, college-wide format for monitoring students' progress, and there are slight variations in the systems used to record attendance, depending on the nature of the class in which students are enrolled. As a result, for practical purposes, overseas student co-ordinators have further devolved the function of actually collating reports of the attendance and progress of overseas students to each academic department. Within each department, the function is often carried out by academic mentors appointed to monitor and assist the academic progress of overseas students, or else taken on as a further function by the Program Manager.

Academic mentors report that they usually see this function as unexciting and uninteresting. It is considered a 'chore' and 'a necessary evil' and those who perform it do so most often in a 'matter of fact' or perfunctory manner with little regard for absolute accuracy. Furthermore, teachers and some program managers who carry out this function believe that the task is not rightfully theirs because it is an administrative function only and should really be carried out by the overseas student co-ordinator. This adverse response to a necessary task reflects a more general but rapidly growing dissatisfaction among teachers about the increasing number of administrative staff appointed within TAFE WA, in the face of a real decline in the number of teachers.

(iv) The Performance of Achieved Functions in a Perfunctory Manner

Some achieved functions carried out by TAFE WA personnel in providing for overseas students are also fulfilled in a perfunctory manner. An explanation is

required about how achieved functions, which are self-generated functions created and carried out voluntarily outside their stipulated duties by some TAFE WA personnel, can be performed only perfunctorily. It would seem that if functions are created and carried out without compulsion from outside forces, it is contradictory to consider that they might be carried out in a perfunctory manner. However, a situation described by the manager of the ELICOS centre of a regional college will help to exemplify the position.

Towards the end of the first term of the ELICOS program, one of the teachers proposed that an 'international lunch' be combined with a graduation ceremony for students who had completed the first ten-week course. Other staff from the college who had some particular involvement in providing for overseas students, ranging from the managing director to the groundsman, were invited to this lunch, along with selected dignitaries from the local community, such as the local mayor. The event was born out of the enthusiasm and imagination of the particular staff member who was particularly energetic in her approach to her work. The international lunch and the graduation ceremony are now institutionalised events each term in the work of the ELICOS centre and to that extent are less 'glamorous' than they were the first few times they were held. Nevertheless, they add significantly to the profile of the ELICOS centre within the college because the activities are highlighted in various 'in-house' publications and those invited to them comment on the enjoyable experience it is. For those who first conceived the idea, the activities have now become a perfunctory yet still significant feature of how they organise the work of the ELICOS centre, according to the manager of the centre.

This same ELICOS manager also commented that another important reason for the nowadays more perfunctory performance of some of their functions by ELICOS personnel is that they are constantly apprehensive about their long-term role, if any, in the college. The function of ELICOS programs as part of the strategic planning for the college has not been clarified by the college executive council. Moreover, because the recruitment and marketing of students for ELICOS programs is completely in the hands of TIWA, college-based ELICOS personnel feel frustrated that they are prevented from themselves trying to bolster the student intake into their programs.

In another college, one ELICOS teacher, in partnership with the head of the Business Studies Department, established an innovative program that has now become a part of the Business English program for overseas students. Many of these students struggle with Australian legal terms and concepts that must be learned for success in a number of mainstream certificate and diploma courses. To try and enhance overseas students' understanding in this area, the ELICOS teacher negotiated with the program manager of the Business Studies Department to arrange a common time in the timetables of both departments when a Business Law module would be taught in the Business Studies Department, and a class of Business English taught in the ELICOS centre. Details of the topics to be covered in the Business Law modules were set out by the Business Law teacher and given to the ELICOS teacher in order to plan her teaching around them. Subsequently, by arrangement, the ELICOS students joined the Business Law class in the Business Studies Department, to reinforce, in context, the language they had learned in their ELICOS sessions. The outcome of this joint approach across academic departments to providing for overseas students has become

a 'perfunctory' function in the sense that it now forms an accepted part of the work of the two departments.

A final example concludes explanation of this category of function. Some current affairs and special-purpose magazines and journals have been available in college learning resource centres for quite some time. Of late, however, the number ordered has increased in certain colleges. The subject matter of many of the newer journals has reflected the presence of overseas students. For example, journals such as *Asian Business*, *The Far Eastern Economic Review* and *Inside Indonesia*, together with a range of foreign language newspapers are now purchased by several TAFE WA colleges. These purchases resulted from learning resources centre managers taking it upon themselves to make specific inquiries to teachers and overseas students for information and advice about what new 'overseas-centred' resources would be most useful in order to assist overseas students in their TAFE WA studies. There are now standing orders for these journals in the same way as there have been continuous subscriptions for more 'local' journals over many years.

(v) The Performance of Ascribed Functions with Resistance

In providing for overseas students, certain ascribed functions, in spite of their mandatory nature, are resisted or not carried out by those charged with doing so. The nature of what is meant by 'resistance' in this regard can be illustrated by the following example. Western Australian State Government policy, implemented through WADOT, has urged TAFE WA institutions to expand the range of their education and training market, including looking for new opportunities in the international market. According to one managing director, institutions have been

encouraged to “establish directions, set objectives and devise strategic plans” with this goal in mind. It might be expected that in response to this imperative, the managing director of each college would lead the move to ‘internationalise’ her or his college. However, the managing director of the college with the highest profile in TAFE WA, the college that could almost be considered the ‘flagship’ of TAFE WA, has indicated some resistance to the initiative. He has maintained that the drive towards ‘internationalising’ his college is supplementary to first, providing training services to local industry, and, second, making a profit from each aspect of the college’s operations. In his view, the overseas student program is just one element of the college’s activities and whether to pursue the program depends entirely on whether it makes a profit or not. He does not see the program as an essential strategy in ‘internationalising’ the college. Furthermore, he questions the assumption that there are necessarily automatic benefits to be gained from trying to ‘internationalise’ TAFE WA colleges. Further, he asks what ‘internationalising’ a college actually means. He is not aware that WADOT has ever clearly spelled out what these advantages are and what time period or priority, if any, WADOT has given to the push to ‘internationalise’ colleges, in the overall strategic planning it has undertaken in respect of the future of TAFE WA. Furthermore, the managing director claimed that he did not know of any research undertaken or relied on by WADOT that would encourage him, as the person charged by WADOT to manage a college profitably above all other objectives, to none-the-less continue to run a loss-making overseas student program because of the perceived educational benefits and cultural-awareness it brings to the college. Some of the important issues involved in the clear conflict and confusion that exists between WADOT (acting through TIWA) in this situation will be taken up in more detail later in Chapter Seven of this dissertation, in the

discussion about the concerns of TAFE WA personnel who had had responsibilities in the overseas student program. However, it is important to emphasise here, that there is obvious resistance by an influential TAFE WA managing director to a function ascribed to him by the Department of Training to work towards ‘internationalising’ his college.

Another function in providing for overseas students that is resisted involves the work of program managers in charge of academic departments in colleges. Program managers are responsible for timetabling classes. A difficult issue in this regard is timetabling classes in computer rooms, because there is an increasingly heavy demand on the use of these. Also, the rooms are limited in the number of students that can be accommodated in them because TAFE WA policy is that there should be one computer available for each student. In every new teaching period, a number of overseas students arrive after the period has commenced, sometimes arriving as late as the fifth or sixth week of a twenty-week period. The first indication that the student has arrived is when he or she is brought to the program manager to be placed in a class. This causes some concern to the program manager for many reasons. Classrooms, especially computer rooms are almost always fully occupied and special arrangements must then be made to add furniture and equipment to rooms to accommodate the student. A program manager reported that he was informed in the first week of classes that he was to set up a new computer class for between fifteen and twenty late arriving students who would come within the next few days. Students who arrive late expect that teachers will supply them with all the lesson notes and resources previously provided to other students. Also, overseas students who arrive

late want to be able to sit for one or more of the ‘continuous’ assessments that may have already been set and marked, perhaps two or three weeks previously.

After a late start to a teaching period, it is very difficult for overseas students, as it is for most students, to accomplish in the remaining time available all the learning outcomes required to be achieved. However, because of the ‘commercial contract’ that was established between TIWA and the overseas student when TIWA accepted the student’s enrolment, college-based personnel have no choice but to accept the student in the college, irrespective of all other considerations. For example, overseas student co-ordinators and teachers have to repeat many of the group functions that have already been carried out in connection with the cohort of students who enrolled at the commencement of the teaching period. In this situation, the ascribed functions necessary to provide for the overseas students are carried out, but with considerable resistance from the TAFE WA personnel involved.

(vi) The Performance of Achieved Functions with Resistance

There are also functions that initially originated out of the ‘goodwill’ of TAFE WA personnel providing for overseas students, but which have later become the focus of resistance. For example, in a teaching department in one college, a program was instituted at the department’s initiative, aimed at providing extra support for overseas students in their academic work. Special classes were scheduled for two hours each Friday, the best time available outside of the regular timetable for the overseas students. The classes were to be flexible to the extent that students could raise topics of particular difficulty for them and helped with those. To do this work, the program manager of the department approached the most experienced, enthusiastic and

empathetic teacher, who was able to teach, counsel and advise about the full the range of modules and units in the study area, who agreed to manage the class. In approaching his task, the teacher gathered from his colleagues, copies of all assignments and compulsory work for all modules and subjects in the various courses in which overseas students were enrolled. He did this in order to be well prepared to assist the students in completing whatever subject or topic they wished to work on.

For the teacher, the preparation involved in such a multi-faceted class was well in excess of what was usually required. Furthermore, the teacher did not have to take on the class since he already had a full teaching allocation. In the result, this enthusiastic attempt by both the program manager and the teacher to provide extra support for overseas students was not taken up by them on a regular basis. Numbers attending dwindled quickly after the first week. However, in 'emergency' circumstances, such as when assessments or assignments were due, students were very keen to come to the extra class. This *ad hoc* approach by the students put considerable pressure on the teacher concerned because he did not know who or what to expect in any given session. In the following semester, overseas students were canvassed to see if they still wanted the service. In response, the special classes were continued, but the manner of conducting them was altered and attendance requirements were tightened. The same teacher was appointed to manage the sessions. However, his initial enthusiasm had been dented significantly and an achieved function he had principally carried out enthusiastically became one he performed with a considerable degree of resistance.

Propositions

The analysis presented so far in response to the second research question of this study, namely, what are the functions of TAFE WA in providing for overseas students who come to study at its colleges, will now be taken a stage further. This analysis is presented in the form of three inter-related propositions. Each of the propositions is formulated from the same data set that led to the two previous sections of this chapter and each of them is aimed at informing future policy at TAFE WA with regard to overseas students.

Proposition One

Since 1987, new functions began to slowly emerge in individual TAFE WA institutions in order to provide for the increasing numbers of overseas students. TIWA was able to offer only partial leadership in the early stages of administering the required functions required to provide for these students. Now, however, a range of core functions in the areas of management, welfare, curriculum and teaching in regard to providing for overseas students in TAFE WA can be identified.

Since 1987, new functions slowly began to emerge in individual TAFE WA institutions in order to provide for the increasing numbers of overseas students. Initially, the functions were allocated to a single individual located at WADOT, who carried them out in addition to his existing duties. Later, a special institution named TAFE International Western Australia (TIWA) was established to take overall responsibility for the organisational change brought about in TAFE WA by the advent of overseas students. However, the role of ‘change agent’ was not the only role undertaken by TIWA, which also undertook other functions aimed at obtaining commercially profitable opportunities to provide education and training in the international arena.

TIWA was able to offer only partial leadership in the early stages of administering the functions required in providing for overseas students in TAFE WA institutions. In practice, the necessary functions were developed as required by individual institutions as the number and complexity of the issues surrounding overseas students steadily grew. As with the early experience of WADOT, the functions initially formed only a part of the duties of particular college staff members, and needed to be fitted in with these staff members' other existing 'main' tasks. In almost every instance, those specially appointed staff members received no special training in providing for overseas students. Later, overseas student co-ordinators in TAFE WA colleges were often appointed from among personnel with 'spare capacity' in their duties. Appointments were not made on the basis of qualifications or expertise in the area. Accordingly, the functions required in colleges to provide for overseas students were generally not well known or understood at this early stage.

Now, however, a range of core functions in the areas of management, welfare, curriculum and teaching in regard to providing for overseas students in TAFE WA institutions can be identified. Most TAFE WA colleges have incorporated fresh 'ways of doing things' in these areas in providing for overseas students, although the area of curriculum has received less attention than the other three aspects. Also, those functions that have evolved have not been established and drawn together as part of a coherent, integrated approach to providing for overseas students throughout the TAFE WA network of colleges.

The transfer of knowledge and skills to overseas students from an education or training program, especially one conducted in unfamiliar circumstances for those students, can be affected by the participants' perception of how they were treated as

individuals and how they were catered for. While a number of examples of new functions as well as physical and administrative structures have been established in TAFE WA to provide high quality services to overseas students, these need to be continually improved to enable TAFE WA personnel to complete their work more effectively. In the present situation, much depends on the individual persistence and creativity of the people in the functions they perform within those structures.

The functions and structures that exist in TAFE WA in order to provide for overseas students should be institutionalised through a planned, pervasive organisational change process that makes them an integral part of the operating policies and procedures of each TAFE WA institution. Institutionalising the functions in this way should see superior effectiveness in providing services to support overseas students, which, in turn, should be viewed by all TAFE WA personnel as a contribution towards TAFE WA gaining a 'competitive edge' that continues to attract overseas students to it.

Proposition Two

Since 1994 in particular, an increasing number of diverse, formal and informal functions have been added to the core functions that had emerged in the earlier days of overseas students studying in TAFE WA. These functions emerged out of a need to respond to a sharp rise in the total number of overseas students in TAFE WA. They now form a significant part of the overall roles and tasks that make up the way each college operates.

Since 1994 in particular, an increasing number of diverse formal and informal functions have been added to the core functions that had emerged in the earlier days of overseas students studying in TAFE WA. In the development of the functions to accommodate these students, there has been a symbiotic relationship between TIWA and the colleges in the practical work of providing for overseas students. However,

some role duplication between TIWA and the colleges has been evident and some tension is observable between TIWA and the colleges regarding the performance of certain functions. Accordingly, TIWA and college personnel need to work more closely for the formation of policies and processes that incorporate an appropriate division of all functions required. Furthermore, the allocated functions of TIWA and the colleges need to be clearly defined in formal policies and processes used throughout the organisation.

All of the diverse formal and informal functions that have now been added to the core functions that had emerged in the earlier days of overseas students studying at TAFE WA came forth by way of response to a sharp rise in the number of overseas students. Now, TAFE WA personnel are required to differentiate in some central functions between distinct cultural groups. Even though there is a small cohort of TAFE WA personnel with knowledge and experience of overseas students, there has been no systematic plan to draw on these attributes to enhance the experience of the different cultural groups now studying in TAFE WA. Accordingly, very few TAFE WA personnel who provide for overseas students have been adequately prepared, either through previous personal experience or planned professional development programs, to perform the functions ascribed to them.

The new functions regarding overseas students now form a significant part of the overall roles and tasks that make up the way each college operates. How to divide these functions between institutions, and to select appropriate persons to undertake them, however, constitutes a complex challenge. A number of combinations might work well, providing each of the support functions required to accommodate overseas

students is adequately covered. One step in the right direction would be to ensure that the full range of these functions should be recognised and legitimated through a proper, professional approach to human resource planning and management within TAFE WA.

Proposition Three

At the end of the 1990s, all of the functions performed by TAFE WA personnel in providing for overseas students constituted just one element of the full scope of functions needed to deliver the abundant range of courses and activities available throughout TAFE WA. All functions, traditional and modern, have not been managed over the years in a cohesive manner, using the best combination of resources available. Furthermore, there has not been an overall management plan to serve as a blueprint from which a series of organisational sub-plans could be compiled in order to integrate and co-ordinate the entire sweep of functions required for the effective and efficient operation of contemporary TAFE WA.

At the end of the 1990s, the functions performed by TAFE WA personnel in providing for overseas students constituted just one element of the full scope of functions needed to deliver the abundant range of courses and activities available throughout TAFE WA. Since 1987 in particular, TAFE WA personnel have been constantly required to resolve and adapt to many modern education and training reforms, introduced at a much more rapid pace than at any time in the history of the sector. Most of these reforms have stemmed from intensifying international competition, technological advancement in production and communication and the consequent labour market changes. New organisational forms have been instituted to provide for these reforms, which include 'flexible' delivery of the curriculum to meet the individual needs of students, assessment of skills in the workplace and recognition of the prior learning of students, distance education using electronic means, providing vocational education and training in schools, articulation with schools and higher education institutions in providing 'pathways' that enable students to progress from

one sector of education to and through others, and the establishment of TAFE WA colleges as autonomously managed, rather than centrally administered, institutions. Consequently, in a very brief period, TAFE WA personnel have experienced profound changes in the nature of their work, which, in turn, is having a significant impact on their contemporary roles and functions and the way they are carried out.

Since 1987, the changing roles and functions that have emerged in TAFE WA, have not been managed at the most senior levels in a cohesive manner, using the best combination of resources available. In regard to the overseas student program in particular, few TAFE WA personnel other than those most intimately involved with overseas students have been made aware of its aims and objectives, the way it is marketed, and the fact that the students have been encouraged to join TAFE WA on the promise of an education high by international standards and conducted in a supportive environment. Few personnel, including some of those intimately involved with the program, realise what this education is costing the student, what the financial benefits are to the college, and the cultural and educational enrichment the college can gain from the interactions that occur between people from different countries. At the end of the 1990s, there is still insufficient appreciation throughout TAFE WA institutions of the cultural diversity that exists among overseas students. These requirements are able to be addressed to a large degree through an extensive professional development plan for both administrative and teaching staff in colleges to ensure the most productive results can flow from the current-day structures and functions now in place.

For the full suite of courses and programs offered in TAFE WA, including the overseas student program, there has not been an overall strategic management plan to serve as a blueprint for organising them. From such a strategic plan could be built a series of organisational sub-plans in order to integrate and co-ordinate the entire extent of functions required for the effective and efficient operation of contemporary TAFE WA. One important leadership function since 1987 has been to try to bring a positively international 'culture' or 'psyche' to TAFE WA. For this function to succeed among the other competing goals of the organisation, it is crucial that there be a strong commitment to 'overseas' objectives from the head and senior executive council of the institution. This commitment must be brought to all areas of the organisation through effective communication, co-ordination, co-operation and mutual support. Vision statements, strategic plans, decision-making, and support for the visible presence and high profile of activities involving overseas students are the essential signs of the required commitment. At both the central office and within colleges, TAFE WA personnel need to view the overseas students' program as part of TAFE WA's strategy to 'internationalise' all of its institutions, because that is what government requires. The chief executive of WADOT, and in colleges, managing directors, should lead this task. The contribution from the middle level should come in the form of appropriate managers supplying overseas student centres and academic departments with the resources necessary to support the development of the functions of welfare, curriculum and teaching required to provide for the needs of overseas students. At the most fundamental level of commitment to providing for the needs of overseas students, the overall systemic effort needs to include energetic and enthusiastic attitudes of individual teachers and non-teaching support staff, and the strategies they use in carrying out their functions.

Summary and Conclusion

This chapter provided an analysis of the contemporary functions of TAFE WA in providing for overseas students. It was in three parts. The first part described the functions performed within the structure that was established within TAFE WA to support overseas students. The next part of the chapter analysed the functions performed by TAFE WA personnel in the new structure. The chapter concluded with a set of propositions aimed at informing future policy in this aspect of the work of TAFE WA.

As the literature reminds us, overseas students come from many and varied cultures. It also argues that such students should not necessarily be thought of and provided for as if they constituted a singular cultural group. Therefore, in carrying out the research for the study reported in this dissertation, one of the important areas of focus was to determine whether or not there were special functions that were required to be performed for the different cultural groups that comprised the total population of overseas students. Participants in the study were given ample opportunity through probing to expand on their thoughts on this particular matter. However, they noted only minor distinctions.

The fact that TAFE WA personnel do not report a need to undertake separate functions for diverse cultural groups does not mean that the matter is still not an important one that requires further research. This issue is one that needs expressing. However, no more will be said about it at this point as it is highlighted again in the next chapter; a chapter that considers the concerns of TAFE WA personnel who,

through their functions, have responsibilities for providing education and training for overseas students in TAFE WA colleges.

***Classroom teachers perform ascribed functions in a perfunctory manner. Most teachers readily accept overseas students in their classes and are keen to assist their learning in a very positive way. Nevertheless, most teachers believe that overseas students, having chosen to study in an overseas environment, are seeking the benefits of such an environment and want to experience the teaching and learning approaches that teachers traditionally follow with Australian students. Consequently, some teachers make only perfunctory adjustments to the teaching, learning and assessment strategies they use in classes containing overseas students, for example, by trying to reduce the speed and complexity of the language they use in addressing the class. For example, in the case of Muslim students in the hospitality and tourism study area in one college, knowledge of different styles of wine and other alcoholic beverages is required in the hospitality diploma. Muslim students are not exempt from this part of the course, even though it might offend against the Islam religion.

They believe that their efforts so far to develop the centre and try to attract new students have not been recognised and rewarded (Czarny interview). They consider that they deserve greater recognition and reward than they receive because of the high level of achieved functions they have developed. All ELICOS personnel are

employed under short-term contracts. should include, at minimum, renewal of their contract teaching positions. promotion, through allocation by TIWA of an increased numbers of overseas students, or opportunities to travel overseas with TIWA personnel on recruitment and marketing forays in order to 'sell' their particular work (Czarny interview). To date, however, these proposals have been followed up only spasmodically.

The concern in this for overseas student co-ordinator is that they seldom have little formal training, or even , qualifications of experience', to bring to these functions.