

Beyond Borders: toward a shared student experience - a 'Students First' Symposium

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00:00:01:15 - 00:00:34:24

Prof Judyth Sachs

Good afternoon, everyone. My name is Judyth Sachs and I am the Chief Academic Officer from Studiosity. Today is our second symposium titled Beyond Borders Towards a Shared Student Experience, and it's one of our *Students First* symposia. Before beginning, I want to acknowledge that I am hosting this online conversation from the lands of the Cammeraygal People. I also acknowledge the traditional custodians of the various lands on which you all work today and the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people participating in this meeting.

00:00:35:17 - 00:01:10:05

Prof Judyth Sachs

I pay my respects to elders past and present and celebrate the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and their ongoing cultures and connections to the lands and waters of New South Wales and elsewhere in Australia and overseas. So today's symposium is about new thinking for transnational teaching and learning experience. In this session, panelists will explore strategies and practices for belonging, integrity and success for a transnational student cohort and how these issues are changing into 2024 and beyond.

00:01:10:14 - 00:01:42:21

Prof Judyth Sachs

So what I'd like to do is I'd like to invite members of the panel to introduce themselves and to talk briefly about the expertise that they bring to today's session. So if I can start by asking Professor Linley Lord.

Prof Linley Lord

Thank you, Judyth, and good afternoon, everyone. And can I also pay my respects to First Nations people and acknowledge that as a university we operate on the lands of many First Nations people and have many students that come from First Nations.

00:01:43:05 - 00:02:09:06

Prof Linley Lord

And so I pay my respects to them and their elders. So my name's been they load on the Provost Chancellor and president. It couldn't Singapore. I've been here in Singapore just over five years now in this role. Curtin itself has been in Singapore over 30 years. We've had a dedicated campus here for 15 years and our campus in Malaysia for some 20 years.

00:02:09:15 - 00:02:42:24

Prof Linley Lord

We've also got a campus in Mauritius and a campus in Dubai. So we sit around that Indian Ocean rim and prior to coming up to Singapore to take up this role, I chaired Curtin's Academic Board for six years, so that gave me a really good understanding of the complexity in which we operate. I've got a much better understanding of that now that I sit in Singapore and see how that plays out on a day to day basis.

00:02:42:24 - 00:02:51:12

Prof Linley Lord

So I'm looking forward to sharing that as part of the discussion. So I thank you.

Prof Judyth Sachs

Beverley Could I invite you to introduce yourself, please?

00:02:52:09 - 00:03:22:15

Prof Beverley Webster

Yes, thank you, Judyth and hello everyone, Welcome to the symposium. It's certainly wonderful to be here. My name's Beverley Webster. I'm currently the Vice President Education at Monash University in Malaysia, so I'm joining you today from a very hot Kuala Lumpur. I, I think everyone will know that Monash is a global university. We have the campus here in Malaysia, in Kuala Lumpur, which is actually Monash's third largest campus.

00:03:23:06 - 00:03:50:20

Prof Beverley Webster

Monash has three campuses actually in Australia, but we also have a presence in Italy, we have a presence in India, a partnership in India, in China, and more recently we've opened up a campus in Indonesia. So definitely a global university. I've got previous experience at RMIT. I was located in Vietnam, another global university with a presence in a number of different locations around the world.

00:03:50:21 - 00:03:58:02

Prof Beverley Webster

So this this topic obviously is important to my portfolio and I'm looking forward to the discussion with you.

00:03:59:10 - 00:04:00:19

Prof Judyth Sachs

Thank you. And Alex.

00:04:01:20 - 00:04:41:19

Prof Alex Frino

Yes. Can I also acknowledge the traditional owners of the land on which I am meeting you? Hello, Alex Frino. I'm the Senior Deputy Vice-Chancellor at the University of Wollongong. Previously I was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor Global Strategy at the University and oversaw our offshore operations and internationalization of the University of Wollongong. The University of Wollongong has campuses in Dubai, Malaysia and Hong Kong and a very significant partnership with the Singapore Institute of Management in Singapore.

00:04:43:05 - 00:05:13:12

Prof Alex Frino

We were the first foreign university to open a campus in Dubai 30 years ago and hopefully we will soon be the first foreign university to open a campus branch campus in India. We've just been awarded a license in India to open. I'm so happy to be at this conference and happy to share my experiences over the last seven years in these portfolios with you.

00:05:14:16 - 00:05:37:00

Prof Judyth Sachs

Thanks, Alex. So the first question that I've got, and I think I'll just randomly ask people if I could start. So Beverley, I'm going to ask you if you'd like to contribute. Then I'll get Alex to answer. Then finally, Linley. What does transnational education mean in the context in which you are working and what are the benefits and risks of investment in transnational education?

00:05:38:23 - 00:06:15:18

Prof Beverley Webster

Thanks, Judyth. And so, you know, I shared that Monash is a global university, and with that, the mobility opportunities for all of our students. And it is important, it's embedded in our strategy that as a monash student you will and can have an opportunity to have a mobility experience, to have intercultural and emerging experience. We've got a variety of mobility programs that students can access, which can take them to many different parts of the world, either at another Monash campus or in another location with a TNE partner.

00:06:15:18 - 00:06:42:18

Prof Beverley Webster

And we have many, many of those. So we're not just restricted to our students going to another Monash campus. It's important. It certainly helps us diversify our international strategy and it's to ensure that our students, but not just our students, but staff. Our research and our programs of study are attuned to the needs of an increasingly globalized economy and a globalized workforce.

00:06:43:13 - 00:07:19:02

Prof Beverley Webster

Of course, you know, it helps us generate some additional revenue, but that's not the priority there. It's an extension of our mission to increase participation as well. It is certainly our main strategy for student mobility. I mean, providing a suite of options from short term intensives to immersive experiences. Some of the risks I think when we're looking at expanding and offering mobility at scale, we do risk marginalizing certain cohorts of students.

00:07:19:02 - 00:07:48:05

Prof Beverley Webster

And so we're working very closely on how our systems and our strategy to offer these opportunities for our students don't marginalize. For example, we can't have these opportunities based on cost because we know that if money is, money will be a barrier to a certain cohort of students. Also, there are certain cohorts of students which would not naturally choose a mobility option.

00:07:48:11 - 00:08:02:03

Prof Beverley Webster

So whilst we are doing very, very well in this space, our next effort is to make sure that we are genuine in our promise that if you come to Monash, you can have a mobility option.

00:08:03:10 - 00:08:07:02

Prof Judyth Sachs

Do you also recruit students in Malaysia for Malaysia?

00:08:08:02 - 00:08:15:08

Prof Beverley Webster

Yes, we do. In fact, 72% of our student cohort are local Malaysian students.

00:08:16:00 - 00:08:47:07

Prof Judyth Sachs

Okay. Thank you. Linley.

Prof Linley Lord

And our thanks. Thanks to this and very a lot of similar things to what Beverley was talking about. One of the what does it mean for us? It means that we can take education to where the students are. So those campus locations are providing opportunities for students to either

choose not to come to study in Australia or can't come to study in Australia.

00:08:47:07 - 00:09:17:07

Prof Linley Lord

And that can be around some financial constraints. Sometimes it's around where the parents won't want their kids to be studying closer to home and places that they consider to be culturally safe. So there's a mix of motivations there, but it is around taking education to where its students are. But it also helps us to build networks with the universities that are in the region, with businesses in the region.

00:09:17:17 - 00:09:54:14

Prof Linley Lord

Obviously in Singapore, it's a financial hub. There's lots of the multinationals have got the ASIAPAC headquarters here. It gives us access to those organizations that we just don't get in Australia. We don't get in Perth. So that opens up opportunities for students in terms of their career opportunities for the staff around around research. So in terms of some of the the risks around transnational education, obviously the quality of the learning experience.

00:09:55:05 - 00:10:27:12

Prof Linley Lord

We're a smaller campus all around. Our global campuses are all smaller than the main campuses in Perth. So we don't have necessarily that breadth and depth of resources available. So how do we ensure the equivalent experience for the students without it becoming vanilla? I'm very strong that students need to know that they're in Singapore, they're at an Australian university, they're at Curtin, but they're in Singapore and so we don't want it to be vanilla.

00:10:28:22 - 00:10:57:21

Prof Linley Lord

Just the challenge of accreditation requirements working across different jurisdictions and with accreditation bodies for some of the courses, we don't want to recognize when a course is being offered in a location other than Australia. That's a real challenge. And then those issues around being culturally sensitive around curriculum and what can and can't be taught in certain locations because it's against the law.

00:10:58:20 - 00:11:25:14

Prof Linley Lord

And what does that mean around issues of academic freedom and really the transformational power of education? But how do you ensure that you keep staff and students safe? So there's some of the, I guess, challenges and risks. Yeah. The thing is, it's a highly competitive market. We've all just talked about where all our campuses have located and new campuses that are opening, and that's just three of us on the screen.

00:11:25:15 - 00:11:43:16

Prof Linley Lord

So there's a lot of activity that's happening in that space. And so how do we maintain the integrity of what we're offering, I think is some of that. But the risks around expanding too quickly or spreading ourselves too thin. Thanks.

Prof Judyth Sachs

Thank you. And Alex.

00:11:44:09 - 00:12:12:03

Prof Alex Frino

Yeah. One of the problems with going last is everyone steals the available thunder. But anyway, I agree totally with Beverley and Linley's views of the benefits and risks of operating offshore campuses. If I could just add a couple. So the offshore brand recognition is really given a boost through operating offshore. We've experienced that in Dubai.

00:12:12:03 - 00:12:40:11

Prof Alex Frino

And if I could just give you a funny anecdote. In Dubai, you can swim at Wollongong Beach. Google it. That's the kind of relationship you can build if you're in a place long enough and people get to know you. The visibility of your institution is raised dramatically. So we travel really, really well in the Middle East. Global student mobility, which I love and I think is important for developing the global mindset of students and future leaders.

00:12:41:04 - 00:13:03:24

Prof Alex Frino

We launched a program, a pilot program, a couple of years ago where we figured out we've got offshore campuses teaching the degrees that we teach in Australia. So why not allow students the opportunity of studying their entire degree, cycling through our offshore campuses? So we launched what became known as a global leaders program. And essentially you could take a Bachelor of Commerce.

00:13:04:08 - 00:13:31:08

Prof Alex Frino

You do your first year in Australia, six months in, next port of call was Hong Kong, six months in Malaysia, six months in Dubai. Home for your Honours. So and whilst it started as a small pilot program, it's proved very, very attractive. But that's the kind of global mobility opportunity that you can open up for your students and really look after them as they're moving through your offshore campuses.

00:13:31:08 - 00:14:22:11

Prof Alex Frino

And if your campuses are organized neatly and streamlined, it's very easy for them to slip into

the routine of study, but experience the culture that the offshore location has to offer. Risks perhaps worth highlighting. Yeah, perhaps with highlighting that geopolitical risks you know, will be truly present when you operate offshore without going into names if to if the Australian Government and another government doesn't get on that can have repercussions for your ability to grow staff offshore or indeed, you know, we worry about some of our staff operating in offshore locations from time to time as different threats and threats originate.

00:14:22:17 - 00:14:44:19

Prof Alex Frino

And so you really in operating offshore campus, you really have to have your risk management brain switched on all the time and be tuned in to ever present emanating risks with plans for how you can deal with them as they emerge and create problems. So I think, yeah, they're kind of just a couple of ideas around benefits and risks.

00:14:45:18 - 00:15:12:13

Prof Judyth Sachs

So we've got 120 years of history, practically 90 years of history in the combined work of the three universities doing this transnational education. What do you think the big lessons are that you've learned about transnational oil education from that beginning 30 years ago, both in Curtin and in Dubai and Curtin, does Curtin still have the Sarawak campus as well?

00:15:13:08 - 00:15:33:12

Prof Judyth Sachs

Right. So that's that's been going a long time too. So what's what's the sort of story you tell in your institutions about transnational education and your organization and how it's part of your DNA now? And I'm not going to nominate anybody, so somebody can jump in first.

00:15:34:05 - 00:16:06:12

Prof Alex Frino

Yeah, I'm happy to contribute. There's this kind of a notion. It's not just a branch campus can be thought of as part of the economic construct that the corporations that have branches overseas face all the time. And you can develop a mindset that, you know, knowledge and the way of doing things goes from your mothership down to your branch campuses.

00:16:07:12 - 00:16:37:22

Prof Alex Frino

And one of the really pleasant things that I've seen over time over the last seven years that I've been at University of Wollongong, is creating a more integrated whole and understanding that there's all kinds of interesting ideas that emanate in the way of doing things and research. So and building a research culture at our offshore locations that can benefit Australia.

00:16:37:23 - 00:17:08:00

Prof Alex Frino

So if I was going to highlight an idea at the University of Wollongong, we we realized five years ago that, you know, we've got the Australian Research Council in Australia, but we've got similar like bodies in other locations and so teams of academics could get together and apply for research funding in all of those locations, not just in Australia, and you could be quite inclusive and put together really interesting teams.

00:17:08:00 - 00:17:25:23

Prof Alex Frino

So there's, there's all kinds of opportunities and possibilities that open themselves up. If you can get over the hurdle that, you know, everything doesn't go from the mothership to the branch campus, but there's enormous benefits from bringing everyone in and, and together.

00:17:29:24 - 00:17:52:03

Prof Linley Lord

Judyth I'm happy to add to that. And Alex I agree with that with what you said and certainly from the Curtin point of view has been the shift. I guess the story that we tell is the shift from that focus on teaching that the campuses were there as, as teaching machines, in effect to really a mindset about being a campus.

00:17:52:12 - 00:18:25:23

Prof Linley Lord

So we now talk about them being comprehensive campuses, not in terms of delivering everything, but we teach, we research, we engage with industry, we engage with the community. And so there's now that expected across all of the campuses, like Alex was saying, that we're contributing to research outcomes, but that's often increasingly we're seeing that our colleagues from Australia are coming to us and saying, Oh, there's really exciting things happening in your part of the world.

00:18:26:06 - 00:19:00:03

Prof Linley Lord

Can you connect us? Can we work with you to work with those people? And a fantastic example for students was through some work that we're doing in the health area, Data science students coming up, working in one of the hospitals here in the rare diseases area, short term projects, absolutely phenomenal outcomes for the students. Life changing for them, but they would actually make a real difference.

00:19:00:11 - 00:19:25:22

Prof Linley Lord

One of the things that really enabled that was our presence on the ground here, because it meant that the who we were working with, the partners knew that we were serious and it that what I was talking about having that presence, having that visibility, people knowing who you are and must be serious about relationships if they've got feet on the ground here and in

the other locations.

00:19:25:22 - 00:20:03:00

Prof Linley Lord

So I think those things that's the story. That is the story for Curtin. The other thing that we're doing is running a global leadership program. We developed that we'll run it for the third time this year and that's around people understanding what it means to work in a global university and bringing people together from the campuses, from our strategic partners at a sort of a middle level, and even talking to each other and finding out, wow, there's so much to learn about what's happening in our global locations.

00:20:03:00 - 00:20:15:24

Prof Linley Lord

I want to be part of that. So that's, I think, another development that says it's not the mothership delivering to the campuses, it's the partnership across all of them, and that's a real shift for us.

00:20:17:23 - 00:20:45:21

Prof Beverley Webster

Yes, I can absolutely concur with what Alex and Linley have said, and I can continue on that. Same Monash has been in Malaysia 25 years this year, so a long time and you know, 25 years ago it's you know, Alex mentioned the mothership, the curriculum coming up from the mothership, and that's exactly what happened. And it did take a while for the campus here to mature.

00:20:47:08 - 00:21:23:15

Prof Beverley Webster

But I think more importantly than the campus here in Malaysia maturing, it took even longer for Monash in Australia to acknowledge that there was expertise and authority in Malaysia. And then being it's we are an Australian university with, you know, Australian licensed degrees, but we also are licensed in Malaysia and it's taken a long time for the curriculum to be nuanced and for the mindset to allow the curriculum to be nuanced, given that we are in another country.

00:21:23:20 - 00:21:53:23

Prof Beverley Webster

So in relation to teaching and learning, we are now at a point where, you know, our students know that they're at an Australian university, but they're studying in Malaysia, similar to what Linley said about being in Singapore. And the other part of the story about being in another country is that when we look at research we are wanting our primary objective is to engage in research that's beneficial to the Asian region.

00:21:54:09 - 00:22:24:13

Prof Beverley Webster

So working with industry, working with government, working with local community on helping them identify and solve problems. And that's really important. And it's not it's not good enough for us just to say we are graduating people into your community. We need to do more. And I believe it's taken a significant amount of time to get to that place where we actually are now, where we have been well recognized as a higher education institute.

00:22:24:19 - 00:22:33:00

Prof Beverley Webster

But we are also well recognized as a genuine partner with the Malaysian community in helping them to solve problems.

00:22:34:05 - 00:23:02:20

Prof Judyth Sachs

And I picked up on two things and two separate questions. And given that Beverley's just mentioned partnership and partnership is fundamental to your being successful, what will enable a positive and effective partnership between an Australian based university and a transnational campus? And Beverley, can I just ask you to answer the question first?

00:23:04:11 - 00:23:13:14

Prof Beverley Webster

Definitely. So your question is what will make a successful partnership with I'm I think I heard you basically between the mothership and the campus?

00:23:14:05 - 00:23:23:19

Prof Judyth Sachs

And how do you do it, and how do you sustain it, and what are the politics that you need to acknowledge?

00:23:24:06 - 00:23:54:08

Prof Beverley Webster

How long have we got? Politics. I've been at Monash for nearly three, well, just over three years now, and I'm very fortunate. I came into the university when that relationship was very mature. Still pockets of, you know, where the boss down here, your, your you know, you do what we say up there. But the key to a successful partnership is acknowledgment of expertise, where there is expertise and acknowledgment that we're in partnership, we need to work, whether it's research or whether it's curriculum, teaching and learning.

00:23:54:14 - 00:24:23:04

Prof Beverley Webster

We need to work collaboratively on this. There because of, you know, governance is always eye opening. If we're talking about degrees, there's an owning faculty. We don't have faculties in Malaysia. We have schools. But that mutual respect and until you have that mutual respect,

that acknowledgment that there is expertise in both locations, not all the expertise is at the home campus, then that's when you will get a successful partnership.

00:24:23:19 - 00:24:51:24

Prof Beverley Webster

Of course, you do need systems to facilitate that. You need to have members from different locations on committees, on working groups. I'm sure that in the earlier days, every member of every committee and working group was from the home campus. And so you need to make sure that you have some enabling processes to facilitate that collaboration and that mutual partnership.

00:24:53:13 - 00:24:58:05

Prof Judyth Sachs

And so there's reciprocity?

00:24:58:05 - 00:25:05:01

Prof Beverley Webster

Definitely reciprocity. Yes. I mean, it's never going to work if the voice is only coming from the home campus.

00:25:06:06 - 00:25:40:04

Prof Linley Lord

And I think the other thing, Judyth, if I could add to that, one of the things is also being prepared. So from if I speak from my role here of continuing to remind the Perth campus about global campuses and so when discussion is happening, which would make perfect sense in the Australian context, that I know is going to be problematic, reminding, reminding them that that won't work in Singapore or that won't work in one of our other locations.

00:25:41:01 - 00:26:04:18

Prof Linley Lord

And, and so it is part of that people starting to understand the context. The other thing that's made a real difference is really - put aside the pandemic, but people coming and spending time on the campus. And that's a real game changer because it speaks to what Beverley was talking about. Like, wow, you've got some great systems here. You do that really well.

00:26:04:18 - 00:26:24:15

Prof Linley Lord

Could you share that with others? I didn't know you were doing that. So telling the story of what's happening on the campus, because it can be a little bit out of sight, out of mind. And you spoke about politics - at times that could be really terrific. You can just get things done and ask for forgiveness later.

00:26:24:15 - 00:26:44:04

Prof Linley Lord

So there are some advantages. But the understanding what we're doing here has been a real game changer. And so now I hear people telling our story, not just me telling the story. And so that equalizes that partnership.

Prof Judyth Sachs

Alex, what have you got to add?

00:26:45:03 - 00:27:19:23

Prof Alex Frino

Yeah, I agree with Beverley and Linley, who you highlighted, especially the need to remind colleagues when they drive to work for example, in Wollongong, that there's, you know, there's a lot beyond Wollongong in terms of the University of Wollongong. But I think that's just human nature. But I think the most important bit is if you have an inclusive culture within a university, then that would drive you to include everyone at your offshore campuses.

00:27:19:23 - 00:27:53:09

Prof Alex Frino

So pleasantly we've - it hasn't been all, all roses, but we've managed to get offshore staff onto most committees that run in Wollongong so that they get visibility, the offshore campuses get continually this continual visibility of what's happening at the offshore campuses. The notion of ownership of degrees here, I mean that, you know, with ownership comes, you know, revenue allocation.

00:27:53:22 - 00:28:22:10

Prof Alex Frino

Sometimes. The interesting model we have in our Dubai campus is students; the degrees they complete qualify to be recognized both in the UAE and Australia. The student opts for one or the other at the end of their degree. But that's kind of interesting. It just changes the equation a little in terms of how you deal with the offshore campus.

00:28:22:10 - 00:28:38:19

Prof Alex Frino

I really like that, and we're seeking to do that at some of our other offshore campuses. But I think I think the key is an inclusive culture. As long as that exists, that drives people to include everyone, no matter where they are in the world.

00:28:41:14 - 00:29:08:07

Prof Judyth Sachs

Linley You talked about culturally sensitive curriculum, and so that means that there have to be has to be some translation, local translation to make sure that that cultural sensitivity and that recognition of different ways of thinking, acting and being are taken into account. How do you do that?

Prof Linley Lord

Well, I think I think it's around having that sensitivity and it surrounds that getting involved in curriculum development.

00:29:08:16 - 00:29:32:01

Prof Linley Lord

So whilst we are required by a regulator to take the curriculum from Perth, we're not allowed to develop it ourselves. But that doesn't mean we can't be involved in the development because one of the risks is we'll add an international case study and stir and say that we've internationalized the curriculum. And of course that just doesn't do anything.

00:29:32:01 - 00:30:01:09

Prof Linley Lord

We do get complaints from our students here, if all of the case studies are around organizations in Australia, because they say, Yeah, that's fine, but I want to know what's happening in the region. So there's just the actual material that you're asking them to, to look at I think is really important. The other thing is drawing on that expertise of the staff that we've got here who live and work in this area.

00:30:01:09 - 00:30:36:15

Prof Linley Lord

Most of our people have industry experience. So bringing that into making the theory live in terms of what happens in the region is really important. Then there's I guess the more challenging area of - in some of our locations talking for example around LGBTQ issues is actually illegal. And so some of our courses have got that material in them.

00:30:36:15 - 00:31:08:06

Prof Linley Lord

What do we do in those situations? And of course there's always the two arguments. It's an Australian degree. We should be able to deliver it, but there's a legal framework that we're operating within that says you can't talk about these things and people are put at risk, a serious risk if they do. So that's the other challenge is how do you then deliver the learning outcomes that you're trying to deliver through those courses in different ways?

00:31:08:06 - 00:31:38:13

Prof Linley Lord

Are there different way to approach it? And that causes some real tension. So some of it's very simple: bring groups together from across the network to develop a curriculum that truly does have a global outlook, that has more than a Singapore specific perspective because we draw not only our campuses but our partnerships. And then what do we do about those really sensitive areas and not just take the easy way out?

00:31:38:13 - 00:32:01:05

Prof Linley Lord

So we just won't teach that course there. How do we provide that opportunity for students in those locations in a safe way?

Prof Judyth Sachs

Beverley, do you want to make some comments or Alex, about that conundrum? Really, it's and it's it's a risk. It's a risk factor that is very real.

00:32:01:20 - 00:32:32:10

Prof Beverley Webster

It is. It is a very, very real risk. And, you know, everyone will be aware of the laws in Malaysia. But, you know, we're an Australian university, but we have a social contract to the country that we're in and it is a balancing act in our curriculum. But beyond our curriculum, even the in the experiences that students and staff will have when they're actually on this campus and we have to find a way to make it a very safe space for staff and students.

00:32:32:10 - 00:33:10:05

Prof Beverley Webster

We do, you know, access, equity and diversity is a huge agenda for Monash as a university as it is for most universities. And we have, you know, diversity weeks, we have activities, but they are and unfortunately have to be confined to campus. We would not want to, a restriction is that we would not be able to and we wouldn't want to because of the social contract we have with the country, we are able to organize an event outside of the campus that's just sort of the the compromise that we need to make.

00:33:10:05 - 00:33:45:12

Prof Beverley Webster

So we are providing our university community with those experiences, but we are confined to where we can hold those types of events. I mean, and, you know, when we talk about sort of mobility, it's not just when our students are here in Malaysia, but obviously we send students out to different locations and it's beholden on us to be cognizant of what, what, what is going to keep them safe in those different locations, what they need to do, what what they need to be aware of.

00:33:46:10 - 00:33:50:06

Prof Beverley Webster

So there are some limitations depending on the country that you are operating in.

00:33:51:13 - 00:33:54:19

Prof Judyth Sachs

Alex and you do have some limitations in Dubai as well.

00:33:54:21 - 00:34:23:14

Prof Alex Frino

And in Hong Kong, when you think about it, I mean, in Australia we've got this, you know, tradition and mindset that it's okay to criticize the government and make all kinds of comments that are not exactly flattering, but there's jurisdictions in which you can be summarily arrested. So it's something that we're very mindful of. We need to keep our staff safe.

00:34:24:08 - 00:34:52:02

Prof Alex Frino

And and like Beverley, for example, the global leader students put them through a culturalisation experience before they attend a location just to make sure they don't do things that are, you know, young people - young kids, that's what they are - would do and might get them into trouble. But it's a very significant risk and one that is always at the back of my mind.

00:34:52:12 - 00:34:54:04

Prof Alex Frino

In the front of my mind, actually.

00:34:54:22 - 00:35:17:00

Prof Judyth Sachs

Alex, there's a question that's been asked specifically to you, and can I invite people in the audience to pose some questions? Because, you know, it's, these become enriched with your questions. So, Alex, your question is you mentioned that students can decide whether they want to have their degree awarded as an Australian or a UAE centered one.

00:35:18:08 - 00:35:36:16

Prof Judyth Sachs

Do you have any idea of the proportion that would choose to study in the UAE, University of Wollongong, Dubai campus and choose to have a degree awarded as Australian? Do you know whether there is any correlation with whether the student might want to do their postgraduate studies directly in Australia or afterwards or work in Australia afterwards?

00:35:37:04 - 00:36:10:20

Prof Alex Frino

Yeah, that's exactly right. You've hit the nail right on the head. It's about 30% that choose to take out a UAE qualification. So the majority take out an Australian qualification. The UAE is an interesting place. So Emirati, you know, the natives of the UAE are very small in number 400,000 or so in a country of 4 or 5 million, and opportunities to work in government are therefore smaller, but they do exist.

00:36:11:17 - 00:36:39:03

Prof Alex Frino

And so that's a pretty important driver for a student. It doesn't really matter whether they take out a UAE qualification or an Australian qualification if they want to go on to further postgrad study. There's similar openness in Australia to take them on. It's more about whether that degree of qualification that they take out opens up an opportunity that they couldn't otherwise open up with, with one from another jurisdiction, which is typically government related.

00:36:40:16 - 00:36:43:16

Prof Alex Frino

I'm sorry, did I answer all the questions?

00:36:43:16 - 00:37:16:03

Prof Judyth Sachs

Yeah, I think pretty much, yeah. Yeah. Look, students are at the heart of what happens in any university on any campus, but I think the idea of inclusive openness, belonging and wellbeing is a challenge to all people in senior positions. So, Beverley, can I just get you to start off how do you create a sense of belonging and wellbeing in a campus like the Singapore campus or sorry, the Malaysian campus?

00:37:16:03 - 00:37:47:11

Prof Beverley Webster

Yeah, that's a it's a really good question and it's a really important area for discussion. It really has to be part of the fabric of the way that you accept how you are operating and accept how your staff and your students are having the experiences they have with you. It needs to be in your strategy. It needs to be in your plans. It can't be something that you hope will happen by osmosis or by some nice conversations or some posters put around campus.

00:37:48:10 - 00:38:13:13

Prof Beverley Webster

It actually has to be in every part of the experience, it needs to... I mean, first of all, we you know, we believe in inclusiveness. We believe in access. So we are at the front door accepting a whole group of students who come from a whole different range of backgrounds, be it cultural backgrounds, be it, you know, academic backgrounds.

00:38:14:02 - 00:38:44:13

Prof Beverley Webster

And we accept them in, thank goodness, happily gone are the days where it's only the high achievers that go to university. And so it's on us to make sure that once they come through that front door that there are support systems, regardless of their pathway into university. And those support systems need to be around different cultures, need to be around different academic abilities, and need to be around different, I guess, mental states as well.

00:38:45:09 - 00:39:21:15

Prof Beverley Webster

So we need to ensure that the systems we have, the support that are there for all of these different cohorts of students so that they do feel included. I don't think we've got that right. I think there's still a long way to go in relation to that, particularly with I think at the learning and teaching space. I think we've got a fair way to go to have our workforce really understand what it means to have to be educating a diverse cohort of students.

00:39:22:11 - 00:39:47:03

Prof Beverley Webster

I think we've got a long way to go to get our educators to accept that they are not educating people who will take their jobs, who will replace them. That's the minority. We, we really need to, I feel, turn the dial on where our focus is on all of our students. But I still feel that in a lot of areas our focus is on our high performing students.

00:39:47:20 - 00:40:08:09

Prof Beverley Webster

We need to turn the dial and make sure that our support mechanisms and the way that our students are experiencing their education is inclusive and they don't feel that they're sort of the odd one out, that they're left out, that this is too much for them. I'm still seeing what I would consider disturbing numbers of students in first year failing.

00:40:08:14 - 00:40:21:02

Prof Beverley Webster

I don't think that we should have hardly any students in first year failing. So we've got work to do and around an inclusive education for a diverse cohort of students.

00:40:21:24 - 00:40:27:17

Prof Judyth Sachs

And does that mean providing sort of extra support, sort of academic scaffolding and things like that?

00:40:28:05 - 00:41:08:16

Prof Beverley Webster

It it does it does it means providing a suite of different types of support because our students are diverse and it's about providing support to get students to a stage where - there will always be a distribution of students' abilities. Definitely. But we need to have the support for the different cohorts of students in the areas that they need it. And we know what that we know what those are. You know, there's sort of academic support, there's wellbeing support. There's language support, but we need to have those in place.

00:41:08:16 - 00:41:36:17

Prof Beverley Webster

And we also need students to feel comfortable accessing that support because that's another

issue is that often students' help-seeking behavior is not as proactive as it should be. So and and again, I think we could probably do better in our messaging and communicate about the support that's available. And it's not - it's not shameful to seek support.

00:41:39:01 - 00:42:04:17

Prof Judyth Sachs

And Linley or Alex, do you want to make a comment about student wellbeing and belonging?

Prof Linley Lord

Yes, in terms of I think one of the challenges is understanding the cultural differences around how you what you report, how you access services, and that we really do need to understand that the expectations around learning and that's not just from the students.

00:42:05:19 - 00:42:39:14

Prof Linley Lord

We've also we get complaints from the parents that there are no final exams and why are we just giving their child 'homework' to do, which is the continuous assessment, and not how can they be learning if there's no final exam? So being clear around what the learning processes now look like both for the students and for their parents, and just recognizing that, you know, for many of our students English might be their *third* language, not their second language, their third language.

00:42:39:21 - 00:43:11:09

Prof Linley Lord

And we don't privilege that. We are often very critical that their English isn't good enough and they're actually operating and thinking in three languages or more. How do we start to privilege that ability, particularly from an Australian context where, myself included, not a lot of people speak multiple languages and think in multiple languages, which is just an amazing skill.

00:43:11:09 - 00:43:34:23

Prof Linley Lord

So I think, you know, those challenges around just understanding that context and privileging it rather than it being a deficit model of "they don't ask for help" or "they don't do this, they don't do that", what *do* they do, and what can we do that actually meets students where they are. But I'll leave it there and hand over to Alex.

00:43:36:18 - 00:44:13:04

Prof Alex Frino

Yeah, we did an interesting experiment at the University of Wollongong to just kind of broaden the minds of the academic staff that were teaching offshore. So we teach finance one, and accounting one, at every location that we're in, but we brought them together to teach as a unified group across the entire diversity of the crowd. And I think what I saw all

kinds of gains from doing that, including in terms of labor and cost savings.

00:44:13:08 - 00:44:47:07

Prof Alex Frino

But the one benefit that I didn't appreciate was the academics learned to deal with teaching to very, very diverse groups because Australians had very different demands to groups of students in Malaysia or or in Malaysia, for example. So so yeah, I think, you know, educating your staff and those that are dealing with students on the importance of student wellbeing and belonging and how that can enhance the learning experience is fundamental.

00:44:48:08 - 00:44:56:19

Prof Alex Frino

And so figuring out ways that you can broaden the minds of your staff teaching wherever they are, I think is really important.

00:44:58:13 - 00:45:17:11

Prof Judyth Sachs

Look, can I just ask the people who are listening to this to put their questions in the chat part rather than the Q&A part, because it's easier for me to see the chat and the Q&A and bring those together and look across a number of screens. But Peter Waring's got a question. I don't know who can answer this, and so I'll just put it out there.

00:45:17:19 - 00:45:49:02

Prof Judyth Sachs

Why do Australian universities lag UK universities in the TNE space and what can be done? What can we do as an Australian sector to compete effectively? So the Brits, many universities have successful campuses or even in some cases unsuccessful campuses. So how do you define success in terms of a transnational project and what do we as a country need to do to support transnational education?

00:45:54:03 - 00:45:56:18

Prof Beverley Webster

I think that sounds like it's for you Alex.

00:45:57:03 - 00:46:35:19

Prof Alex Frino

It's a big- Hi Peter! That's a big question. Look, I don't agree that the UK universities are ahead of the game relative to Australia. I think there's pockets of excellence, including my colleagues around the table here today that operate offshore in a very effective way. But there's always room for improvement no matter where you are. But I might let some of my other colleagues address that one.

00:46:35:21 - 00:47:24:11

Prof Linley Lord

Look, what I would add to that is one of the things in terms of what we do differently or better, in my view, is around brand Australia. Australian education is well respected and well respected internationally. I'm not sure that we always capitalize on that. I think we're getting better at it. But for me, one of the things that could make a difference in terms of just raising the profile of Australian universities in all of their locations, is that real focus on the quality of Australian education wherever you, you get it.

00:47:25:02 - 00:47:47:21

Prof Linley Lord

And then obviously, you know, at an individual level compete fiercely with each other and then collaborate when that works as well, as we do now. But, you know, if I, if I think about what I see here in Singapore, I don't see as much of that as I think we could do that would make a difference.

00:47:49:22 - 00:48:15:23

Prof Beverley Webster

I think there are more universities in the UK, so proportionately that might not hold. But I would just add to that as well. And I'll just mention Malaysia. Yes, there are a lot of UK universities represented in Malaysia, very good universities represented in Malaysia and you know I collaborate with a number of staff at those universities, but Monash has been here for 25 years.

00:48:15:23 - 00:48:44:18

Prof Beverley Webster

Curtin has been in Malaysia for a long time as well and they're very, very, very solid, large numbers of students. So whilst there may be a lot of UK universities represented, they're not necessarily large cohorts of students. And certainly they're offering quality education. But I go to what Linley said, the Australian brand is very, very strong, Australian education is very strong.

00:48:45:02 - 00:49:08:04

Prof Beverley Webster

And I often think about, you know, regulators. It's like we, we and, and in Singapore Linley will be the same. And in your many locations, Alex, is you're kind of double-regulated. So you've got double the quality, which is true for any campus that's not in its home location but I think it's a matter of maybe quality, not so much quantity.

00:49:10:14 - 00:49:35:01

Prof Judyth Sachs

Neema's put a very interesting point here, and she's noted that perspectives here are all from perspectives from Australian education backgrounds. Any thoughts on what your colleagues in host locations who are born and raised in these locations would say about the sense of

belonging your students have compared to those going to a local university, in inverted commas?

00:49:36:08 - 00:50:01:22

Prof Beverley Webster

I love this question, it's a great question. And at Monash here in Malaysia, we have we have staff from about 70 different countries, but the majority of our staff are from local Malaysia and our student body. As I said earlier, 72% of our students are from Malaysia. So local students don't have any, we don't have a barometer.

00:50:01:22 - 00:50:26:16

Prof Beverley Webster

We haven't done a survey at this point in time. But when I work with staff and when I look at the student activities, so I'm surprised you can't hear it. But underneath me in the foyer is the student activity is rife, there's music, there's all sorts of things. So my observation and it is just an observation, is that there is a sense of belonging to Monash.

00:50:26:16 - 00:50:50:19

Prof Beverley Webster

I mean, students are very, very proud to come to Monash. You know, their parents are paying a lot of money to send them to Monash, but they are very proud to be coming to Monash that we do know and staff, local Malaysian staff definitely choose to work at Monash. It's considered quite a good job. I don't want to use the word prestigious, but that is what it's considered.

00:50:51:15 - 00:51:11:16

Prof Beverley Webster

Do they feel more of a sense of belonging than students who are going to local universities? I can't really say, but I can confidently say that there is definitely a sense of belonging to Monash as a university by what I see in, in relation to the extent of the engagement with university activities.

00:51:12:08 - 00:51:23:22

Prof Judyth Sachs

So that's students. What about staff? Staff who are locally educated and locally recruited, What's that like? Because that was the sense that I got from Neema's question.

00:51:24:22 - 00:51:44:13

Prof Beverley Webster

Well, at Monash and it may be different in Singapore, but a lot of our staff are Monash alumni. We see, I don't know, it's not actually written on the selection criteria, but we have quite a large number of local staff who are Monash alumni, but of course we do have a lot of staff who have gone to local universities.

00:51:45:09 - 00:52:10:23

Prof Beverley Webster

But I think with staff because staff choose to work here, no one's forcing them to work here. So they've chosen to work here for a variety of reasons. So I think that we could confidently say that they do feel that they belong to Monash. We get a number of staff who work here and their objective is to transition to Monash in Australia and we have a lot of staff that do that.

00:52:11:22 - 00:52:22:03

Prof Beverley Webster

On the one hand it's good for their career. On the other hand we're sad to see them go. So. So that is sort of another indicator that staff feel connected to Monash.

00:52:23:00 - 00:52:54:18

Prof Alex Frino

So but if I could just add to that, because I think Beverley's hit the nail right on the head where Australian universities are operating in these different locations and there's something, there is something a bit peculiar about Australians, Australian universities, Australian culture. And staff that choose to come to us want that. And by the same token so do students because they're selecting to come to a, you know, an Australian university operating offshore rather than going to a domestic.

00:52:54:18 - 00:53:20:09

Prof Alex Frino

Yeah, So the self selection is part of the uniqueness is a result of part of the uniqueness of our offering. So I think we need to bear that in mind. We're not, we're not I don't think we're trying to duplicate or repeat what the others do, but we do want to keep the integrity of our culture and the way we do things.

00:53:21:12 - 00:53:28:00

Prof Alex Frino

To a certain extent. Well, whilst respecting the local culture norms, of course, as we operate offshore.

00:53:30:05 - 00:54:04:02

Prof Linley Lord

I agree with everything that's said. We're similar. Most of our staff, nearly all of our staff are Singaporean, choosing to work with us. A lot of them have got connections to Australia, either have studied in Australia, not necessarily really with us, but have or have got family members who studied in Australia. There's a really strong relationship between Singapore and Australia, particularly through the Colombo Plan and so a lot of respect for Australian universities.

00:54:04:07 - 00:54:31:10

Prof Linley Lord

So therefore coming to work for us sometimes it's just, you know, the national universities here in Singapore are highly competitive, they are machines in terms of, of what the academic staff are required to do. And some people go, to have a little bit more balance in life might be a good option. So we can offer that to slightly more balance.

00:54:31:17 - 00:54:55:06

Prof Linley Lord

We still get them to do lots of marking. So I don't know that we've got that down pat, but it is around that choice and it is around pride in working for a highly respected university and that would be for all of us. And that is that 'brand Australia', you're working somewhere where quality is assured.

00:54:55:16 - 00:55:18:12

Prof Linley Lord

And so that gives people great pride in the work they do. The other thing around a sense of belonging is really finding those opportunities to connect staff in, as we've talked earlier, through committees, through working parties, through research projects. So they're part of the larger organization. And that's not just our Perth campus, but across our global network.

00:55:20:07 - 00:55:47:01

Prof Judyth Sachs

One of the issues when I was in senior positions in universities was we did recruit a lot of students to Australian universities. We had lots of international students, but we never used them as a cultural resource. There wasn't that sense of reciprocity. And as a consequence, many of these students were siloed into the groups of their fellow students.

00:55:47:13 - 00:56:20:17

Prof Judyth Sachs

And I still remember when I was provost at Macquarie, I heard a student say "I didn't ever have to speak English at Macquarie", and that to me was really devastating as an educator. How can we use international students as a cultural, social, political resource and in many respects the old, the original Colombo Plan did provide outstanding links for people who are now in senior positions to, you know, maintain those relationships.

00:56:21:05 - 00:56:57:24

Prof Judyth Sachs

How can we, when it's a massified international education project, how can we see these students as a cultural resource for both the university, but the broader community?

Prof Linley Lord

Yeah, it's a tough question. Just because and I agree with you, we don't use them as a cultural

resource. I think there's sometimes a deficit model that they student that the international students are not as good as, and that's often around language proficiency in English.

00:56:58:23 - 00:57:23:06

Prof Linley Lord

Obviously, the proficiency in their own language is exceptional. So we don't privilege that and think that we can learn from that. I think it does go back to what's the activity in the classroom. Just as a very small example, when I was teaching on the MBA and we had international students in there, we set up discussions and we'd say, Now you've got a cultural resource in your group.

00:57:24:02 - 00:57:47:20

Prof Linley Lord

You need to test how this theory would work in this location. And it just changed it. Suddenly, a group of students who hadn't been able to find a way to contribute because others wouldn't let them in were the holders of knowledge that was valuable. And so it's around how do we how do we massify that? How do we spread that?

00:57:47:20 - 00:58:15:09

Prof Linley Lord

So that part of the learning process, part of the curriculum is around that, that gaining understanding of that knowledge is of benefit to all students. And I don't think we've got that yet. But that would be that is what I think we have to work towards. And so that is curriculum reform. It is learning activity reform, it is assessment reform.

00:58:15:09 - 00:58:26:13

Prof Linley Lord

And we've got to work across all of that. Then we've got at least some foundations for more inclusiveness for our students.

00:58:28:20 - 00:58:56:10

Prof Alex Frino

But I agree with Linley, but I'd like to add another piece. So there's an old kind of saying that 'culture trumps strategy' and the best reform in the world will fail unless you have people that have the right mindset to deal with it. And I think, Linley In your teaching, you were exactly the type of person that I'd want working at my university.

00:58:56:13 - 00:59:23:22

Prof Alex Frino

You've got a global mindset and you see the benefit of the student sitting that corner that that, you know, maybe from China and have all kinds of ideas and experiences that they can bring into the classroom. But you can only activate that if you have the right staff with the right mindset. So I think it begins from the hiring of and the type of staff that you go after in,

you know, to teach and fight students.

00:59:23:23 - 00:59:26:14

Prof Alex Frino

So but it's a very important point.

00:59:26:22 - 00:59:29:10

Prof Judyth Sachs

Beverley, we're running out of time but you can have the last word.

00:59:30:08 - 01:00:04:06

Prof Beverley Webster

Wouldn't we love that crystal ball when we're hiring! Malaysia is a little bit unique because local Malaysians are actually three cultures anyway. We have Malay-Malay, we have Indian-Malay and we have Chinese-Malay. So as a country it's multicultural, but of course we have students coming from all other different countries as well. We just another practical example, we use our student clubs, we leverage the capabilities of our student clubs to embrace this and to look at ways that their activities can be all inclusive of different cultures as well.

01:00:04:14 - 01:00:31:01

Prof Beverley Webster

But I'll say culture isn't the only point of difference. There are lots of other areas that students are different and can be marginalized other than culture. And so when we're talking about inclusivity, we need to look at all of the different types of ways that students are different and how can we support them to, how can we include them in that so they have a better life while they're at university?

01:00:32:10 - 01:00:55:12

Prof Judyth Sachs

It's now 4:01. I've gone over the specified time by one minute, but it's been such a wonderful discussion and I thank you for your time today. And I also thank you for your candor and your reflections on the context in which you're working. And from the comments, I think everybody's enjoyed the panel. So thank you to the three of you and enjoy the rest of your day.

01:00:56:09 - 01:00:58:04

Prof Linley Lord

Thank you, Judyth. Thank you.

01:00:58:05 - 01:00:58:20

Prof Alex Frino

Thanks, Judyth.