

Experiences as an International student residing at a residential post-graduate college

I lived in Kathleen Lumley College (KLC), a postgraduate residence affiliated to the University of Adelaide, between January 2007 and February 2008. During that period I completed a Postgraduate degree.

I found that living in the college was no different from living in any student residential community in any country. You will find adults of different age groups, with different stages of maturity and with different goals and interpretations of events.

I did not see any evidence of bullying nor as a person of colour, did I experience racism. The closest 'evidence' of racism was observing groups of Asian students dining only with each other and hanging out with each other. However, to call this racism would be a stretch as I am sure the less than English fluency and the need to be amongst people with similar cultures while one is overseas were the contributing factor. People, both Australians and students from other countries did and were open to interaction with all groups. There was NEVER any event, both sponsored by the KLC student activity board or by private organizers, where anyone or group of students were excluded. People were considerate of

I was aware that a former KLC student board member was disgruntled and he made several failed attempts at re-election; however from my observation of their behaviour during elections and during day to day interaction, I could understand why he may have felt targeted. He was combative, unfriendly and subject to histrionic interpretation of events. Investigation by the university indicated that there was no credible evidence of racism. We had fair elections, I should know I was on an election committee and we counted the ballots in front of witnesses. I doubt that anyone should blame any poor performance at university on anyone other than themselves. To do so would indicate a lack of maturity. It is not difficult to pass courses with due diligence and preparation for lectures.

Overall the atmosphere at Kathleen Lumley College was conducive to learning and to developing life long relationships. I continue to maintain contacts with colleagues and friends from all over the world. I treasure the time I spent studying in Australia and the University of Adelaide. I look positively at my year spent living at Kathleen Lumley College. There are no regrets.

I found the administration of KLC to be fair and responsive to student enquiries and concerns. They see international students as people and treated all their residents with respect. I have nothing but kind things to say about the ladies that managed the daily operations of the college. Please review the comments posted on the Adelaide Advertiser article on this issue. The overwhelming majority of comments were positive of their experience at KLC.

<http://www.news.com.au/adalaidenow/story/0,22606,25949913-2682,00.html>

From my experience in studying at the University I have two main comments about both domestic Australian and international students. I had Australian classmates who did not complete an undergraduate degree but were enrolled in Postgraduate courses. International students were required to have completed a recognized undergraduate degree. I found that I needed to assist these students in studying and preparing for papers and exams.

My second observation was that several foreign students could barely converse in English (they needed electronic translators) nor were they fluent in writing English. At times as a foreign student I was frustrated that I would have to help out both Australian and international students to ensure that group papers were coherent and had consistent tone in grammar.

Because of these observations, there were moments when I questioned why I decided to quit a highly compensation job to study in Australia.

Recommendations to the Committee

1. Make visa renewals less costly for international students who need to extend their stay in Australia. Allow renewals for at least one academic period.
2. Look beyond IELTS to ensure that international students truly have fluency in writing and speaking English. Review the testing centres conducting the IELTS to ensure that the test is being administered correctly.
3. Ensure the standards for admission of international students to match those of domestic Australian students (e.g., require a Bachelors degree from all students applying for Postgraduate study). This ensures both groups have a level playing field for academic study.
4. Encourage Australian universities to utilize the same admission tests (e.g., GMAT, GRE) as international universities. This ensures uniformity in standards. Not all Australian universities require standardized tests for postgraduate admission.
5. Provide assistance to Australian universities to obtain international accreditation (e.g., AACSB, EQUIS) for specific programmes.