Valuing Pastoral care as a Key Component in Sustaining New Zealand's Export Education Industry.

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Abstract

In recent times a “Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students” has been introduced in New Zealand. This code requires minimum standards in the international education industry in New Zealand. However there is a danger that regulated minimum standards can become prescriptive and reduce performance to the lowest common denominator (which in turn, defines the highest standard). The spirit and intention of the code is to encourage high standards in the practice of quality care, which enhances our reputation as an international study destination, but can also impact long-term strategies and consequences. This paper will argue that the practice of high quality pastoral care is a necessity in enhancing our reputation, developing a long term strategy, and maintaining integrity in our marketing. Discussion within the paper will explore the effects on the sustainability of the international education industry by endorsing and adopting high standard best practices in the care and welfare of international students. Additionally, the moral considerations that arise from the realisation that international students are people, not commodities will be explored as further motivators for quality care.

It will be argued in light of a variety of “global effects” increased competition is being experienced in the international education industry and the choice of an international education destination is made around a number of factors including price, quality, safety and the overall education experience. The country and educational institutions that gain a reputation for academic quality, cost efficiency, high standards of care and safety, in short the total education experience will be the ones preferred by those choosing an international education. In short high standard pastoral care is a key to sustainability in New Zealand’s Export Education Industry.

In this paper, we shall use *The Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students* as our site of discussion. The Code, created in 2001 and enacted in 2002, is the primary document concerning the pastoral care of international students. Despite its infancy, it along, with the accompanying guidelines, is again undergoing revision (First revision Ministry of Education, 2003) and review (First review Peddie, 2003). Here, we wish to critically use it as a point from which discussions about the practice of pastoral care can depart, particularly in relation to the long-term sustainability of New Zealand's export education industry.

Whilst a voluntary code has been in place since 1996, the enactment of the present Code in 2001 mandates pastoral care. As the brochures given to students about the Code state:

> "When students from other countries come to study in New Zealand, it is important that those students are well informed, safe, and properly cared for.
>
> New Zealand educational providers have an important responsibility for international students' welfare."

However, in this paper, we wish to approach the Code as critical policy analysts; this is not to throw the proverbial baby out with the bath-water, but rather to sift through that which is noble and realistic about the Code while simultaneously concerning ourselves with some of its underlying assumptions. We support Prunty's explanation (cited in Ball, 1994:2) that:

> The personal values and political commitment of the critical policy analyst would be anchored in the vision of a moral order in which justice, equality and individual freedom are uncompromised by the avarice of a few. The critical analyst would endorse political, social and economic arrangements where persons are never treated as a means to an end, but treated as ends in their own right.

In this paper we examine the discrepancies between the intended and the implemented, before examining previous graduates' and contemporary students' experiences in New Zealand. We then recognize the contextual effects of the Code, where we distinguish between the Code as text and the Code as discourse and the specific and the general effects of the Code. We also highlight the *perceived* practice of the Code, where the Code is seen to be performed, in principle if not in practice. Yet, the Code also has significant risks attached to it, including vis a vis domestic education and, for providers, taking responsibility (and attendant risk) for the delivery of quality as designed and measured by the State. The notion of quality in the Code is problematic; in the Code, it is both a commodity and an output, which creates particular tensions whilst also informing forms of management.

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The Code of Practice, and its attendant documents, can be seen as a set of technologies and practices which are struggled with, reshaped and realized in local settings; that is, it is both what is *intended* and what is *enacted.* To a

large extent, policies are simplistic; sometimes, they are crude tools used to build a complex structure. Policy is created in the matrix between politics, society and economy (that is, will it re-elect politicians, will the constituent(s) buy it, and how much will it cost?) In short, policies are the product of compromises at various points during the policy-making process (Ball, 1994).

The practice of policy is not dissimilar. If anything, it is more complex and unstable. Consider those facing issues with the Code of Practice; they also – in secondary schools – are facing the relatively new NCEA (National Certificate for Educational Achievement) and in universities, the PBRF (Performance Based Research Fund). Education providers are not usually given extra resources to deal with the extra bureaucracy these various policies engender; yet, amidst their usual teaching and administrative loads, they must make the policies 7%)8. The Code of Practice is the design for the building, not the building itself; therefore, gaps between expectation and experience, not to mention design and delivery, are to be expected.

The Education Review Office (ERO) distinguishes two types of quality, namely outcomes and process. To quote ERO (2003:6):

> Outcome indicators [are] things [that are] directly connected to the merit of what is being evaluated. They describe the +)-,#)-* by which judgments are made, and they can have specific outcome measures attached to them. In schools, measured student achievement is an example of an outcome indicator.
>
> Process indicators [are] proxies for desirable outcomes but not directly connected to those outcomes. In schools, examples of process indicators are the quality of teaching and the quality of assessment. These are indirect indicators of merit, but do not in themselves guarantee high levels of student achievement.

The $%&# %' ()*+,-+# '%) ,"# (*.,%)*/ $*)# %' 01,#)1*,-%1*/ 2,3&#1,. can be seen to be concerned with outcome indicators, which are quantifiable: the number of staff allocated to international students' welfare, or the procedural documents for complaints, or the information collected on home-stay parents, can all be measured. Arguably, the Code of Practice is less concerned with the process, which in the Code at least, is vague, unquantifiable and, importantly, open to varying interpretations.

In this paper, however, we are concerned with the 4)%+#..: how the pastoral care of international students goes from being inscribed in legislation to being practically implemented in various localities. To consider this, we draw on our research on the experiences of New Zealand graduates and current international students, in particular issues surrounding their pastoral care (McGrath, 1998; McGrath, 2003a; McGrath, 2003b; McGrath and Butcher, 2001; McGrath and Butcher, 2003; Butcher, 2002; Butcher et al, 2002; Butcher et al, 2003, McGrath and Butcher, 2004.).

Previous graduates' experiences in New Zealand

The experiences of previous graduates in New Zealand, in particular the Colombo Plan students are enlightening. Admittedly, the numbers were smaller, their presence was novel, and there was no ostensible moneymaking generative scheme in action. Nevertheless, the largely positive experiences of these Colombo Plan students in the communities in which they were a part suggests that the pastoral care provided to them – even if it was discursively unknown as such at the time – contributed to an overall positive impression of New Zealand, to such an extent that these students in turn sent their children to New Zealand (cf. Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2001).

Take the example of a former student we will call John. From Malaysia, John was an international student in New Zealand during the 1970s. Recently he returned to New Zealand, this time to settle his children into university here. He expressed great interest in the ongoing work we were doing on the pastoral care of international students. He saw pastoral care as being very important and it was a crucial factor in deciding to send his own children to New Zealand. He spoke of how, because of his own positive experiences as a student in the 1970s, New Zealand was a natural choice for a study destination for his children. His impression was that Australia was racist and that America was too far away, too expensive, and too dangerous (cf. Butcher, 2002; Lewis and Butcher, 2003). He had no problem with Canada or Britain but again his own experiences, which he had often relayed favourably to his children, dictated his preference toward New Zealand for his own children. He suggested that his experiences were not unique; many of his contemporaries had similar positive experiences, gained good impressions of the friendliness and helpfulness of New Zealanders and the high standard of lecturing. Our friend John is correct; his contemporaries did have positive experiences and research bears this out (Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade, 2001).

But John did more than send his children to New Zealand. As an influential CEO of a large corporation, he recommends New Zealand to his business partners and community leaders. For twenty years, John has proactively supported New Zealand, in business and in recommending others' to study here. After John, came his brother, two cousins, a high school classmate, numerous friends and business associates, and – as he practiced as a teacher upon his return to Malaysia – many of his own students. The common theme in his recommendations seemed to be dominated by his experience of a caring society and a safe society, a helpful context and one that meets the other significant requirements for international education such as cost and quality. Speculatively, he may have influenced 25 to 30 students in choosing to study in New Zealand. To consider this mathematically, we may get an equation like this:

30 students (average fee + average living expense + plus associated expenses + GST) x 3 years (average course) = About $3 million in continuing business for New Zealand.

This does not account for the multiplying effects of those he sent here, including his three children, currently studying in New Zealand. Of course, some of his non-student peers may have come to New Zealand as tourists, bought New Zealand products, invested in New Zealand's economy or themselves recommended New Zealand. There is a ripple effect, which diagrammatically can be seen as:

Family & friends
Community
Nation

As returnees move up into the higher echelons of their career and social standing, so does their influence. It's a good thing our friend had a good experience here. We hope his children will have the same experiences.

In our research, graduates noted that the pastoral care, which impacted them positively was identifiable in the following ways:

- Academic assistance in both adjusting to a new situation and in learning support;
- Lifestyle assistance, particularly in terms of accommodation, dealing with homesickness, making friends and handling relationships, and general life skills such as cooking, shopping and driving; and,
- Assistance when things went wrong, particularly at times of sickness, accidents, relationship breakdowns, bereavement or family crises.

Significantly, the large majority of this pastoral care came from the informal sector. Equally significantly, the value of friendships with New Zealanders was highlighted as a key care mechanism and the majority of returnees indicated a regret that they had not given more time to making more friends amongst New Zealanders (cf. Butcher et al, 2002).

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Is this true of contemporary international students? Well, in one way we simply do not know. Regrettably, there has never been a longitudinal study undertaken of international students in New Zealand. Furthermore, given the variegated experiences of international students, not to mention the diverse range of 4)%5-&& experiences (e.g. education, interaction with the host community, vicarious experiences of others), it would not be possible to isolate pastoral care provisions – at least in the form outlined in the Code – and their long-term effects. This is not necessarily negative; rather it demonstrates the significant importance of -1,#9)*,-19 the pastoral care of international students into all facets of their experiences, not dividing it into relatively arbitrary and forced quantifiable experiential categories.

To reiterate, while the Code is concerned with the various experiential encounters of international students, from their home-stay to their driving license to the marketing that brings them here, it nevertheless creates a false distinction between these categories, as if international students live their lives and allocate their experiences according to predefined notions of care. More importantly, it divides their pastoral care from their educative care. This is

perhaps deliberate: international students' education is regulated by other means, through the NZVCC, NZQA and ERO, to name only three. Nevertheless, if a student is encountering difficult or stressful situations in their home-stay, it will affect their performance in the classroom; similarly, if a student is performing poorly in class, they may redirect their poor performance into bad behaviour or isolationism. Treating these issues individually is treating only the symptoms and not the central problem. To this end, it could be argued that the Code is primarily concerned with treating the symptoms. For example, if a student has a poor home-stay experience, we shift them away to a different home-stay, castigate the home-stay provider and hope that all improves, when in fact their poor experiences at their home-stay may be a reflection of other pastoral or educative difficulties.

Nevertheless, research by Ward (2002, 2004) indicates the following discrepancies between international students' expectations and experiences:

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Expectation	% Expected	% Experienced
Understand NZ English	80	57
Express myself effectively in English	77	40
Get good grades	87	28
Form friendships with NZers	91	41
Enjoy socialising with NZers	82	52
Understand NZ social customs	82	34
Be accepted by NZers	72	37
Maintain a positive outlook	88	69
Feel stressed	31	49
Have enough money	62	51
Have no problems with my living arrangements	59	70

The socialization and friendships with New Zealanders, money difficulties, handling stress, understanding New Zealand customs and maintaining a positive outlook are not aspects featured in the Code of Practice. Amongst other things, their absence from the Code demonstrates that:

- The Code in itself is not enough as a pastoral care mechanism;
- That international students' experiences cannot be easily delineated from each other or, more importantly, from their expectations;
- That these expectations derive from sources that may be less than truthful about the experiences of and reception towards international students in New Zealand; and

- While the Code of Practice may address these areas within its general principles (which is debatable), the way it is 'read' may differ between policy-makers and practitioners and between different contexts, historical and practical.

The contextual effects of the Code

Ball (1994) distinguishes between policy as text and policy as discourse. He argues that policy as text is complexly +%&#&(via compromises, authoritative public interpretations and reinterpretations) and complexly &#+%&#&(via interpretations, experiences, content, skills and resources). That is not to say that the delivery of a policy will be fundamentally different from its design; policy-makers, whilst not controlling the meanings of their texts, nevertheless make a concerted effort to achieve as 'correct' a reading as possible. However, what policy-makers and politicians cannot necessarily control are the changing environments in which these policies enact their meaning. Thus, events at the Columbus Academy in West Auckland, SARS, and the public backlash against Asian student drivers and the apparent rise in abortions amongst Asian students all served as impetuses in shifting the environment and, in some cases, resulted in a change in, or emendation to, policy.

Similarly, we must consider the Code of Practice not as a stand-alone policy document, created out of a vacuum, but as one of several policy documents, concerned with quality and education on one level, and the Government's role in providing so-called public services on the other. It is instructive to go back as far as the 1987 Treasury ?%5#)1@#1, A*1*9#@#1, reports and to consider the reforms derived from the Picot Report, the liberalization of trading in education both in New Zealand and abroad, and the ongoing complex issues surrounding the funding of New Zealand's tertiary sector (cf. Butcher, 2003).

Ball (1994) differentiates between first-order effects and second-order effects. First order effects are changes in practice or structure while second-order effects are the impact of these changes on patterns of opportunity, social access and social justice. Arguably, whilst the implementation of the Code can be seen via changes in second-order effects, changes in first-order effects are less forthcoming. This can be explained thus: on one level, regulation of the pastoral care of international students has been necessary because some education/business managers in their preoccupation with the bottom-line and profit motive have been unwilling to put some of the economic returns back into the care and well being of the international students. Many educational providers have been very reluctant to finance their care provisions. They point to the GST (and now to the levy) taken by the Government and say it's their responsibility or that the students should pay for it. On one hand, this is a user-pays mentality, which is also behind the student loan scheme for domestic students. On the other hand, however, it also highlights issues surrounding the funding of education.

There will also be a difference between 9#1#)*/ effects of policy and .4#+-'-+ effects. Generally, with the examples above, the Government responded and

was seen to respond. Specifically, the effects will vary across place. Furthermore, there is not *one* environment in which these policies are decoded; there are several environments. The enactment of the Code of Practice will be quite different in a well-resourced decile ten school from a poorer decile one school; and will be different from a university with 30,000 students to a private provider with only a few hundred students. Here, the ongoing revisions to the Code become problematic. The Code can too easily become prescriptive and force these very diverse 'players' into an uncomfortable (and arguably unnecessary) straitjacket of conformity. In the current revisions being undertaken attention is being focused on shifting aspects currently contained in the guidelines into the code itself thus making the exemplars the prescription and in the process risking contextual flexibility, and adaptability. The move to increase the prescriptive aspect of the code in this way may in part provide outcome indicators that ease evaluation and in part provide prescription that reduces the need for professional development of staff. The concept of a Code that sets out minimum standards for pastoral care is a good thing but to increase the prescriptive aspect of it whilst seeking to have a one documents that covers all situations ranging through all types of educational environment in which international students are found is a questionable strategy as a means of addressing the need to improve pastoral care.

From a policy-maker's perspective, this may be the ideal situation, for it arguably gives more control to the policy-makers and politicians whilst also creating the perception, if not also the reality, of a united industry (cf. Lewis, 2003). However, as Ball (1994:18-19) persuasively argues:

> The point is that we cannot predict or assume how [policies] will be acted on in every case or every setting, or what their immediate effect will be, or what room for manoeuvre actors will find for themselves. Action may be constrained differently (even tightly) but it is not determined by policy. Solutions to the problems posed by policy texts will be localized and should be expected to display ad hocery and messiness.

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Policies tell you what to do, not how to do it. Therefore, schools and other education providers respond to the Code – in its various facets – in different ways. Woods (cited in Ball, 1994:129) identifies two forms of responsiveness:

- "Whether schools are making changes as a result of choice and heightened competition and, if so, whether such changes are substantive (to do with policies, practices, curriculum, organization and the like) rather than concerned only with image and activities aimed at promoting the school [and]
- Whether such changes result in schooling which more closely accords with parental wishes (related to this how school decision makers decide what changes to make and, in particular, how they assess what parents look for in a school or what innovations might attract parents)."

To express it in relation to the Code: education providers could respond to the Code in a cosmetic fashion, i.e. cross all the t's and dot all the i's on the paperwork but make no substantive nor fundamental changes to their structures or pastoral or education delivery. They could similarly respond to the marketing potential of the Code (and the Code has significant marketability; cf. Lewis, 2003) by promoting their largely cosmetic adherence to its principles, supported by photographs of a diverse group of smiling well-groomed international students. Only the more astute 'consumers' of education will be able to peel beneath this veneer of marketing to distinguish between packaging and content.

Indeed, it can be argued that the Code, in concert with the general underlying neo-liberal ideology and the introduction of market forces into private and public education alike, has meant that education providers are now working in an environment "in which image and impression management are becoming as important as the educational process" (Ball, 1994:51). Educational providers in West Auckland, have employed public relations firms to 'market' their school, domestically and internationally. Similarly, the apparently high reputations of Epsom Girls' and Auckland Grammar Schools could be seen to influence the high house prices in Auckland's Epsom region. This is good "impression management".

Yet, failing students or, worse still, having out-of-control international students, is poor "impression management". Yet, very often, the very schools that can afford (in all senses of the word) to manage their reputations can also afford (ditto) to +'"%%.#the best international students, can afford to demographically diversify their international student population, and can afford staff with specific responsibility for the welfare and education of international students. In turn, this perpetuates already existing inequalities in public education.

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Public education providers have a further issue, namely responding to the domestic consumers. The domestic students are still (albeit decreasingly so) public providers' 'bread and butter'; and at primary and secondary school levels they are governed by Boards of Trustees who, amongst other issues, have the interests of their domestic-student children at heart. If anything, the domestic market offers significantly more surety and stability than the international market, but if a school's energies (at the multi-layered levels of governance), and responsibilities (to its various stakeholders), are spent on international students at the expense of domestic students then aside from potentially jeopardizing their legislative responsibilities, schools are also potentially ignoring their greatest constituents, the parents of their domestic student market. If anything, the restricted choice that school zoning offers parents' alleviates some of the risk and responsibility for schools in this.

Along these lines, the Code, particularly alongside the levy, also places risk and responsibility on the schools. The key discourses here are those of self-management (generally as a sector if and when the administration of the Code is removed from direct control of the Ministry of Education, and

specifically as schools seek to create, maintain or interfere in quality control directives) and indicators of performance (adherence to the Code of Practice, a positive report from the Education Review Office, a recognition of qualifications by the NZQA etc.). The indicators of performance in particular are state-controlled (the State determines what is and is not 'quality', differentiates between different types of quality such as pastoral care and education, and determines the mechanisms for the audit of that 'quality', such as the control of funding) but provider-delivered. Therefore, it becomes possible for the State to blame providers for faults in the delivery of the Code (or any other quality mechanism) even if those faults are inherent in the policies. In short, providers are left to deal with the contradictions that policies create. The State has the power but no responsibility and the providers have all the responsibility and very little power.

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The relationship between power and responsibility can also be seen in the expectations placed on the delivery of quality as defined in the Code. Ball (1994) also argues that policy is &-.+%3).#6Discourses embody the meaning of propositions and words; they are about what can be said, done and thought as well as about who can say, do and think. 'Quality' itself is a discourse and the Code of Practice defines 'quality' for us, for it is against this constituted quality that education providers will be assessed. Their work, therefore, "is thus increasingly viewed and evaluated solely in terms of output measures (test scores and examination performance) set against cost (subject time, class size, resource requirement)" (Ball, 1994:51). Here, quality +%1,)%is set alongside economic rationalism: deliver #"-+-#1, quality at the lowest cost.

The importance is to recognize the embeddedness of certain aspects of quality in the Code as well as the *B.#1+# of other aspects. For example, despite suggested revisions to the Code on international primary school students (Ministry of Education, 2003a), the draft revised Code made no mention of them (Ministry of Education, 2003b); we suspect that such an omission is deliberate. However these were addressed as a result of a ministerial directive and the Code altered to require primary students under a certain age to be living in the care of a parent resident in New Zealand. This solution to what was perceived as a problem by a "one fits all" regulation produced for many primary schools an undesirable consequence. It limited the activities of the providers who also met the intention of the code in regard to young primary age children and provided high qualities of pastoral care as well as limiting those providers whose activities had created concern.

The quality issues surrounding primary school students are full of complexities and competing constituencies. It is useful for there to be debate at all levels regarding income generation and welfare provision and it is good that the Code ensures a debate happens. However debate aside education providers still have to grapple with the mechanics of the Code. Yet this discourse of quality informs a discourse of management. Quality is both a commodity and an output; it transforms the management of education providers from being one concerned primarily with the delivery of a particular education to being

one concerned with entrepreneurial innovation and income-generation. Income-generation and welfare-provision are not necessarily mutually exclusive, yet there is a natural division between them. The challenge for education providers is to move away from keeping up appearances of quality in order to maintain reputations, receive funding, and recruit students and to genuinely practice quality through fundamental changes to their perceptions of education and their students, pedagogic and curriculum changes, and integrative support.

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Given the recent (re)creations, contemporary changes, and ongoing applications of the Code of Practice, there has been very little critical analysis of it (however, see Lewis, 2003 and Lewis & Butcher,2003). We hope, however, that there is an increase in critical debate about the Code, its associates, and its assumptions, for such a critical debate should seek to sharpen its utility. We also hope that any critical debate does not become entrenched in debates about the Code as a form of political governance, or become just a nit-picking task of its flaws. To be sure, debate needs to critically engage with the Code's theoretical (or, more likely, multi-ideological) assumptions, and in so doing illustrate some of the difficulties inherent in its outworking, but it must do so within a discourse of social ethics. For both the advocates of a /*-..#C D*-)# international education market and those in favour of regulation (and, indeed, those that are positioned elsewhere), Stephen Ball's (1994:144) warning is pertinent: "[t]he majesty of the market is so stridently trumpeted by its advocates that all else is in danger of being drowned out". The 'market' (however that might be defined) is easy to defend ('liberating') and easy to oppose ('exploitative'), yet any critical engagement with the international education 'market' needs to take the analysis further. To quote Plant (cited in Ball, 1994:144):

> Without some sense of civic virtue, or orientation to values which are not of a self-regulating kind, market behaviour will require growing regulation in the interests of the market itself. Such regulation, in turn, may become increasingly problematic if there is not some more general concern to cultivate a sense of social and civic responsibility, which, as I have suggested, may become more and more difficult with the erosion of social values in favour of private and self-interested ones.

Indeed it is easy enough to criticize; however, we seek to identify points of possible navigation to move forward.

It is not enough to point to particular community organizations, or education providers, or even individuals that are concerned with cultivating this social and civic responsibility; it is necessary to consider the political and social dynamics in which these organizations, providers and individuals exist. It is necessary to critically consider the following:

- Education policy that ignores the involvement of international students in its development or the needs of international students in its application (Butcher, 2003);

- The economic preference of considering international students as commodities (*full-fee paying* students) first and as individuals who can contribute cultural capital second;
- Immigration policies that favour international students for their contribution to the labour market without accounting for any number of other reasons for migrating to New Zealand or for the significant (discriminatory) barriers that they might encounter in entering the labour market in the first instance; and
- An apparently growing social resentment toward migrants in general and Asians in particular, especially in the Auckland region (Ho and Bedford, in press).

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This integrates analysis in such a way that it considers the *morality* of market trends. It brings debate into the public sphere and brings into the open both the design and the deviance of discourse. Moreover, it challenges the aggressive individualistic principles of the market. Again, to quote Ball (1994:147):

> Analytically, it is important to move beyond the superficialities of the political rhetorics of parental choice and school competition (articulated through concepts like responsiveness) and to begin to explore the social costs incurred and moral depredations wrought in the education market place.

The *practice* of the pastoral care of international students strikes right at the heart of the *morality* in the industry. It highlights reciprocity: a positive experience given to an international student may see that same international student, as an influential graduate in years to come, return that positive experience in kind. Some argue that it is just sufficient to provide education to a good standard and that is it: "They come, they pay and we deliver." Care is seen as peripheral and better undertaken by those outside the 'core business' of providing an education. For New Zealand's benefit, some would argue, we need to maximize the return by minimizing the cost to us and obtaining the best return for our product. This is all very well in an industry of tradable commodities, but the one feature that distinguishes the export education market from the other four largest export industries in New Zealand is that while we may be selling education, we are dealing with people (cf. Butcher et al, 2002). Such pure self-interest is morally reprehensible and it can severely damage our reputation. However, we see this as a result of the compromises of the twin liberal ideals of social welfare and egalitarian democracy through education policy and agree with Peters and Olssen (1994:194) that:

> The result has been the establishment of a neo-liberal policy paradigm, which emphasizes individual responsibility…at the expense of collective responsibility; it accepts unchecked the burgeoning of inequalities in the name of individual freedom of choice…[and] it favours the institutions of the market and the quasi-market over the social-democratic constellation of the market, the state and civil society.

We believe that education should not be a business of commodities. In export education we risk emphasizing profit at the expense of the 4)*+,-+# of pastoral care. To do that is to imperil our long-term viability internationally. Comments by former CEO of the Asia 2000 Foundation Tim Groser (2000) are instructive:

> When I was in Beijing about three weeks ago, I had a very interesting discussion with a Vice Minister of Education…. I then however, made a mistake: I referred to the sale of our education services as an 'industry' He immediately took issue with me…. He went on to say that the Chinese families who sent their children to New Zealand for study had probably saved up for decades to do so and we in New Zealand had a moral responsibility to ensure they received in return a first rate education

For the industry to gain the best returns over the long haul the focus has to be on providing positive value in the total experience for international students, rather than on processing through the largest numbers of students. The Government may have recognized this in part, although we are also conscious that they are placing responsibility on providers and the community in general, to quote Maharey (2001):

> In many ways export education is a success story, but there are some risks to balance the immense opportunities. In particular, providers, and indeed the New Zealand community as a whole need to ensure that the quality of care and personal safety and security of international students is of the highest standard."

However, we also wish to note that the roles that community organizations play in providing pastoral care are significant and instrumental in engendering positive experiences for international students (cf Butcher et Al, 2002, McGrath and Butcher,2004)

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At an institutional level, however, we argue that there are several mechanisms through which the practice of quality can be a sustaining feature of the export education industry. We believe that there should be two forms of pastoral care, reactive and proactive.

Reactive care should be the exception and not the rule. It should be provision made for significant crises such as accidents, bereavement, and acute culture shock, amongst the plethora of other potential crises that international students encounter. Well-thought through crisis intervention reflects well on an institution when things go wrong for a student. Equally so, poor quality care or no care reduces significantly our reputation nationally and internationally. These crises tend to clearly differentiate between those for whom quality is an unnecessary appendage and those for whom quality is a fundamental principle of practice. Reactive pastoral care, however, is not responding ad hoc to twice the number of international student enrolments than expected or with pedagogic difficulties or issues surrounding resourcing. These measures should be strategically addressed not reactively responded to.

The second form of pastoral care is *proactive.* This is the care that anticipates and provides programmes to aid the well being of the student. Proactive care includes such things as:

- Academic orientation for students coming from vastly different education systems; living skills for living in NZ society;
- Community friendship programmes to make up for the lack of extended family and friends;
- Orientation to health and living issues such as sexual norms and mores; and,
- Assistance with handling the regulation and law within our society, in particular tenancy, driving, consumer and employment law.

Proactive care programmes tend to enhance the quality of sojourn and avoid many of the problems a student may encounter. Proactive programmes address the issue of expectation and provide education and information that enhances the well being of the student. Frequently they draw on the wider community and through that contact provides host culture friends who aid the process of adjustment and well being.

We also note the absence of the voice of the international students themselves in debates surrounding their pastoral care. Of all the stakeholders in this industry, international students are arguably amongst the most important and yet, by and large, they do not sit on advisory boards, have little input into policy development, and little representation on governing bodies of education providers. To be sure, they lend their voice through research, but their direct influence is minimal. They may not wish to participate, but we should at least give them that choice.

Also, professional development amongst the staff of institutions both academic and ancillary is important if we are going to become better in the way we use our existing resources for pastoral care. Most staff in New Zealand are not specifically trained to deal with international students. By contrast, the professional development of international student advisers in Australia is a high priority. It is time to consider offering courses in international education in our universities and an accreditation system for our international student support workers and managers to ensure and maintain quality provisions at that level.

As we discuss in more detail elsewhere (McGrath and Butcher, 2003), there are significant issues surrounding the miniscule funding available specifically for the pastoral care of international students. It is not enough to say that this money will come from the levy, especially when considering the many other measures and organisations the levy is meant to pay for. If the export education sector continues to grow rapidly it seems probable that there will be greater need for additional resources for the pastoral care of FFP students. It is dangerous to reduce funding in this area when the numbers are increasing; we suggest that there needs to be some pro rata guide for funding here.

A Final Thought: Long-Term Downturn or Timely Lesson?

In interviewing graduates who have returned home a commonly repeated phrase was " I would recommend NZ as a study destination provided they can continue to deliver at least the quality of experience I had." Graduates from the past are sure of the good experiences they had. Students in the present need to have the same experience if they are to recommend for the future. Today we need quality pastoral care if tomorrow we are to have a sustainable international education sector. Pastoral care is one of the factors that will assist sustainability. Without it, providing long-term positive experiences for international students who study in New Zealand will be a pipe

And this leads onto our final point. The recent (or is it continuing?) downturn in the enrolments of international students has seen much disappointment and dismay expressed at the (sometimes significant) financial cost to institutions (and, by association, to the country as a whole). What, however, is the social cost of this downturn; or, to look at it a different way, is social cost a causal factor in this downturn?

There has been much speculation about the cause of this downturn and it would seem that there have been a variety of largely external factors that have been attributed blame. We shall never conclusively know why there was a downturn in the market, and while SARS, the high New Zealand dollar, changing immigration policies and education prices in the United Kingdom and Australia, and international political unrest may all be quite plausible reasons, they are also quite convenient reasons for the downturn. And their convenience (and, indeed, their largely external origins) also makes them easy scapegoats. However, what if the downturn is the result of more substantive and fundamental problems within New Zealand? To be sure, it is speculation, but so are the other potential reasons named above. Are we prepared to even consider this possibility and, if so, how shall we respond?

A recent example of a response has been an initiative from Education New Zealand supposedly on behalf of the industry. The initiative "7*. ,)-99#)#& BE ,"# ."-',-19 *1& -1 .%@# *)#*. '*//-19 &#@*1& '%) =#7 >#*/*1&F. #&3+*,-%1 .#)5-+#.G *1& ,"3. ,"# 1##& ,% -15#., * 9)#*,#) 4)%4%),-%1 %' ,"# -1&3.,)EF. 9#1#)-+ '31&. -1,% &#@*1& 9#1#)*,-%1 HThe result was that the ENZ Board and the Ministry of Education decided to increase the monies available to promote New Zealand as an education destination. To achieve this the government gave $846,000, approved a one off sum of $500,000 from the accumulated surplus in the International Levy account and altered the profile for expenditure of levy funds. The result of these changes was:

> to increase the budget for Marketing, Promotion and Communication from $800,000 to $2,696,000 over 300% increase
> and reduce the budget for capability development from $845,000 to $280,000 a 67% reduction.

Increasing demand generation is an appropriate response and it is reasonable to look for monies to do this however questions need to be asked as to why monies must be taken from capability development. Considering the reasons

for downturn it is surprising that monies have been reduced in the area of capability development as increasingly New Zealand's reputation built around care and quality of experience has been threatened by increasingly knowledge in the public domain of failure to provide care and a good experience. The expectations identified as being unmet (Ward 2004, McGrath and Butcher 2004), the high and low profile failure of education institutions, the generally acknowledged need for professional development amongst the many staff and community and business groups servicing the international student market and the many individual stories of negative experience within New Zealand and our educational environments indicate a need for our capability within to improve. Professional development of pastoral care staff, community organisations and service businesses should be part of a response to the downturn if indeed we recognise lacks thereof are a contributory factor to downturn.

The quality of the product is important in regard to sustainability as the quality of the sales programme. Surely there is logic in spending more to increase demand generation but it will only be sustainable with being able to provide a high quality overall experience. Questions must be asked of the example set here by the lead body in the industry, Education New Zealand, and of the ministry in allowing it. The stewardship of the Levy funds in reducing funding drastically to this important aspect is questionable in terms of the intentions of The Education (Tertiary Reform) Amendment Act 2002 that governs the use of the Levy.

Are we getting our response right? From the above example it seems not, however not all education institutions and organizations respond in this way nor do they need to. There have been improvements in the quality of pastoral care in many institutions. We started this discussion with reference to The Code of Practice for the Pastoral Care of International Students. Certainly its enactment has contributed to quality and improvements but will the gains made stemming from Code initiatives when the student numbers were rising continue in a context of downturn and focus being shifted to demand generation? Somewhere in all of this a realization relating to balance is needed. We do need to sell our international education and what we sell should be of high quality. People are not commodities and international students are people. Care for them is of paramount importance not because we desire their recommendation to sustain our industry but because they are people however the spin off from quality care assists greatly in the marketing of r international education.

Considering the morality of the market, critiquing it where necessary and facilitating it where required are the steps forward. Perhaps now we are learning that welfare is worthwhile and the pastoral care of international students is key to the long-term sustainability of New Zealand's export education industry.

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