

# All Party Parliamentary Group for International Students

## Submission to the Parliamentary Inquiry

### Preamble-

The following submission is made on behalf of Goodenough College, London.

Goodenough College is an educational charity which exists to provide a safe and stimulating residential context for some 700 international and British postgraduate students, chiefly studying for their advanced degrees in London.

This submission consists of two parts-

- (1) A set of responses framed in the three areas of the Inquiry to which the College's practices are most relevant (and might therefore most benefit from the College's insights.)
- (2) A speech given by Mr Eric Tracey, Chairman of the Board of Governors, in October 2017 which is of relevance to the general topic of the inquiry.

### Submission Headlines-

- (1) Goodenough College experiences international students entirely as 'opportunity' and not as 'problem'.
- (2) Goodenough College asks HM Government to revisit and restore a post-study visa regime in the United Kingdom

## Part 1

### **‘In the Classroom’**

Goodenough College is a residential, but not formally a teaching, institution. We do not have classrooms but we do provide a specific locus and space for lived intercultural engagement. We were founded in 1931 by Frederick Goodenough, Chairman of Barclays Bank, to encourage the proper and fruitful mixing of postgraduate students from diverse cultures and nations with priority to those from the Commonwealth. An early exercise in what might be termed ‘optimistic internationalism’, Goodenough College has for decades provided a home for some of the world’s brightest students to associate and to learn more about themselves and about the distinctive cultures and values of the United Kingdom.

The College experience is founded on the twin pillars of ‘conviviality’ and ‘commensality’, living together and eating together. We experience our intercultural mix entirely as ‘opportunity’ and creative challenge. We maintain a base level of UK students at 12% to encourage the thorough cultural acclimatising of our international postgraduate students. Without this firm base of UK postgraduate students we would risk the development of an ‘international ghetto’ effect. The UK base population ensures the presence of a British cultural hegemony which we believe is appropriate to an institution situated in the heart of London.

### **‘In our communities’**

Goodenough College has developed a robust pattern of volunteer student engagement with specified partners in our local community. In 2016 the College retained a consultant to carry out an audit of its local voluntary engagement. As a result of this exercise, a number of local community partners were identified for synergistic working. A

homelessness charity, a befriending the elderly scheme, the homework club of a local primary school and the mentor programme of a local FE college were all identified as pillars of a targeted approach. These external involvements allow our talented international postgraduate students to perform a series of positive interactions with local audiences and constituencies. The aim is the development of altruistic empathy and a broad social understanding.

We do not typically experience any linguistic barriers to local immersion- the current student visa system works well in this regard for us and we find that all of our arriving students are fully functional in transactional English.

We experience our international students wholly as 'gift' in our context and have very little experience of them standing in tension with any elements in our local community.

As the above describes, we actively seek the widest interactions possible with all sectors of the Bloomsbury demographic and attempt to offer our students the broadest of social and interpersonal experiences.

We sponsor inter-institutional engagement - the Bloomsbury Festival, the Bloomsbury Breakfast and the Knowledge Quarter to name but three. Within the College we offer a wide range of lectures, poetry evenings, seminars, conferences and recitals, many of which are open to the attendance of our local community free of charge. This we believe actively serves to sponsor intra-community cohesion. Goodenough College in this way has become a prime forum for local intercultural dialogue and a prime vehicle for the fruitful inclusion of international students in the local host community.

## ‘In Research, Trade, Soft Power’

The Goodenough College community is entirely constituted of British and international graduate students - Masters and PhD students. Currently they end their time with us as acknowledged experts in their chosen fields of research. Many of our international students wish to remain in the UK and to contribute to the academic and social communities in which they have been formed and nurtured but very few are able to. We suggest that in most cases this represents a considerable loss to the research knowledge base of the UK and we would urge that HM Government considers ways through the visa system of harnessing their commitment and expertise. In particular we would commend the revisiting of the issue of post-study visa provision in the UK.

In our experience the post-study work visa system was a positive attractor for international postgraduate students considering whether to study in the UK. Those who resided at Goodenough College viewed their graduate degree and their subsequent work experience as complementary; taken together they provided a more complete preparation for their longer term career ambitions than a Masters or Doctoral qualification alone. The ending of the post-study work visa brought a degree of disillusionment with the British authorities amongst our students; many felt they had been denied the opportunity to make a contribution to the UK and its economy. The high level of university fees and the cost of living in London exacerbated the sense that international students were being exploited as a commodity rather than being welcomed and valued for their talents.

Notwithstanding the demise of the post-study work visa, when international students depart the UK their experiences while in London can contribute signally to what Joseph Nye might term the UK’s ‘soft power projection’. At Goodenough College we actively cultivate the ‘representative’ function of all our students while they

are in residence and we believe that they go on to perform a useful ambassadorial function for us as our globally distributed alumni. We suggest that the British Council might continue to refine its interest in cultivating the promotional value of globally distributed students with UK university degrees. We would finally reflect that the willingness of such students to help with the project of a 'global Britain' must to some degree depend on the experience of welcome and hospitality they will have enjoyed during their time in the country. Any government policy which stigmatises - or is perceived to stigmatise - international students risks compromising much of the goodwill that might be expected to accrue during their period of study here.

## Part 2

A Speech given on Founders' Day, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017, by Mr Eric Tracey, Chairman of the Board of Governors, in the Great Hall of Goodenough College

*Kia Ora*

*Tena koutou, tena koutou, tena koutou katoa*

Recognising the international diversity of today's audience (and indeed, any gathering at this College), and being the first non-English Chairman of the College, I felt it appropriate to wear this magnificent feather cloak and offer a few words of greeting in Maori. Now, in English,

*'You are all very welcome'.*

A few words on the Maori cloak. It is a privilege and an honour to be allowed to wear such a cloak made of such wonderful feathers. A cloak for leaders.

To deliver the Founder's Day oration is a great honour, and one that I cherish. Indeed, I cherish every aspect of my association with this great College. We stand for the encouragement of respect and understanding between individuals, between nations and between faiths. This is clearly as important in the world today as it was in the late 1920's and early 1930's, when Frederick Goodenough's vision was so boldly imagined and then created.

Our Founder foresaw and delivered us the means of providing not just the ambience of an Oxbridge College, but one with a Hall as grand as and far bigger than any at those Colleges. The Great Hall and the other public spaces within the College contribute greatly to your ability to build multi-faceted lives here and become part of a very rich and supportive community.

In the course of 86 years, from our beginning as a Commonwealth-only institution, our doors have become open to all nations. Our Founder would be proud indeed that we currently have near 80 countries represented here and that our Members are studying a range of subjects unimaginable in 1931.

Our Founder would surely also allow himself a satisfied smile at the extent of our Royal Patronage. Not just that we are so fortunate to have Her Majesty the Queen as our Patron, but also how we have benefited by the interest she has shown in the College. Those of us who enjoyed her visit to William Goodenough House last December will never forget it. It was her 11<sup>th</sup> visit to the College! I am reliably informed that no other Charity of which she is Patron has seen her as often. Her enthusiasm for meeting members was palpable and appreciated by those from Commonwealth and non-Commonwealth countries alike – as is evident from the smiles in the many

photographs on the walls downstairs. Her parting remark of “*I’ll be back*” showed a love for what we are, way beyond duty.

Founder’s Day is also a day to acknowledge our Alumni. In one sense the College is its Alumni. It is our alumni who spread the word of what we stand for most effectively. They speak fondly of their time here and what it has done for them and of the friendships formed and the lessons learned about others’ points of view.

My compatriot, Helen Clark has written of her time here as:

*...a positive experience...which put me on a successful career path... to an academic post at Auckland University, to being a Member of Parliament for over 27 years, to being Prime Minister of New Zealand for 9 years, and to my...position as the Administrator of the United Nations Development Programme...*

I find it hard to speak of famous Alumni without mention of F.W. De Klerk, the former President of South Africa. He has oft spoken of how it was here that he first realised the power of intellectual discourse and debate. When we look at those iconic photographs of Nelson Mandela walking out of jail with De Klerk in 1990, we can reflect with pride on the thought that it was FW’s experience here that was the spark that started the journey leading to that moment. Now, THAT is something to be proud of. THAT reflects what this College stands for.

An overriding common thread through the Alumni messages and stories is the love of Britain generated by their time here. What is also clear to all of us here is what a wonderful example of soft power this provides the UK. Our Founder foresaw that this is how it would be. Clever people who came here to study and become part of the “United Nations in one Square” that we have become, would take away with them a fondness for British

values that could only benefit both their countries and Britain in the years to come.

So, how damaging to the British national interest is the current policy of lumping student numbers in with general immigration numbers? How can the current UK Prime Minister be so blind (or possibly blindsided?) on this? As I said in our 2017 Annual Report:

*“Undue restrictions on international student numbers ... pose a clear threat to the attractiveness of studying in the UK and hence potentially to the ... diversity of nationalities and the subjects being studied by our Members, which is at the heart of the College’s mission and contributes to the UK’s reputation across the globe as a provider of top quality tertiary education. Our alumni list is testament to that and its contribution to the soft power it provides the UK.”*

Lord Patten, the last British Governor of Hong Kong, a former chairman of the BBC Trust and Chancellor of Oxford University, has this to say on the matter:

*“I have always preferred policy to be based on facts rather than prejudice. A good example of the latter is the way the immigration figures are presented. At the moment our policy is not, alas, founded on evidence.”*

He goes on to explain why we should follow the approach taken by Britain’s main competitors for international students (America, Australia and Canada) and exclude students from the immigration numbers, concluding

*“that whilst the change in classification would have little effect on the government’s ability to control medium and long term migration, the difference to the education sector, to Britain’s soft power around the world and to the UK economy, is very significant.*

*It is enough to make the strong weep.”*

Such a view was echoed with even more venom in a *Spectator* magazine article last month by Martin Vander Weyer who described the PM's clampdown on non-EU students entering the UK as "*an exercise in pig-headed economic self-harm.*"

But there is hope. I welcome the Home Secretary's recently commissioned report on the positive economic impact of international students. I intend to make a submission to that Enquiry and throw the weight of this College behind the search for common sense on this issue. We owe that to our Founder and we must not let him down now. Let me assure you that achieving a good outcome from the government Review will remain a top priority for the College Board.

Whilst that battle continues, we can reflect upon many positive achievements here. Our National Student Housing Survey Award for 5<sup>th</sup> successive year is but one measure of how well we are delivering our Founder's dreams. Another is the range of activities and interests pursued by each year's members. I witnessed that first hand last week with the buzz at the Clubs & Societies Fair in this Hall.

These good things do not happen by accident. Much is owed to the leadership provided by Andrew Ritchie and his team and by our members who get involved in the Members' Council and other organs of our governance. Thank you, on your behalf, to them.

And it is on matters of good governance that I shall conclude. Over the last year, we reviewed the financial sustainability of the College which led to a major debt restructuring in May. This was the third leg of the long-term sustainability strategy which the Board has pursued, since the current Director, Andrew Ritchie, identified the need for it, shortly after his appointment. The other legs of this strategy were the

refurbishment of both London House and William Goodenough House and the creation of a long-term Plan to ensure that the asset maintenance and replacement needs of the College became central to our planning. We have achieved a transformation of lasting benefit to the College. Accordingly, and notwithstanding the many ill political winds across the globe, the College can now look forward with a confidence not imaginable at any previous time in our history.

That seems a pretty good note on which to conclude... with  
Three Cheers for Goodenough College and our Founder,  
Frederick Goodenough!

*Tena koutou katoa*

(Eric Tracey, 4<sup>th</sup> October 2017, and submitted for information to the Home Secretary in the same year)

This concludes the submission of Goodenough College to the APPG for International Students.

Further detail on the material contained within this submission may be obtained from The Revd Dr AW McCormack, Dean, and Ms C Persaud, Registrar, at the College, Mecklenburgh Square, London WC1N 2AB.