David Crick – Course Coordinator/Lecturer

An awareness of internationalisation issues and the tools for dealing with them was vital for any course coordinator, Professor David Crick said. Although it may be obviously important for International Business students to have this awareness, no students – and no staff – could afford not to be alert to internationalisation problems and the tools for resolution.

“With any teaching, in a modern university with a high percentage of international students, or where you are preparing students for a globalised world, if you haven’t got an international focus, there will be issues. Think about resolving conflict in a class. How would you deal with it?”

David was alert to some of these issues from his own experiences as being an international teacher, coming to New Zealand only comparatively recently. “Things that might be obvious to a New Zealander were not clear to me!” When the opportunity came to learn more about the Internationalisation at Home project and its introduction to classes, he took it. IBUS306 involves Victoria students in projects with cross-cultural teams working from their own facilities overseas. Sometimes those facilities could be very basic. It seemed logical to Course Coordinator, Associate Professor Val Lindsay to include the ExcelL process for these students. When Karen Commons and Xiaodan Gao ran the role-playing process for the class David attended as an observer. He expected there to be benefits for students, but he was surprised by the impacts on himself of the ExcelL process. “It did open my eyes,” David said. “I was surprised.”

This raised the question of what he should do for his own classes in the future.

“There are benefits to international students who are coming to New Zealand to adapt, and the extent to which we adapt is part of that. We have to recognise that this is two-way. We can learn from them, but they are here to learn from us. We need to do more, but so do they – anything else can mean a lowering of standards. Take group work. Some say they don’t want to work in groups. Well, that’s part of the learning process and that won’t change as we have to prepare students for teamwork in the world of work.”

“But I might interact with them more and in a different way. Having seen ExcelL at work, I will not assume that even general conversation is going to be interpreted as I meant it.”
“We can use the analogy that gaining a degree is like climbing a wall, and our teaching provides the ladder. What this international awareness is showing, is that to add value we should put in a few more rungs.”