Māori at Victoria University of Wellington

Māori and Pasifika student interventions

Following a four-month review in 2017 of Māori and Pasifika student interventions, 2018 saw outcomes from the review being implemented to help boost enrolment of Māori and Pasifika students and support their continued success.

In October, the University released the Final Outcome document establishing two new teams to support our student success—Āwhina, a University-wide Māori student support team, and a University-wide Pasifika Student Support team. The two new teams came into effect on 1 January 2019. Together, they will work collaboratively with faculties and other student services to provide culturally responsive support and enhance the retention and achievement of our Māori and Pasifika students.

Towards a bilingual Wellington

Victoria University of Wellington academics worked with Wellington City Council and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori (the Māori Language Commission) to develop an action plan that will ensure te reo Māori is seen and heard more in Wellington.

An essential part of this initiative is Te Tauihu, Kaupapa Here Hukihuki—Te Reo Māori, the Te Reo Māori Policy. Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Māori) Professor Rawinia Higgins, Dr Vincent Olsen-Reeder, and other Te Kawa a Māui staff developed a detailed submission on the draft policy, and Dr Olsen-Reeder gave a follow-up oral submission on behalf of the University. Dr Olsen-Reeder also attended a hui with Council and Te Taura Whiri i te Reo Māori representatives, which included a discussion on developing a language plan to help implement the policy.

Supporting future leadership

In August, the University launched the Hei Rātā Whakaruruahau programme, which aims to help emerging Māori leaders in governance roles. The programme involved 22 participants between 18-35 years of age and was delivered in partnership with Te Rūtea Whakatupu Trust and the Federation of Māori Authorities.

Hei Rātā Whakaruruahau taught the students about leadership tools from a range of Māori, non-Māori, and global sources, and examined how leadership themes link back to the participants’ own tribal, Māori land trust, or company workplace strategy and culture.

Toiora programme

The Toiora programme was developed in 2016 by Student Health and Victoria Recreation with the aim of improving the overall hauora (health and wellbeing) of Māori and Pasifika students by promoting the importance of wellness.

In 2018, Victoria Recreation continued to deliver the programme, educating students on important aspects of wellness such as good nutrition, sleep, and keeping active, and provided Māori and Pasifika students with wellness opportunities through simple, informal ‘drop-in’ recreation sessions. As a result, Victoria Recreation has become a hub for Māori and Pasifika students, who are increasingly engaging in services such as group exercise classes and casual sport sessions.

Taihonoa partnership programme

The University continued to progress its partnerships with iwi and other Māori organisations through its Taihonoa partnership programme. The programme provides an opportunity for iwi and other Māori stakeholders to match dollar-for-dollar a contribution by the University for scholarships to their students attending Victoria University of Wellington. In 2018, 27 He Herenga Tangata relationship agreements were signed with new partners and more than $500,000 of scholarship money went towards increasing the participation and success of Māori students at the University across all disciplines at both undergraduate and postgraduate levels.