

Engaging Pacific in the Mainstream

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Abstract

This paper is part of a presentation at the Australian and New Zealand Student Services Association (ANZSSA) Conference held in Hobart, Australia, 7th-9th December 2015, entitled 'Engaging Pacific in the Mainstream'. It looks specifically at how the Centre for Pacific Learning, Teaching & Research at Unitec New Zealand, has engaged with its Pacific students studying there from 2010 to 2014.

The term Pacific is a generic term used to describe a group of people who originated from a number of separate islands located within the Pacific Ocean region. 'Pacific' is not a "race" of people, and it does not represent a homogeneous population. Despite having "similarities", the separate island states have vastly different languages and practices. For this reason, there is no "one size fits all" solution to engaging with Pacific students. At Unitec, many different initiatives and programs are applied all with the one goal in mind, i.e. engaging with Pacific students and helping them to succeed. Given the diversity of Pacific students at Unitec, it makes sense to also be diverse in the ways we support and help them. The following paper outlines the many different initiatives that have been applied at Unitec to provide support to its Pacific student population.

The first part gives a brief background of the Pacific demographic makeup of New Zealand, and discusses why New Zealand has made it a priority to support Pacific students in tertiary education. The second part discusses Unitec's commitment to supporting Pacific through; (i) the existence of the Pacific Centre for Learning, Teaching & Research, (ii) the development of the Pacific Success Strategy and (iii) the influence of the Fono Faufautua. The third part looks at the methods used by Unitec to support and assist Pacific students, starting with the Nakuita model that provides the foundation for Pacific engagement, as well as discussing the various initiatives that have been used to improve success rates for Pacific students. The last part will provide an analysis on how successful the initiatives have been at Unitec by looking at the success rates of the Pacific cohort during the 2014 academic year.

The Pacific demographic

The 2013 New Zealand Census recorded the Pacific population of New Zealand to be 295,941, making up 7.4% of New Zealand's total population. This was an 11% increase from the 2006 census figure of 265,974. The 2013 New Zealand, Pacific population was made up of; Samoans – 144,138 (48.7%); Cook Island Maori – 61,839 (20.9%); Tongan – 60,333 (20.4%); Niuean – 23,883 (8.1%) and other minor Pacific groups – 5,748 (1.9%). The majority of Pacific people (92.9%) resided in the North Island, with Auckland having the most of the Pacific population (65.9%).

The initial results from the 2013 Census shows that economically, Pacific people's income is 34% lower than the national average of \$18,000.00 a year (Auckland-Council, 2014). This immediately puts them at a disadvantage compared with the rest of the New Zealand population. In terms of unemployment, this report also shows that the Pacific population unemployment rate is disproportionately higher at 11.8% compared with the national average of 5.7%; and that only 21.8% of the Pacific population owned their own home compared with the national average of 53.2%, with a large number of Pacific people in Auckland being tenants of community housing, and more likely to live in overcrowding households. These socio-economic issues all contribute to the problems Pacific people face in many aspects of life in New Zealand, especially education.

Data from the New Zealand Qualification Authority (2015) shows that 67.8% of Pacific students in Auckland are in schools that have a decile rating¹ of 1-3. In terms of the socio-economic makeup, these are amongst the poorest areas/suburbs of New Zealand. This data also shows that a considerable number of Auckland schools (88%), now have 50% or more Pacific students attending; and that, despite this large number, only an underwhelming 27% of Pacific students achieve University Entrance and 19.1% of the students end up unemployed, and not in any form of education or training. As a result when Pacific students enrol at Unitec, they are likely to have only NCEA level 2 or no secondary qualification at all. Of those Pacific students that do enrol, 32% would have come straight out of high school, 32% would have been working while 12% would have been previously unemployed (NZQA, 2015). These statistics clearly illustrate why the Pacific cohort from the outset would need the extra help & support while studying at Unitec.

Why support Pacific?

Firstly, according to Johnson & Inoue, (2003, p.254) diversity is a fact of life and efforts to build a common culture often privilege the dominant culture. In New Zealand, the dominant culture is the European culture. It is even more dominant than the indigenous culture of the country, the Maori. At only 7.4% of the country's population, the Pacific people are indeed a minority in New Zealand, despite there being considerably more Niueans and Cook Islanders in New Zealand than their respective home islands; as well as large numbers of Samoan and Tongans which number at a slightly lower number than those of their respective homelands. Despite the minority status, the Pacific population is a fast growing one and because of that, they need to be recognised as a unique group that exists within the New Zealand general populous.

The need to support Pacific students in education is not only necessitated by the statistics, but also by the policies and strategies which have been put into place not only by the Ministry of Education, but also by other government departments such as the Tertiary Education Commission, Education Review Office and the New Zealand Qualifications Authority. Each of these departments has formulated a specific plan, framework or strategy that ensures Pacific education is given priority and attention within their respective departments. The latest versions of these policies are:

- Ministry of Education (MoE) Pasifika Education Plan 2013-2017
- Tertiary Education Commission (TEC) Pasifika Framework 2013-2017
- Education Review Office (ERO) Pacific Strategy 2013-2017
- New Zealand Qualifications Authority (NZQA) Pasifika Strategy 2012-2015

The Ministry of Education's main objective for the Pacific in the tertiary sector is to enable Pasifika learners to attain higher levels of tertiary education through increasing participation, retention and completion of tertiary level qualifications (2013). Its target is that Pasifika learners participate and achieve at all levels at least on a par with other learners in tertiary education. In actual fact the Government has been making this a goal as early as 2002.

The Government's Pasifika Education Plan for tertiary education nominates as its focus 'increasing participation and achievement, improving retention and encouraging higher levels of study' (Coxon, Anae, Mara, Wendt-Samu, & Finau, 2002, p.122)

The framework also outlines the Ministry's goals and actions it will employ in order to achieve their objective. The Tertiary Education Commission is responsible for funding a tertiary education system that assists all Pasifika New Zealanders to reach their full potential and contribute to the social and economic well-being of New Zealand (2013, p.2). Like the MoE Pacific Education Plan,

¹ According to the Ministry of Education, 'Deciles' are a measure of the socio-economic positions of a school's student community, relative to other schools throughout the country. Decile 1 schools are the 10% of schools with the highest proportion of students from low socio-economic communities, whereas Decile 10 schools are from the highest socio-economic areas. The lower the school's decile rating, the more funding they receive.

it has key objectives to ensure the tertiary education system is responsive and collaborative to Pasifika learners. The Education Review Office also has policies to better support Pacific learners. Its vision is that Pacific learners will achieve a high level of education and success, and it aims to achieve this by developing a high quality evaluation that contributes to a high quality education for all Pacific learners (2013, p.1).

Pacific Centre for Learning Teaching & Research

The first step to supporting Pacific students at Unitec is acknowledging that they are an important group of students. Unitec does this by acknowledging Pacific students as a 'priority group'. Other groups of students identified as priority groups are Maori, students with disabilities, international students, and the under 20 year olds or 'youth guarantee'². These priority groups are also identified by the Ministry of Education as groups that tertiary institutions should make a commitment to supporting.

Secondly, there should be a team or department within the institution whose main purpose is to provide the support to these priority groups. According to Anae, Anderson, Benseman & Coxon (2002, p.63) one of the main initiatives that has helped Pacific students achieve better at tertiary level was having an office or a centre specifically dedicated to supporting Pacific students at the tertiary institution. At Unitec, there is the Pacific Centre for Learning, Teaching and Research (PCLTR). At present, the PCLTR consists of nine members who each play a different role in terms of supporting and assisting Pacific students at Unitec.

Unitec Pacific success strategy 2010-2015

In order for a tertiary institution to be able to support their Pacific students, it is vital that there is a strategy or policy put in place that provides direction for the institution as well as setting out the goals the institution has for its Pacific students and community. For this, the Unitec PCLTR has developed the Unitec Pacific Success Strategy 2010-2015. The strategy is made up of four main goals:

- To Increase Pacific participation and perspective in governance and operational decision making.
- To develop, enhance and maintain relationships with Pacific communities
- To ensure successful participation, completion and progression of Pacific students within Unitec Programs.
- To contribute to the relevance of Programs to Pacific communities.

A strategy is only as good as the influence and ability to implement within an institution. Although the Pacific Success Strategy was developed by the PCLTR, the onus is with the entire institution to work towards achieving the goals set out in the strategy, not just the PCLTR. This is evident in the requirements of most departments to have their program leaders report on how the strategy is being met in their various programs.

Fono Faufautua

To ensure that Unitec honour their commitment to Pacific students, a Pacific advisory board known as the Fono Faufautua was set up. The board is made up of seven to eight prominent members of the Pacific community who meet monthly to discuss Pacific issues relating to Unitec. The Chief Executive of Unitec, the Dean who overlooks the PCLTR, the Director of the PCLTR and the Pacific Student Representative also sit on this board. During the monthly meetings, Unitec Deans, Heads and Managers are invited to attend, and present to the Fono how their respective departments

² According to the New Zealand Tertiary Education Commission, Youth Guarantee initiatives are about improving the transition from school to work for students aged 16 to 19 years who are studying towards NCEA levels 1 or 2 or another qualification at levels 1, 2 or 3 on the New Zealand Qualifications Framework.

are applying the Pacific Success Strategy to their programs etc. The Fono is a sitting committee under Unitec's Council and this status gives them a good standing within the Unitec institution.

At the institutional level, most of the committees within the institution also include a Pacific staff representative as a voice for the Pacific community at Unitec. These committees include the Academic Board, the Learning & Teaching Committee, the Research & Enterprise Committee, and the representatives on these boards include the Director of the PCLTR and the Principal Academic Adviser Pacific, also from the PCLTR. These positions ensure that Pacific needs are met at both the governance and the institutional levels.

The Nakuita model

The PCLTR is currently made up of nine members. With fifteen departments and hundreds of Pacific students spread across these departments, the PCLTR came up with a way of supporting these students, without directly providing the support themselves. To do this, the PCLTR adopted the Nakuita model. The Nakuita (Fijian for octopus) was developed by the PCLTR Director, Linda Aumua in 2008, to inform the work of the centre. The octopus has one central body which metaphorically refers to the centre and its tentacles as the Pacific support provided through the learning development lecturers infiltrating the departments and services (Thompson, McDonald, Talakai, & Taumoepeau, 2009, p.2). This model is based on the PCLTR having relationships and links with these departments. Of the nine members of the PCLTR team, only four members actually work with students. There are three Pacific Development Lecturers, and one Postgraduate Development Lecturer. It is therefore logistically difficult for these four members to provide support to all of the Pacific students at Unitec. Through the Nakuita model, the PCLTR works with and supports designated staff members from various departments to support Pacific students within their departments. The support can vary from having a member of the PCLTR work with the designated staff member, or simply providing information and resources to allow the designated member of the department to provide the necessary support for their students. Most often the designated member of a department is a Pacific staff member themselves, but in some departments where there is no Pacific staff member, this role has been taken up by a non-Pacific staff member. Members of the PCLTR are allocated departments and they become the contact person between the PCLTR and the specific departmental Pacific support person.

Through the Nakuita model, the PCLTR also connect themselves with other support services at Unitec. They provide the same support to these services as they do to the academic departments. The support services provide support to the mainstream student population, and through their relationship with the PCLTR, they are also able to help and support Pacific students who come to them for support. Representatives from these various support services are invited to be part of the weekly PCLTR team meeting where they discuss issues around supporting Pacific students. According to Anae and Suaali'i (1996), existing services for Pacific students were fragmented and needed to be integrated and consolidated to become more effective, (cited in Coxon et al., 2002, p.129). The Nakuita model allows for the services at Unitec to be consolidated and effective.

The four P's

Over the last five years, a number of initiatives have been put into place to help increase Pacific success rates at Unitec. These initiatives can be categorised into four main groups, collectively known as the 'Four Ps'. The four Ps are: People, Participation, Place and Promotion. Firstly, 'people' are an important part of the equation. There needs to be people willing to help in order for change to occur. Secondly students need to be encouraged to 'participate' in the initiatives that have been set up. If there is no participation, there is no success. Thirdly, students need a 'place' to call home. Home is a place of comfort and safety and if students are made to feel comfortable and safe, they are more likely to succeed. Lastly, there needs to be constant 'promotion' of Pacific. Without promotion, initiatives fail. Pacific successes also need to be promoted so that other Pacific students

can see that if their Pacific peers can succeed, so can they.

1. People

• Pacific staff

Having Pacific staff at the institution is an integral part of helping Pacific students achieve. According to Benseman, Coxon, Anderson, & Anae, students value of Pacific staff members as role models and mentors (2006, p.158). The number of Pacific academic staff at tertiary institutions is generally lower than Pacific non-academic. Regardless of low academic staff numbers, these non-academic staff are invaluable in providing a Pacific presence, especially in dealing with administrative issues (Benseman et al., 2006). Goal 1(c) of the Unitec Pacific Success Strategy 2010-2015 aims to increase the capabilities of Pacific staff at Unitec. In 2009, the ratio of academic to allied staff was 42% and 58% respectively. In November of 2015, the ratio was 47% and 53%, a 5% increase in the number of Pacific academic staff at Unitec (Tominiko, 2015, p.2). The more capable a staff community is, the better they are able to support their students. In 2015, there were a total of 110 Pacific staff members at Unitec. The PCLTR maintains close relationships with the Pacific staff at Unitec and run a Pacific Day once a year for all Pacific staff to come together to discuss issues around Pacific support as well as to network and socialise with other Pacific colleagues.

• Departmental Pacific support person

As mentioned above, a way that Pacific students can be supported in departments without necessarily having direct involvement from PCLTR members, is to have an allocated departmental Pacific support staff member from that department. They will be responsible for monitoring the success and attendance of Pacific students in their department, and if necessary, contact the PCLTR if they need any assistance. Their presence is especially important in supporting first year students in tertiary studies. Research shows that many students who are new to the culture of tertiary study lack the discipline to keep up with their studies (Benseman et al., 2006, p.154). A staff member monitoring and following them up would ensure that first years don't fall into such traps.

• Pacific development lecturers

According to Anae (2002, p.67) the absence of familiar faces, lack of engagement with lecturers and the unfamiliarity of the academic work are barriers to student success. The lack of engagement with lecturers can be partly due to the fact that the numbers of Pacific lecturers in tertiary education are relatively low. For this reason, the PCLTR have four Pacific Development Lecturer (PDL) positions whose primary role it is to provide academic assistance to the Pacific students. Three of the PDLs work with undergraduate students while one specifically works with postgraduate students. They provide general academic assistance for students from all departments, and work closely with Development Lecturers from other student service centres to provide this support. In some cases, the PDLs have a regular group of students who come to them for academic help and this regular contact creates the familiarity between the PDL and the student, which is often missing between students and lecturers.

• Peer writing assistants (PWAs)

In an attempt to increase contact with Pacific students, senior Pacific students with good academic records were employed on a part-time basis as Peer Writing Assistants (PWA) to help provide academic support mainly with essay, report and assignment writing. This was a collaborative effort between the PCLTR, the MAIA Maori Learning Centre, and the Te Puna Ako Learning Centre. According to Benseman et al., (2006, p.156) tertiary students felt that their peers were the greatest influence on their academic participation when they

entered tertiary education. We found this to be rather accurate as a large number of students regularly sought the help of the PWAs. Together the PWAs and the PDLs were able to provide academic support to large number of Pacific students.

- **Pacific mentoring**

Research has shown that role models influence students long before they arrive to enrol in tertiary education (Benseman et al., 2006, p.159). The same research also shows that students were very receptive to the support and information offered by their role models, as they felt they were in the best position to offer advice. Given that there were many initiatives set up to provide academic support, there was also a need to provide a vehicle for pastoral support. For various cultural/personal reasons, Pacific students seldom seek the help of counselling and financial services on campus etc. Most often, their personal issues are kept to themselves and eventually this affects their abilities to cope with their studies. Knowing this about Pacific students, a mentoring program was set up to provide pastoral support as well providing a person for students to go to when they had personal issues to deal with. The mentors were staff members who volunteered to be a mentor to a group of students. In some cases, the mentor for a particular group of students was also their department's Pacific support person as the two roles were somewhat connected. As a cohort, the mentors would put on a shared lunch at least once a semester to bring together their students, and to create a family environment for them.

- **Pacific student representative**

The Unitec Student Union also provides a vehicle for supporting Pacific students. A Pacific student representative position is a priority position on the Unitec Student Council that is elected by the students every year. The Pacific representative on the council is the voice of Pacific students, and is also responsible for organising and running the Pacific cultural events that are run by the Student Union every year. The Pacific student representative is also invited to regularly attend and contribute to the CPLTR. Fono Faufautua and general Pacific staff meetings as the representative of the Pacific student body. The student representative is also very much involved in many of the initiatives that are set up to support students. With their connection to the student body, they are able to encourage and rally students to attend and make use of the services and initiatives provided by the PCLTR and staff in general.

2. Participation

- **Pacific orientation**

In order to familiarise Pacific students with Unitec and tertiary studies, a specific Pacific Orientation is held every year for the students. This is organised and led by the PCLTR, with other Pacific and general staff helping out. This is usually held over one day and usually takes place a week before semester starts. This is done on purpose as when students arrive during the first week, they get overwhelmed with mainstream and departmental orientation week programs. When students attend the Pacific Orientation, they are introduced to Pacific staff members as well as various services that they would need while attending Unitec. This is also their first introduction to the PCLTR team, and it is here that the connection with these students is first made. The Pacific Orientation is also a good opportunity for Pacific students to get to know one another so that when the actual semester starts the following week, the chances are they will already be familiar with some peers they had met at the Pacific Orientation.

- **Pacific Fanau evening**

An evening for the students and their families is held three weeks into the first semester, and is a chance for families to come on to campus and see and experience some of the things

that their student family member experiences. Not only are they given a chance to have a look around campus, they also have the opportunity to meet with lecturers and listen to senior Pacific students share their experiences/challenges in tertiary education. This event allows the families of the students to become part of the extended Unitec Pacific community. In the case of Pacific students, family obligations sometimes get in the way of their studies. Although families were usually supportive of their involvement in education and expected academic success, this was not always the case (Benseman et al., 2006, p.155). If the family understands the time and commitment a student needs to commit to their studies, this would likely prevent them from putting any more pressure on their family member with regards to other family commitments etc.

- **Assignment retreats**

Assignment retreats are held at least twice a semester. The main purpose of these retreats is to provide a space for students to come and complete any assignment or work they have due. Sometimes students do not have an appropriate place at home to work, or they may be a parent and can't find time between attending lectures and running a household to complete any assignments they have. Assignment retreats are typically held on a Saturday and usually run from 9am to 5pm. It usually takes place on campus in a large study area where students attend and work all day. The CPLTR provides food throughout the day and staff members are present also in case students require any assistance with their work. Sometime beforehand, students inform the CPLTR what specific help they need, and the CPLTR makes arrangement to have the appropriate lecturer or staff member attend the retreat to help those particular students with their assignments etc. According to Coxon et al., (2002, p.129), a great way to help Pacific success is to provide departmental Pacific tutors/tutorials and liaison tutors. We have found this to be very true.

- **Pacific events/workshops**

There are many events and workshops at Unitec that benefit Pacific students. The library has a staff member specifically responsible for supporting Pacific and as part of their role, they run library workshops. The staff member has catalogued all books/references that contain Pacific knowledge or make reference to Pacific with a Pacific code to enable easy access and to promote Pacific knowledge. The PCLTR also run workshops on topics such as essay writing, exam preparation and time management. There are also workshops catered for finding employment for students after they graduate. There are always lunches put on for students just to bring them together to socialise and network.

3. Place

- **Pacific centre**

The provision of a dedicated space is important to the success of Pacific students. Facilities should be accessible and welcoming to Pacific students (Anae et al., 2002, p.69). The PCLTR provides a space where students can work. There are two rooms that can be closed off for quiet group work as well as areas outside with tables where students can sit and discuss work. There are also six computers available for students to use to work on assignments etc. The good thing about having these spaces located next to the office of the PCLTR members is that students have much easier access to the staff when they need help. In most cases, Pacific students will get immediate access to help from the PCLTR staff, compared with other services where students need to make bookings days in advance. A shared space like this allows the staff and students to interact more, and creates a homely and welcoming environment for the students on campus. Other departments have also created spaces for their own students to provide a similar atmosphere to that of the PCLTR study and computer space. For most tertiary institutions, acquiring space may be difficult;

however, simply having a small room or office which students can call their own space goes a long way to making students feel comfortable and welcome at tertiary institutions.

- **Pacific intellectual space**

It is also important to acknowledge that Pacific culture and practices have a place in the modern day curriculum. In some cases, lecturers and tutors are unprepared to teach a culturally diverse student population. Culturally responsive pedagogy for teacher education prepares them to be sensitive to the cultures of their students and to use their understandings about how culture influences their learning in their day-to-day planning for teaching students (Stoicovy, 2002, p.80). For this exact reason, the PCLTR runs workshops for staff to attend as professional development. The first workshop discusses the practices and customs of Pacific culture, and the second workshop looks specifically at how to teach Pacific students effectively. These include, but are not limited to the points below:

- Teaching that is student centred.
- Teaching that ensures academic and social engagement between learners and lecturers.
- Commitment to high-achievement standards and the expectation that all students can achieve.
- Active willingness to make these standards accessible through academic support processes—e.g. academic tutorials and individual assistance, including goal setting.
- Access to resources—e.g. developing familiarity with libraries, assistance with access to texts, fostering use of computers.
- Accessible pastoral care.
- Functioning within a ‘staircasing’ environment that provides links from one level of qualification up to the next. (Benseman et al., 2006, p.160)

Pacific content in programs is also important to appeal to Pacific students. In most cases, the various departments invite lecturers from the PCLTR and from outside of the institution to give guest lectures in their programs with a focus on Pacific. As a follow on, the PCLTR is also invited to give guest lectures on engaging in Pacific research, as well as applying Pacific methodologies to research conducted by Pacific postgraduate students doing research. Once every two years, the PCLTR organises and runs the Pacific Research Symposium where Pacific staff and postgraduate students get to share their research projects, and in return get feedback from the Unitec research community.

- **Cultural space**

Equally important to having a study space, is a cultural space where Pacific students can feel at home. Unitec has a Pacific fale (house) on campus. It is often used for cultural practices such as kava ceremonies, and a Samoan tattoo exhibition has also been held in it. Like the marae is to Maori, the fale represents the Pacific community at Unitec. Similarly the University of Auckland has a much larger and modern Pacific fale on its campus as a symbol of its Pacific community.

4. Promotion

- **Pacific marketing advisor**

Research has shown that events and associations are an effective way of profiling the Pacific presence in tertiary institutions and a method of providing peer groups for students who may be feeling isolated. Some institutions have been developing a Pacific presence in their operations, student recruitment and philosophies (Benseman et al., 2006, p.159). A Pacific Marketing Advisor role at Unitec ensures that there is a strong Pacific identity within the institution, but also promotes the Pacific identity that the institution has outwardly into the community. Under the advice and leadership of the Pacific Marketing Advisor, Unitec is seen to be participating in Pacific community events. Participation in Pacific community

events builds the reputation of Unitec as an institution that is culturally in tune with the Pacific community. Pacific languages and cultures are also promoted and celebrated at Unitec. Throughout the year, Pacific language weeks are celebrated with a Pacific song-writing competition bringing all the different groups together. Culture is celebrated through cultural food and dance festivals run by the student union. For recruitment purposes, successful Pacific students are also used in promotional material as well as television advertisements. Again this not only attracts Pacific students to Unitec, it illustrates Unitec's commitment to the Pacific, as well as giving the message that Pacific students succeed and do well at Unitec.

- **Pacific websites**

The PCLTR has a direct link on the Unitec corporate page. It is clearly set up on the home page and easy to navigate. The Pacific link on the website is filled with images of real Pacific students studying at Unitec, and this gives a strong Pacific feeling to the website. Pacific staff are also used as models in mainstream Unitec links, and this confirms the multicultural identity of Unitec. Unitec has also embraced social media with the PCLTR having an official Facebook page. The page is very successful in engaging with Pacific students as well as promoting Pacific events that are happening on campus.

- **Pacific graduation**

Every year around September/October, the PCLTR honours all Pacific graduates by putting on a Pacific Graduation Dinner for them. Although initiated by the PCLTR, the running and organisation of the dinner is a combined effort between Pacific staff from a number of departments and services within Unitec. The costs are largely subsidised by the centre with graduates attending for free and family members paying a hugely discounted price. Heads and deans from various departments are invited to attend and share in the celebration of Pacific success at Unitec. This is an opportunity for families to celebrate the success and achievement of their family members, as well as the lecturers and tutors of the graduates. It is also in keeping with Pacific cultural practices of a collective celebration for the achievements of individuals. Pacific students who are still studying are also encouraged to attend the dinner as this is a good way of encouraging and motivating them to work hard and complete their studies.

Result

In 2014 the average success rate for Pacific students at Unitec was 76%. In the same year, 16 of the 24 departments achieved a success rate of 76% or greater for their Pacific student cohort. Of these sixteen departments, ten departments were proactive in supporting their Pacific students by implementing three or more of the initiatives available to support Pacific students. The remaining six departments, Architecture, Landscape Architecture, Community Health, Medical Imaging, Natural Sciences & Osteopathy, all managed to achieve 76% or greater success rate without necessarily implementing any of the initiatives. Two of these departments (Medical Imaging & Osteopathy) employed none of the initiatives described above. Despite their successes with little to no use of the initiatives, it is of interest to note that these six departments generally have the lowest number of Pacific students enrolled. Both Medical Imaging and Osteopathy in any one year can have only one to three Pacific students enrolled. In a situation where the numbers are very small, success rates can be extremely skewed either way depending on the number of passes and fails. The ten departments that had implemented three or more initiatives generally have large numbers of Pacific students enrolled.

Of the eight departments that scored success rates of less than 76%, three departments (Accounting Finance, Foundation Studies & Civil Engineering) implemented three or more initiatives. This goes against the expected trend and shows that in some cases, the amount of assistance given doesn't

always guarantee success. Foundation Studies has more Pacific students than any other department, and the students enrolled in this department are also the students who generally need the most assistance. The remaining five departments, Computing, Language Studies, Sport, Construction, Plumbing & Gas Fitting all fall below the 76% average and have been the least proactive at implementing initiatives to support their Pacific students. Language Studies & Sport regularly have good numbers of Pacific students enrolled.

In conclusion, it is fair to say that the initiatives that have been put in place are having a positive effect on increasing the success rates of Pacific students at Unitec. If we look at the overall progression of Pacific success between 2009 and 2014 we note that it has grown from 62% to 76%, a 14% increase. Comparing this with mainstream and Maori, their success rates for the same duration have only increased 6% and 9% respectively. From these statistics, we can presume that the initiatives set out above are generally producing positive results for Pacific students at Unitec.

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