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He Vaka Moana: Navigating the success of Māori and Pasifika students in higher education

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Glossary

Māori

Tuakana	Elder sibling, more experienced relation
Teina	Younger sibling, less experienced relation
Tūpuna	Ancestors
Wā	Area, region, definite space
Waka moana	Seafaring vessels
Whānau	Family; nuclear, extended family

Samoaan

Teu le va	Maintaining/tidying up the relational space
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Tongan

Lalava	Traditional form of cord lashing
Pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava	To bind or lash together at the hull of vaka moana and share resources
Talanoa	Conversation, sharing stories, creating dialogues
Vā	Relational space between

Executive Summary

The He Vaka Moana research fellowship is a strengths-based project framed by Oceanic principles and methodologies—connecting us as Māori and Pasifika peoples to what sustains us—the ocean. We draw from our shared history of our tūpuna who navigated the vast Pacific Ocean on purpose-built vessels using Indigenous methods of navigating to successfully reach their destinations.

Based on an internationally proven model, He Vaka Moana seeks to develop a sustainable fellowship of interdisciplinary academic and professional staff in teaching, learning, assessment and research. Through using robust processes that test, evaluate and reflect on Māori and Pasifika students' success, our fellows constructed innovative pedagogical projects to advance students' success, whilst ensuring significant and positive changes occurred institutionally.

Successful Oceanic journeys were enabled through the development of large ocean-going vaka moana, waka moana, or va'a, drawing on deeply methodological Indigenous knowledge of the oceans, tides, celestial navigation and weather conditions. These epic voyages could not be undertaken in isolation. Whilst on the ocean and often far from land, vaka moana would routinely come alongside and lash together to share resources and provisions, learn from each other's experiences, share stories of their journeys and sometimes even swap crew members. At other times, vaka moana were lashed together to ride out storms, as one larger unified vessel was stronger and more resistant to the conditions than many smaller ones, before unlash and heading off on their journeys.

Many hundreds of years later, the descendants of these methodological and strategic navigators continue to navigate and come together in deliberate and purposeful ways now, instead of criss-crossing the Pacific Ocean, our voyages, in this context, are navigations of Māori and Pasifika students in the tertiary sector as we seek ways to purposefully journey towards success.

He Vaka Moana was a two-year project with three aims:

1. To examine, improve and evaluate multiple interventions that develop and advance Māori and Pasifika learners' success.
2. To develop research capacity and capability amongst fellows around projects focused on Māori and Pasifika student retention, completion and successful outcomes.
3. To develop an Oceanic methodology—an approach we named Vā-kā methodology, that recognises the interrelated connections that Māori and Pasifika experience as Indigenous peoples.

He Vaka Moana saw nine fellows across different faculties at the University of Auckland undertake interrelated projects, each taking up a faculty identified challenge around Māori and Pasifika student success (broadly understood).

Highlights of the two-year project include:

- A special edition of the MAI Journal—*He Vaka Moana*, that offers peer reviewed research articles from five of the projects including two articles that forwarded our theorised Vā-kā Moana methodology.
- An increased connection with higher education in the Pacific through collaboration with colleagues at the University of the South Pacific (Tonga).
- Invitations to share our work at the University of Tasmania, Australia.



Figure 1. Oceanic shell maps.

1 Introduction

Te Moana-nui-ā-Kiwa, the largest body of water on earth, has for millennia sustained and nurtured those who have learnt to live in harmony with its rhythms. From food source to highway, from cleanser of the land through to the holder of stories, the Moana has shaped and formed the identities of its people with each lap of its waves upon islands from the sovereign kingdom of Hawai'i in the north to Rapa Nui in the east; from the eastern seaboard of Australia in the west and Aotearoa New Zealand in the South. Moana concepts of voyaging, navigation, collaboration and exploring new ideas/seascapes have underpinned He Vaka Moana from its conception. As such, we continue to privilege our Māori, Pasifika and Moana epistemologies, languages and concepts in this final leg of our project's voyage.

This is the final report of a two-year national funding project (NFP) entitled *He Vaka Moana: Navigating the Success of Māori and Pasifika Students in Higher Education*. Our project established a collaborative research fellowship model, whereby 'navigators' of teaching and learning across faculties theorised and carried out interconnected and faculty-based research projects, working collaboratively to examine existing practices and develop innovative ways to forward Māori and Pasifika student success. We draw on the fellows' research projects and a wide range of peer reviewed publications to report on this NFP.

Me Mihi Ka Tika – Introducing the Research Team



Figure 2. 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Hinekura Smith lead a one-day He Vaka Moana symposium at the Fale Pasifika.

The Moana methodology that we theorised and enacted in this two-year project places importance on positionality as a guiding code of conduct that demands mindfulness of intentions and actions (Autagavaia, 2001; Taufe'ulungaki, 2004). As such, we, the authors of this report, are culturally bound by our methodology to introduce ourselves at the outset.

'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki is a Tongan born woman from the islands of Falevai Vava'u, Tongaleleka Ha'apai and 'Atataa, is a lecturer and academic developer at the University of Auckland (UoA). Hinekura Smith is a Māori woman from Te Rarawa, Ngā Puhi and Te Āti Awa iwi (tribal groupings) of Aotearoa New Zealand, whose research interests include Kaupapa Māori decolonial education and Kaupapa Māori methodologies and higher education. 'Growing the fleet' of Māori and Pasifika researchers is a critical element of He Vaka Moana. As such, our third author, and an integral part of the He Vaka Moana project team is Ashlea Gillon from Ngāti Awa. Ashlea quickly became far more than our 'research assistant', or as she theorises in an article published out of this project, a research teina (Gillon, 2020). Instead, Ashlea has worked closely with both co-principal investigators (PIs) as an integral part of our research team, highlighting the need for Māori and Pasifika students and emerging researchers to be offered opportunities to learn from Māori and Pasifika lead research projects.

Fundamental to the He Vaka Moana research fellowship has been the pikipiki hama, or coming together of Māori and Pasifika research(ers). It could be argued that Māori and Pasifika people have been socially set against each other through systemic racism and societal structures that have discouraged the forging of Moana relationships, forcing us to compare and contrast, rather than compelling us to collaborate and collectivise (Anae et al., 2015; Harris, 2004; Suaalii-Sauni, 2017). Airini et al. (2009), for example, discussed the need for Pacific researchers to *teu le va*—nurture relationships—with tangata whenua and vice versa to grow Māori and Pasifika research spaces. The He Vaka Moana research fellowship model offers one way to positively disrupt the monocultural social and political status quo of higher education in Aotearoa New Zealand through a strengthened Māori and Pasifika research alliance.

The He Vaka Moana fellowship and its agenda were timely. The 2020 year, set amongst its unprecedented global upheaval, was a significant year to focus on Māori and Pasifika student success. The Academic Quality Agency for New Zealand Universities (<https://www.aqa.ac.nz>) was auditing "Access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori students and Pasifika students". The research team were intensely interested as to how higher education would respond to this audit theme. More specifically, given the knowledge and experience of the He Vaka fellows faculty-based research, we were fascinated to see how the UoA would draw on the He Vaka Moana research fellowship. At the time of writing this report three months into the enhancement theme cycle, the silence around this enhancement theme is significant and concerning.

While we wish to avoid utilising a deficit-based approach, little has changed around Māori and Pasifika student success in the past 20 years. Higher education continues to fail in its delivery of equitable access to success. The vast ocean of issues that impact Māori and

Pasifika students means that affecting change is complex, multi-layered and as such, can feel overwhelming. Unsurprisingly, there is no 10-point checklist or silver bullet solution for addressing Māori and Pasifika student success, or the ability and agency for Māori and Pasifika academics to come together, talk more, build relationships, research together and improve educational outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students. Intersecting issues of systemic and societal racism, access to quality education and economic disadvantage, to name just a few, cut deep into Māori and Pasifika student experiences. The current landscape lays down a challenge for us to seek solutions from within our own knowledges and ways of being, testing the constraints of the institutions we find ourselves in. He Vaka Moana, as a research fellowship model, offers a set of ideas and approaches that we believe can be taken up in similar and different ways intra-institutionally and inter-institutionally.

The initial proposal for the He Vaka Moana research fellowship was to develop an inter-institutional collaboration with one fellow from each of the nine faculties at the UoA and one fellow based at Unitec. A Pasifika fellow from Unitec in West Auckland (NZ) was identified and joined the UoA fellowship in the first six months of 2018. However, due to a number of institutional challenges, the fellow was unable to commit as fully as they would have liked to. We recognise here that university and polytechnic workloads are calculated differently with a different focus on research and skills-based practice. This made it difficult for our fellow from Unitec to carve out research time in their heavy practice-based workload.

Our initial proposal was ambitious and held high expectations for both institutions to support a small percentage of time release from the fellows' workloads in each faculty beyond the two-year project, as a way of working towards institutional goals to support Māori and Pasifika student success. Despite initial support from faculty leaders and a number of approaches to senior leadership at the UoA to support the continued sustainability of He Vaka Moana as an ongoing initiative to support Māori and Pasifika staff and students, ultimately, resourcing decisions came down to finances and priorities.

The project set out to accomplish three aims:

1. To examine, improve and evaluate multiple interventions that develop and advance Māori and Pasifika learners' success.
2. To develop research capacity and capability amongst fellows around projects focused on Māori and Pasifika student retention, completion, and successful outcomes.
3. To develop an Oceanic methodology—an approach we named Vā-kā methodology, that recognises the interrelated connections of Māori and Pasifika experience as Indigenous peoples.

Project Context in Higher Education

When Māori students and Pasifika students enter higher education, they bring with them their aspirations and that of their families and their communities (Benseman et al., 2007; Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). Achieving entrance to university for many is in itself a success; however, at university, Māori and Pasifika students remain as ‘key strategic groups’ at risk of lower rates of success and completion. The complexity of navigating the differences between university culture and their home culture, in addition to navigating their own values and ideologies, impacts their success. In one research project, *I too am Auckland* ((Mayeda, 2015). UoA Māori and Pasifika students spoke in powerful and provocative ways of their experiences of significant and persistent racism in higher education in the form of racially-deficit course content; ‘whitewashed’ reading lists; negative assumptions about students’ academic abilities; and regular, overt racism about South Auckland.

The UoA is located in an urban metropolis where over 25% of the city’s population is Māori or Pasifika, and has over 42,000 full- and part-time students, 8% of whom are Pasifika, and 7% of whom are Māori. This demographic is supported by 6% Māori academic teaching staff and 3% Pasifika academic teaching staff (UoA, 2018, p. 8).

The UoA’s Strategic Plan (2013–2020) sets out its objectives around supporting excellent teaching, learning and research for Māori; strengthening relationships with Pacific peoples and implementing strategies to improve Māori and Pasifika success (p. 13). The plan recognises that “increasing our proportions of Māori and Pacific students and staff, and raising the international rankings of the University – remain challenging” (p. 5), and that “the University’s location in Auckland, the largest Pacific (sic) city in the world, both necessitates and provides opportunities for a particular relationship with Pacific peoples” (p. 14).

Brief Overview of the Literature

The following is a brief overview of relevant literature to our project, *He Vaka Moana: Navigating the Success of Māori and Pasifika Students in Higher Education*. Notions of Māori and Pasifika success remain contested, particularly around the socio-political agendas of educational institutions within Aotearoa New Zealand (Matapo & Baice, 2020). Neoliberal ideologies inform understandings of success within higher education and perpetuate ideas of freedom in relation to the learning process (Matapo & Baice, 2020).

Educational institutions within Aotearoa New Zealand often measure Māori and Pacific student success in quantifiable ways, such as grade point averages or (timely) course completion. The successful completion of a tertiary degree is often understood as a positive transformation for both the graduate and their family. When Māori and Pacific students who are traditionally from underserved communities enter higher education, they bring with them the aspirations of themselves and their families and communities (Wolfgramm-Foliaki, 2016). Entering higher education spaces is a success for Māori and Pacific students, but tertiary education institutions often frame Māori and Pacific students as ‘at risk’; however, this risk is the institutional racism that restricts Māori and Pacific students’ success within these spaces. While strategic policy documents at both

national and institutional levels have aspirations of positive transformation for Māori and Pacific students, the implementation and support of these aspirations is limited. Ultimately, Māori and Pacific success needs to be defined by Māori and Pacific peoples.

Māori and Pasifika Students

While the educational outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students have continued to make positive gains over recent years (Tertiary Education Commission, 2017), they remain “priority learning groups” across the education sectors, including tertiary institutions. Strategic policy documents at national and institutional levels express an aspiration to make a difference for Māori and Pasifika learners, but what is required to gain parity and bring these policy directions into action to create transforming change remains elusive.

Prioritising both groups of learners is critical given the prediction that by 2038, 30% of the Aotearoa New Zealand population will be of Māori or Pasifika descent (Stats NZ, 2013). Despite repeated calls to increase participation, engagement and completion rates, research on Māori and Pasifika student success remains ad hoc and often disconnected. At a national level, the Ministry of Education, Tertiary Education Commission, Te Puni Kōkiri (the Ministry of Māori Development) and the Ministry of Pacific Peoples, have articulated in high level strategic documents such as the Pasifika Operational Strategy 2017–2020 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2017) and Tertiary Education Strategy 2020–2025 (Tertiary Education Commission, 2019) their aspirations and recommendations for what is required to raise the success of both groups. Within our institution, the University of Auckland Strategic Plan 2013–2020 articulates the institution’s commitment to both Māori and Pasifika communities in Objectives 11 and 12 respectively. However, we suggest that our education system continues to underserve both groups. Hence, Māori and Pasifika peoples need to define what they see as notions of success for themselves and their students (Airini et al., 2010; Matapo & Baice, 2020; Webber & Macfarlane, 2018). Matapo and Baice (2020) contend that this requires a process of “honouring indigenous ways of being and knowing to engage in generative and emergent reconceptualisations of success as Pasifika within the university” (p. 27). This view is also shared by Bishop and Glynn (1999), Durie (2001), Macfarlane (2004) and Webber (2008), who show strong relationships between Māori identity and educational outcomes of Māori students in their research. Similarly, the work of Davidson-Toumu’a and Dunbar (2009), Airini et al. (2010) and Chu et al. (2013), also shows how education and culture are closely linked and the importance of educators having an understanding of how culture contributes to academic success.

The motivation to address the educational achievement and retention of both Māori and Pasifika students stems from a long and documented history of low academic achievement. While we want to avoid a deficit approach, we are in a crisis. Across education sectors we are seeing slow improvements for Māori and Pasifika students. Many support programmes and institution-wide success initiatives are in place to help improve retention, participation, and academic achievement of both groups. However, despite aspirations to improve and make positive changes for Māori and Pasifika learners, these programmes have produced limited outcomes. Matapo and Baice (2020) assert that

current ‘success’ initiatives and strategies originate from a deficit positioning, and therefore have a significant role in shaping Pasifika learner identity and sense of self within institutions. Further, as members of a minority ethnic group, Pasifika students in higher education in Aotearoa New Zealand are subject to unfavourable stereotypes, or what Steele (1997) calls “stereotypes threat”. Steele asserts that when students are viewed as less able and have to continually deal with the threat of academic stereotypes, they become disengaged and their academic performance is negatively impacted. In relation to Māori students, Webber and Macfarlane (2018) stress the need to address negative stereotypes if we are to improve educational outcomes for Māori.

A number of key research and development initiatives across Aotearoa New Zealand education sectors have been implemented to address educational disparities between Māori/Pasifika and their counterparts. These include the Ka Hikitia Strategy (2009, 2013) as well as Te Kohitanga, The Starpath Project (Webber & Macfarlane, 2018) and the Success for All Project (Yuan et al., 2010) to name a few. The overall aim is to enable Māori and Pasifika to achieve educational success as Māori and Pasifika peoples. Key findings across all initiatives include the need to decolonise the classroom by making culture count and ensuring we eradicate negative stereotypes. Overall, the ethnic identity of both Māori and Pasifika students is identified as critical to their success together with input and involvement from members of the wider communities (Webber & Macfarlane, 2018). Importantly, cultural knowledge and worldviews need to be employed effectively to enhance teaching and learning of both groups (Anae & Peterson, 2020; Matapo & Baice, 2020; Miller & Kaiser, 2001; Webber & Macfarlane, 2018). Although mission statements, institutional strategies, and initiatives (previously noted) have resulted in considerable shifts and improvements, arguably, the current system perpetuates a privileging of the Pākehā majority and upholding of historical patterns that continue to render Māori and Pasifika voices silent.

He Vaka Moana

At many levels, research investigating Māori and Pasifika student success is still limited. The current landscape necessitates a quest for innovative and culturally relevant ways of working together to transform higher educational systems to be more accountable and responsive to our Māori and Pasifika learners. The growing amount of work in this area (Archibald et al., 2019; Ingersoll, 2016; Kapā’anaokālaokeola et al., 2016), together with consistent low achievement of our students, tells us there is a need to develop our own research methodologies and processes. He Vaka Moana as a strengths-based model offers an alternative way of centring Indigenous knowledges and methodologies in our approach to ensuring Māori and Pasifika student success. The model draws from our shared ancestral history of navigating the vast Pacific Ocean on purposefully built vessels using Indigenous methods and ways of successfully reaching our destinations.

He Vaka Moana is conceptualised by drawing on the Tongan metaphor “pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava”. Pikipiki hama means to stick, bind or link strongly to the outrigger of a vaka moana. Vaevae means to give or share and manava—similar to the word manawa in Māori, and is a deeply complex, core term in Pasifika expression meaning the heart,

centre, womb or breath (Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Taisi Efi, 2003). Metaphorically, He Vaka Moana within a higher education context provides a model for how we, as Māori and Pasifika, can work together to share resources and draw on what connects us to address the educational achievement of our students. Damon Salesa and Cynthia Kiro, in their reflections about the fellowship, asserts that “it is a powerful symbol for how we can work together as Māori and Pasifika peoples to refine and contribute our voices to academia” (Salesa & Kiro, 2020, p. 3).

In He Vaka Moana, we look specifically and politically at ways of advancing the success of Māori and Pasifika students in higher education, exploring what works; how success is defined and who defines success; and how, as a university, we listen (or fail to listen) to Indigenous stories and the difference this Oceanic based research makes for our teaching and learning. Our agenda is revitalising Indigenous methodologies and knowledges to transform higher educational institutions’ ways of responding to our Indigenous learners. Employing our own Indigenous methodologies has emphasised our own ‘ways of being’, thinking, speaking, behaving, and even breathing. Indigenous methodologies hold sophisticated systems of knowledge that guide how we move through, and relate to, the world, how we learn and are taught and how we experience life and pass down knowledge. Historically, these ways of being were often practical and purposeful—such as the knowledge required to create clothing and shelter. These ways of being also embraced a holism that included the spiritual, relational, and emotional elements of transmitting values and knowledge, making these methodologies “both cerebral and heartfelt” (Chilisa, 2012, p. 28). For the past few decades, Indigenous peoples have sought to reclaim knowledge systems that, in many cases, have been disrupted or dismantled, in order to create transformative change that will advance their current conditions and ensure cultural continuity into the future.

The findings of Alkema (2014) and Sciascia (2017) together informed and guided the planning of He Vaka Moana. Alkema (2014) documents the three ‘pillars for Pasifika learners’ success’: people, place, practices and pedagogies. Our model weaves these three key elements by drawing on what we conceive as an Oceanic metaphor and methodology, bringing together a group of academics (people) to work purposefully in every UoA and Unitec faculty (place) using culturally sustainable methodologies to examine current practices and develop pedagogies to help Māori and Pasifika students succeed (practices and pedagogies). Sciascia’s (2017) work draws attention to the important role that Māori pedagogies, alongside people and practices, plays in contributing to Māori learner success. Of relevance is the role that tuakana-teina approaches and culturally embedded methods/methodologies play in improving Māori student outcomes. He Vaka Moana as a model provides opportunities to interrogate knowledge systems and engage in continuous decolonisation in our approach, in other words, to enact and engage in what Swadner and Matua (2008) describe as a constant state of being alert and attentive to how research can centre Indigenous voices.

As a research model, He Vaka Moana offers an alternative way of working together to articulate our story in this Western context. Meanwhile, the research here focuses on realising Māori and Pasifika success. We seek to revitalise and use our collective ability to

actively take part in decolonising research to disrupt current approaches that have not worked for us (Battiste, 2013). Further, we reiterate, embody and enact the words of Kovach (2009), who noted that, “for cultural knowledge to thrive, it must live in many sites including Western education and research” (p. 12).

While there is not one prescribed model or answer to address Māori and Pacific student success, we position ourselves within our shared history and culture, a space noted by Teaiwa and Mallon (2005) as “an anchoring point or productive site” (p. 225) that we can use for advancing Māori and Pasifika student success. More importantly, it gives us the impetus to engage in what Archibald et al. (2019) refer to as a process of going deeper into our own knowledge systems to look for our own solutions. In doing so, we are also engaging in a self-determining exercise where we endeavour to take control of our own destinations and guide our journeys of Indigenous knowledges and values.

He Vaka Moana – Working Together

A critical aspect of He Vaka Moana is good and meaningful relations. In reflecting on both Māori and Pasifika peoples’ relationality, He Vaka Moana creates a space for fellows to come together and engage with one another. Indigenous peoples articulate a relational ontology that is grounded in their relationship with one another and with their environment, including the land, the cosmos and their thoughts and ideas. Relationality is core to the Pasifika word *vā*. *Vā*, as we understand it, is our connection with one another as citizens of Oceania and all “things” (both living and non-living) in our environment (Anae, 2016; Ka’ili, 2005; Thaman, 2008). The word *vā* exists in many Oceania/Moana languages, including Aotearoa New Zealand, where it is referred to as *wā* (Ka’ili, 2005). From a Tongan perspective, Ka’ili (2005) draws attention to *vā* as the space in between. When one understands and acknowledges *vā*, it brings a sense of obligation alongside the need to take care, tend and maintain existing relationships (Ka’ili, 2005; Mila-Schaaf, 2006; Thaman, 2008). Similarly, Wendt (1999, as cited in Reynolds, 2016) articulates the importance of *vā* from a Samoan perspective, where the emphasis is on maintaining and nurturing relationships. Mila-Schaaf and Hudson (2009) link a well-balanced *vā* to “wellbeing and good outcome”. Along the same vein, Anae (2016) points out the significance of *vā* not only in our sociocultural contexts, but in the way *vā* is also relevant and central to Pacific research relationships and educational contexts. Anae (2016) expands on the Samoan practice of *teu le va* or taking good care of the relationship at all times. Any actions to take care of the *vā* are underpinned by cultural values, obligations and responsibilities to sustain good and long-lasting relations (Anae, 2016; Ka’ili, 2005; Reynolds, 2016; Thaman, 2008). A significant contribution of Anae’s work in this space is her argument for the need for Pasifika researchers to *teu le va* first with Māori as *tangata whenua* and with relevant parties, including institutions, funding agencies and communities. Within He Vaka Moana, there is a need to constantly tend to the *vā* to maintain good relations and, more importantly, work with one another to counter a colonial relationship that has continually minimised the importance of Indigenous knowledge and values in comparison with Western knowledge systems and paradigms (Mila-Schaaf & Hudson, 2009). Reynolds (2016) argues that *vā* has a place in both the classroom and the Aotearoa New Zealand educational system.

He Vaka Moana offers a number of key enablers for a model as we look towards the horizon for strengths-based ways to work collaboratively, both intra-institutionally and inter-institutionally, for better access, outcomes and opportunities for Māori and Pasifika students. He Vaka Moana also develops a sustainable tuakana-teina network of interdisciplinary fellows who are academic and professional leaders in teaching, learning, assessment and research across institutions. Through using robust processes that test, evaluate and reflect on Māori and Pasifika students' success, our fellows constructed innovative pedagogical projects to advance students' success, while ensuring significant, positive, and enduring changes occurred institutionally.

The He Vaka Moana fellowship creates a space for champions in teaching and learning to purposefully come together to pikipiki hama and engage in deliberate conversations to exchange knowledge and share stories. We recognise the critical role of Indigenous knowledge and values in our postcolonial context. As Māori and Pasifika peoples, we must look to our own systems of knowledge to develop methodologies to investigate our own problems and make visible the way we see our world. As an initiative, He Vaka Moana proactively and positively engages with several national and institutional strategic priorities. Those involved care deeply that Māori and Pasifika students feel welcomed, feel empowered, feel a sense of belonging, feel pride, and experience success in their studies and, more widely, in their lives.

Method and Project Overview

The Research Fellowship Model

The research fellowship model is based on an internationally proven model from the University College Dublin (UCD), where they identified and developed key academic staff “with both the pedagogic expertise and the leadership capacity to effect transformational change in teaching, learning and assessment practices both in discipline- specific areas and thematically, across the institution” (UCD Teaching & Learning, 2020, para. 2). Fellows focus on “areas of strategic importance to the university . . . informed by a scholarly approach to the enhancement of teaching and learning and . . . curricular structures” (UCD Teaching & Learning, 2020, para. 3). The Centre for Learning and Research in Higher Education (CLear) at the UoA adopted the UCD model to identify champions in teaching and learning across each of the faculties at the UoA. CLear hosted the fellowship programme for five consecutive years. Each year focused on a key area of teaching and learning considered to be of institutional priority. In 2018 the theme was Māori and Pasifika student success.

Each faculty engaged in a process to identify and sign off on a proposed project and their fellow via an internal expression of interest process. Following, the nominated fellow was put forward to CLear. Each fellow received a 0.2-time release and some also applied for small support grants of \$5,000 to support their project, for example, to fund hosting of events, research assistance, resource development and data gathering. Both the time release and SEED funding were one-year commitments and fellows were hosted at CLear.

Each fellow was chosen based on a competitive expression of interest process together with support from their head of department/school and associate dean teaching and learning. Once selected, each fellow was advised to discuss their project and negotiate the details of their 0.2-time release. The time release allowed each fellow time off from their agreed workload to work on their project but was not a buyout. Each fellow could specify a particular day to work on their project or spread the 0.2-time release throughout their week. In addition, as part of the requirement for the fellowship, fellows had to be available for several additional meetings throughout the year. This included presenting their project at the annual CLear Learning and Teaching symposium in late October/early November.

Phase One 2017 – Preparing for the Voyage: Pikipiki hama in Practice

In preparation for the commencement of the project, fellows were required to attend three meetings prior to the beginning of the 2018 academic year. The aim was to ensure that within the first three months of project commencement (January–March, 2018), each of the research fellows were at a point where they could begin their interconnected projects focusing on Māori and Pasifika student success, retention and completion.

The preparation for the voyage began with the initial lashing which was completed on shore. Priority was given to bringing the fellows together to engage in whakawhanaungatanga or the Māori practice of establishing links and making connections with one another. Here the fellows, led by the two navigators (the PIs), engaged in a process of getting to know one another by establishing whakapapa linkages and identifying points of connection and location even across the institution. This part of the fellowship was critical to the success of the project and the voyage ahead. Whakawhanaungatanga was key to how the fellows formed and maintained relationships with each other.

We were also presented with a wonderful opportunity to further develop our whakawhanaungatanga outside of the institution and engage in an activity that encouraged us, both literally and metaphorically, to ‘paddle together’ towards a common goal. One of our fellows, Jacoba Matapo, presented a generous invitation to us to get out on the moana and participate in waka ama (outrigger canoe). Our initial whakawhanaungatanga allowed us to identify possible areas of collaboration as well as areas of needs and possible tensions. We were collectively opening up space for a group of researchers to come together and lash alongside one another and engage in a conscious and active lashing together of theory and practice (Smith, 2003).



Figure 3. He Vaka Moana: The Fleet

Phase Two 2018 – He Vaka Moana: A Collaborative Research Fellowship

Phase Two included regular monthly hui hosted at the CLear breakfast workshops with guest speakers such as the Pro Vice Chancellor (Equity); regular professional development events; attending talanoa (conversation) groups across the university and supporting fellowship programmes such as Talatalanoa (described later in this report); writing for publication workshops; writing retreats and preparing for the end of year Learning and Teaching symposium. We also participated in a number of academic conferences—a panel fellows presentation in 2018 at the Ngā Pae Indigenous Conference, and several members of the group were also invited to present their He Vaka Moana projects at the Vaka Pasifiki Conference (VPEC) in Suva in 2018. As well as the fellows enacting pikipiki hama with one another, the fellows also pikipiki hama with colleagues in their faculty and across the wider university community thereby growing the fleet. At the end of this phase, a one-day celebratory symposium/hui was held at the end of Phase One to disseminate findings to key stakeholders including institutional leaders, teaching and learning staff and community leaders. Each research fellow discussed their individual project and findings and reciprocally exchanged knowledge with other ‘navigators’ and stakeholders.

Phase Three 2019 – Project Finalisation, Publication and Symposium

Phase Three involved fellows finalising their projects and working on their articles for the special edition of MAI Journal.

This phase also involved our second symposium held at Waipapa Marae with international guests, Drs David Faavae and Mo'ale 'Otunuku from the Institution of Education, University of the South Pacific (Tonga Campus).

Project Dissemination 2020 (See Appendix)

Given the relational based methodology and intention of this project, dissemination of He Vaka Moana involved a number of key interactive activities including:

- two, One-Day He Vaka Moana Symposia (2018 and 2019)

The symposia were held at Waipapa Marae and the Fale Pasifika at the UoA. Both days were highly successful and were attended by staff, community leaders, senior leaders and two invited overseas Pasifika academics totalling over 200 people across both days.



Figure 4. Over 150 symposium attendees including staff, community and senior leaders are welcomed into the Fale Pasifika – Learning and Teaching symposium 2018.

- Academic Audit Keynote 2018

The PIs were invited speakers at the 2018 Academic Quality Assurance symposium to share their work and research from He Vaka Moana.

- University of Tasmania Invitation to Teaching Matters Conference

The PIs were sponsored to visit the University of Tasmania to talk and present at the large Teaching Matters Conference about Indigenous fellowships and supporting Indigenous

learning. This included a prestigious invitation to a community ‘talking circle’ at the Riawunna Indigenous Australian Centre.

- Talatalanoa

The strength to strength growth of one project, the Talatalanoa series of seminars and wānanga for teaching and professional staff, to include community leaders as facilitators and university senior leadership.

- University of the South Pacific Collaboration – Staff and Students

Both PIs and one fellow were invited to collaborate with colleagues and students at the Institute of Education, University of the South Pacific (Tonga Campus) in 2019 to further disseminate He Vaka Moana and collaborate with Pasifika colleagues in the Pacific. From this collaboration came two journal articles (in press), an opportunity to reciprocate and host two University of the South Pacific colleagues in New Zealand and to support two University of the South Pacific doctoral students to attend the MAI doctoral conference. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 impacts, we have been unable to travel to two further conferences.

Three key resources were produced with our most significant output being a guest co-edited special edition of MAI Journal.

- MAI Journal Special edition, 2020

Both PIs along with six He Vaka Moana fellows and our research assistant were supported to write and publish a MAI Journal Special Edition that was co-guest edited by the PIs. Each article was double blind peer reviewed and published online to a national and international audience.

Securing a special edition for dissemination of the He Vaka fellowship projects was a long journey but is our major dissemination resource for this project.

- International Indigenous Research Conference Video Project Recordings

Both PIs and seven fellows were supported to submit abstracts to the 2020 International Indigenous Research Conference hosted by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Due to COVID-19 this conference was online. Each fellow was given permission to record their project presentation for this conference which will also be held as a teaching resource for He Vaka Moana.

Note that the disestablishment of our former academic development unit (CLear) meant that we lost our He Vaka Moana website, therefore access and online storage is still being negotiated.

- Article in the Journal of the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia

This article on indigenous higher education research was published in January 2021 and was double blind peer reviewed. The article was written for the Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Journal's special edition on Indigenous higher education research. This article is a key dissemination resource as it discusses the qualitative data gathered through interviews with the Māori and Pasifika He Vaka Moana fellows about their experience of the fellowship, how it impacted their work with Māori and Pasifika students, the challenges they face as Indigenous staff and their recommendations for the higher education context.

2 Methodology – Vā-Kā

Contributing to Moana Methodologies – The Context

A key outcome of this project was our theorised contribution to Moana methodologies—an approach we named Vā-kā methodology. Activated by politics of resistance, Vā-kā methodology pushes back against the dominant tide of Western research practices that marginalise Indigenous theory. Instead, we forward Vā-kā methodology as a valid and legitimate academic approach to research, and more importantly, as capable of contributing to positive transformations for Māori and Pasifika research relationships (our double blind peer reviewed article on Vā-kā methodology was published as part of the He Vaka Moana MAI Journal Special Edition, 2020).

Theorising Vā-kā as methodology is a re-voyaging of ancient Moana relationships. It is an attempt to re-navigate, re-connect and re-ignite the space that binds us as Māori and Pasifika peoples. A Vā-kā methodology recognises that we are connected through whakapapa (genealogy), language and shared (and differing) traditional stories, while simultaneously maintaining and asserting identities that are complex, heterogenous and that directly connect us to the Moana.

From the beginning, we were explicit in our desire to disrupt the tendency in higher education to deficit theorise and homogenise issues around Māori and Pasifika student 'success'. As such, theorising research methodologies that deeply examine the language, beliefs, and ways of being held within our own sets of knowledge was critical to address issues of Māori and Pasifika student success in higher education. Enabled and emboldened by Indigenous scholars before us, we theorised and enacted Vā-kā methodology to encourage Indigenous Moana scholars to look to our own sets of ideas, understandings, knowledge, language and ways of being to theorise and seek transforming research solutions for our communities. While Moana methodologies are becoming more visible in academia (Campbell, 2019; Fa'avae, 2016; Hau'ofa, 2008; Johansson-Fua, 2014; Lee, 2008; L. T. Smith, 1999; Te Ava & Page, 2018), and emerge from robust Indigenous scholarship, our methodologies are still held to the margins within Western (dominant) scholarship. Vā-kā is our contribution to Indigenous, and more specifically, Moana methodologies.

Methodology is an immutable aspect of academic scholarship that refers to the concepts and theories that frame the way research is conducted, that is, a conscious articulation of the concepts and theories, knowledges and influences that underpin research as a process for creating 'new' knowledge. Rather than accept a prescribed Western academic approach to our project, we turned to our own 'ways of being' as Māori and Pasifika to theorise an approach that served as a praxis or theory and practice in action. We argue that methodology is a praxis of lashing together theory/thinking and practice/doing, and as such, forward that Vā-kā methodology cannot simply be understood from a distance, but must be enacted, embodied and experienced.

Vā-kā methodology summarised here can be read in more depth in Smith and Wolfgramm-Foliaki (2020).

Lashing Together Vā and Kā

The term vaka (Tongan, Samoan), va'a (Hawai 'i) and waka (Māori) can be broadly defined as a canoe, vessel, vehicle or conveyance. More recently, vaka have been used as conceptual frameworks for arts practices (Looser, 2015) and in areas such as leadership (Spiller et al., 2015). In higher education, the idea of vaka moana has been used in powerful ways to bring students together in relationships. For example, in the Pacific Studies department at the UoA, Vaka Moana is a successful academic advancement programme grounded in Oceanic values to nurture relationships between students and tutors. However, we found little evidence of a theorised unpacking of vaka in higher education.

Vā has been theorised, embodied and enacted in research in a number of powerful ways by Pasifika scholars (Anae et al., 2010; Ka'ili, 2005; Māhina, 2010; Suaalii-Sauni, 2017) to describe relationships, relational order and the valuing and contributing to the wellbeing of those relationships. Samoan scholar Melani Anae (2016) describes teu le vā as the multi-relational, situational and spiritual action of nurturing the vā and 'taking care' or relational space. The Māori language derivative of vā (wā) is defined as "definite space, time" (Williams, 1997, p. 472) and an "opportunity" (Ryan, 1995, p. 330), while the term wā appears in a number of Māori words such as wāhi which means space to move, wānanga as a learning or knowledge creation space, and wātea, to be clear of thought or free of burden.

The Māori term kā (with a macron) means to make fire or to be ignited and ka (without a macron) means the commencement of a new action or condition (Williams, 1997, p. 81). By drawing on our knowledge of our respective languages, we theorised Vā-kā as the igniting of the relational space between Māori and Pasifika researchers. It is important to reiterate here that underpinning vā and wā is a commitment to ensure that the vā is nurtured and maintained, not just for research purposes, but in all aspects of how we, Māori and Pasifika academics, relate to one another, placing good relationships at its centre.

Bound together we developed Vā-kā methodology within the fellowship as a way to ignite Māori and Pasifika researcher relationships, to share ideas, resources, and 'crew members' in allegiances that work to positively support our different and similar transforming agendas and seek transforming change for our diverse and complex communities.

He Vaka Moana Fellows and Project Overviews

All He Vaka Moana projects centred on Māori and Pasifika student success, with each project emerging from a specific faculty focus or need. Each project was independent. However, the projects all shared a common aim, that is, to purposefully examine, improve and evaluate multiple interventions that develop and advance Māori and Pasifika learners' success across the institution. Five of the fellows published their projects in the special

issue of MAI Journal (see <http://www.journal.mai.ac.nz/journal/mai-journal-special-issue-he-vaka-moana>).

As indicated earlier, we as authors and PIs of He Vaka Moana are bound by our cultural obligations, ways of being and commitment to maintaining our vā with one another. Further, our Vā-kā methodology places importance on positionality and relationships, paying attention to the forming, maintaining and nurturing of relationships with and between researchers, therefore it is critical we introduce our research fellows and their projects.

Misatauveve Associate Professor Melani Anae – Faculty of Arts (Pacific Studies)

Melani Anae was a Samoan senior research fellow for the Pacific Health Research Centre, School of Medicine, UoA from 1996–97, and lectured in the Anthropology department from 1998–2000. In 2000, she was appointed senior lecturer in Pacific Studies at the Centre for Pacific Studies. Melani was director of the centre from 2002–2006 and was instrumental in growing the centre from a small language-based programme into a collaborative hub for the study of Pacific culture, history, identity, art, language, performing arts and literature, all centred on a modern Fale Pasifika complex. She is now an associate professor, director of Research, Pacific Studies, Te Wānanga o Waipapa at the UoA. She is involved with local and international teaching, research, and consultancy in the areas of ethnicity, health, education, Pacific research methodologies and Pacific approaches to a range of social issues. Her research interests include regional processes of migration, urbanisation, ethnicity, and the politics of identity. As a recipient of a Fulbright New Zealand Scholar award in 2007, and a Marsden Grant from the Royal Society of New Zealand in 2014, her research into ethnicity and migration in relation to the Samoan diaspora is extensive.

Lalaga: Weaving, Valuing, and Embracing Pacific Knowledge in University Learning Experiences to Enhance Teaching/Learning and Research Success for Pacific Students

This project investigated the influential factor of a secured ethnic identity as well as other factors that contribute to Pacific students succeeding in their studies, and whether existing support initiatives impact this success. This project undertook an analysis of Pacific students in a third-year course in Pacific Studies at the UoA. This research explored deriving meaning for a more secure ethnic identity as a strategy for success across teaching/learning and life courses and sought to explore how the influential factor of a secure ethnic identity contributes to Pacific students succeeding well in their studies. It highlighted the need for strategies, change in environment, and teaching/learning communities, courses and curricula to support Pacific students' identities, successes, families and communities.

Dr Julia Novak – Faculty of Science

Julia Novak is a tauivi academic with a background in mathematics of over 10 years. Julie has furthered into computer science, mathematical education and has completed postgraduate studies in academic practice. With a PhD in mathematics from the

University of London, Julia has worked as an associate dean teaching and learning for the Faculty of Science. Julia's work relates to pedagogy within science education. Currently, Julia is associate director in management at the UoA.

Culturally Appropriate Measures and Pathways for Success

This project investigated retention rates, pass rates and pathways for Māori and Pasifika students in the Faculty of Science. The three phases were: data collection; analysis and consultation; and changing the landscape. This project additionally explored critical self-reflection and how as an educator, one's positionality influences teaching praxes. This project sought to explore how change in learning and assessment practices and the creation of alternative metrics for success could be more aligned with Māori and Pasifika influences and values.

Abigail McClutchie – Student Learning Services, Libraries and Learning Services

Abigail McClutchie is a Māori Kaiārahi in Libraries and Learning Services at the UoA. Abigail has a background in business, commerce, management, international business and is currently undertaking her PhD in Management and International Business in the Faculty of Business and Economics at the UoA. Abigail's interests are in Māori and Pacific spiritual, political, economic, environmental, social, cultural and educational development. Her doctoral work explores notions of Māori entrepreneurship utilising Kaupapa Māori research.

Leadership Through Inclusive Learning and Teaching

Leadership through Learning is an undergraduate programme that runs over a semester and has two key focuses: developing leadership capabilities and academic literacy skills. This programme is centred around utilizing inclusive teaching and learning strategies while working with Māori and Pasifika students. An investigation was undertaken into the impact of leadership through learning and action programmes as a teaching and learning experience, and how they contribute to scholarly achievement, progression to postgraduate study and the development of leadership. The Leadership through Learning programme is designed to help Māori and Pacific students lead, empower and transform through normalising their leadership and learning success.

Dr Marcia Leenen-Young – Faculty of Arts

Marcia Leenen-Young is a lecturer in Pacific Studies at the UoA. She is of Samoan and Dutch descent and has a PhD in ancient history. Her research interests include Pacific pedagogy, Pacific innovation, Pacific history and using her ancient history background to conduct interdisciplinary research within a global context to form new ways of looking at the ancient world through a Pacific lens. She has a background in Māori and Pacific student support, and previously worked as part of Innovative Learning and Teaching at the Business School at the UoA.

Marcia's research interests are exploring Pasifika learning praxes and learning patterns for Pacific students. Marcia's research expertise extends to Pacific pedagogy, Pacific innovation, ancient history and Pacific research.

Akongia Kia Ako: Promoting Learning to Learn for Māori and Pasifika Students

This project investigated concepts of 'learning to learn' for Pacific students in the Faculty of Arts, as well as what makes up a successful learning environment, particularly in relation to initiatives such as He Vaka Moana. This research informed practice as well as provided evidence and impetus for learning initiatives for the future. The objective of this project was to inform how we can enhance recognition of the importance of learning processes for success, and how we as teachers, can foster this within the learning environment. The findings from this project will have practical applications for the Pacific Studies undergraduate academic support programme Vaka Moana. This project sought to design a strategy of interventions to promote Pacific students' exposure to learning how they learn. These interventions are seen as a vital part of their university journey. In exploring how Pacific students learn, this project demonstrated how Pacific students' learning processes are not an issue; however, educators need to be more critically self-reflective of how Pacific students learn at university.

Dr Sonia Fonua – Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences

Sonia Fonua has a Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Science conjoint in anthropology and biology, a Master's degree in biological anthropology and a PhD in critical studies in education. Sonia works in the School of Environment at the Faculty of Science. Her role involves coordinating courses and teaching in the School of Environment with a specific focus on enhancing the engagement and academic success of Pacific students in the School of Environment.

Sonia's PhD research *Ha'otā: Transforming science education in Aotearoa New Zealand for Tongan students* in critical studies in education within the Faculty of Education and Social Work explored Tongan students' experiences of science education. Her research interests are in ethnic disparities in education, and ways to embed Indigenous knowledge and develop effective teaching and learning methods for Indigenous and Pacific students. Her teaching praxis focuses on the needs of Māori and Pacific students in their teaching and learning, which also informs her research focus exploring what Indigenous students' success in academic institutions looks like from their perspectives.

Embedding Indigenous Knowledge, Values and Culture for Māori and Pasifika Success

This project built networks and connections between the key main faculties of Medical and Health Sciences and Science. Several successful talanoa events were held and information about the short-, mid- and long-term goals around embedding Indigenous knowledge, values and culture in science focused courses was collected. Sustainable connections were built as were safe spaces for staff to meet, reflect and develop. In exploring how to embed Indigenous knowledge, values and culture, this project looked at how to encourage teaching staff to critically self-reflect in their roles in relation to

teaching Indigenous students. This project explored the ways in which Māori and Pacific students within science education have less access to achievement compared to other ethnic groups in Aotearoa New Zealand. University engagement with traditional ways of knowing and being in university science is limited, and most formal science curricula globally are founded on Westernised knowledge. Exploring culturally sustaining pedagogy, this project examined the tensions, benefits and considerations that need to be acknowledged and addressed when encouraging non-Indigenous university science educators to incorporate and embed Māori and Pacific values, cultures and knowledge in their teaching practice and learning spaces.

Dr Tia Dawes – Career Development and Employability Services, Libraries and Learning Services

Tia Dawes is of Ngāpuhi and Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairoa descent. Tia is a research fellow at the James Henare Māori Research Centre and works across several research streams involving Māori communities. With an interdisciplinary background, Tia's doctoral research explored whaikōrero in the Roman world, before moving into projects involving Māori student success and career development. Tia is currently involved in the development of a research programme looking at the aspirations of Māori communities and the uptake of new horticultural technologies and the impact these will have. Additionally, Tia's work explores the relationships between kaumātua health and wellbeing, the nature of intergenerational support and the wider responsibilities for kaumātua health.

Work-Related Learning and Māori Student Success

This project involved an exploration of the premise that work-related learning provides an effective means of testing and applying knowledge gained through academic studies to the world of work. These experiences provide significant learning opportunities, and there have been few studies exploring their effectiveness for Māori students. This project sought to provide the opportunity to describe the impacts of graduated employability programmes for Māori to determine whether current career development interventions effectively support course completion, retention and transition from study to meaningful employment.

Work-related learning activities make use of the context of work to develop the skills and knowledge required for success in the workplace. Participants reflected on their understanding of workplace culture and cultural fit. As a result, these students are now better positioned to think about potential career pathways to the point where they are now nominating fields of interest and potential employers.

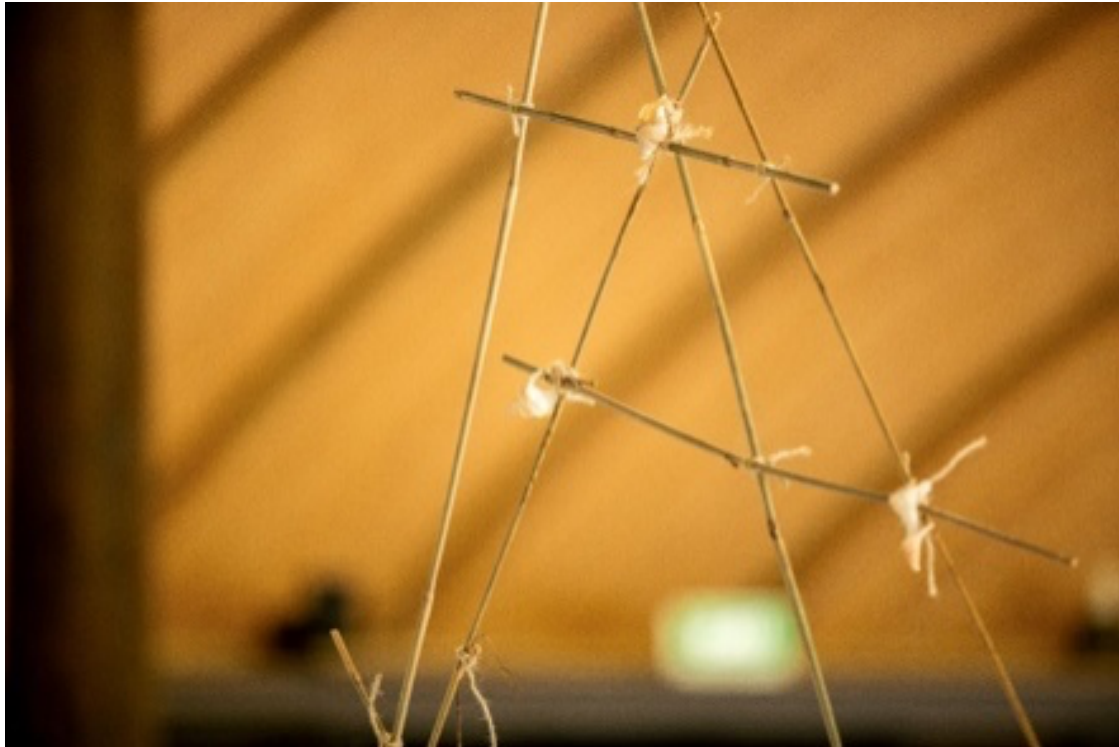


Figure 5. Shell maps draw on ancient navigational knowledge to map our new pathways for Pasifika students.

Associate Dean Jacoba Matapo – Faculty of Education and Social Work

Jacoba is of Samoan Dutch heritage and was born and raised in Aotearoa New Zealand. Jacoba's passion for Pasifika education has stemmed from personal experiences as a Pasifika navigating cultural, political and social tensions in her education journey. Jacoba has traversed a range of leadership roles in her professional career, including centre management positions in early childhood education and programme leadership in tertiary teacher education. Jacoba's love for learning and community engagement has supported her work in research through arts-based practices in early childhood education to Pasifika leadership and pedagogy. Jacoba's current doctoral research locates her work within diasporic multiplicities, attempting to re-imagine Pasifika leadership as a cultural and collective political act. Jacoba's research engages in a postcolonial and posthuman critique of Pasifika education research. From a strengths-based position, her research centres Pacific Indigenous philosophy with posthuman theory to re-imagine Pacific subjectivity in Pasifika education. Her focus on Pacific philosophy calls into question tensions of normativity and teleological ethics in research practice and processes. As a Samoan/Dutch Pasifika academic, her personal and professional experiences in educational leadership across education (early childhood education to tertiary) locates her work within diasporic multiplicities, to engage rigorously in Pacific Indigenous knowledge systems to reconceptualise notions of Pasifika success in education from a decolonising agenda. Jacoba has presented her research both nationally and internationally, problematising constructions of arts practice in early childhood education.

The Art of Wayfinding: Navigating Pasifika Student Success

This research project generated new insights to understanding the complexities of Pasifika success as framed by Pasifika staff and students. As the research was informed by a Pacific cultural reference, it created opportunities for Pasifika staff and students to engage with traditional methods of navigation to re-conceptualize involvement with knowledge, education and notions of resilience in their own academic success within the university. The interactive website (<https://wayfindingpasifika.blogs.auckland.ac.nz>) is a shared resource within the university and is dynamic and changing as new initiatives and interests emerge. The website as a tool of wayfinding Pasifika success includes specific content to foster Pasifika students' success.

Associate Professor Nancy November – Faculty of Creative Arts and Industries

Nancy November is a tauwiwi associate professor in Musicology. Nancy's work centres cultural history and chamber music of the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a recipient of a Humboldt Fellowship 2010–2012, and the recipient of two Marsden Grants from the New Zealand Royal Society, Nancy is working on a range of publications related to chamber music. Her teaching and learning experience in higher education seeks to develop student-centred history pedagogies across disciplines.

What Does Historical Literacy Mean in Aotearoa New Zealand Today, and How Can We Best Foster it in First-Year Māori and Pasifika Students

This project sought to explore how historically literate students can understand, critique and shape their social and political worlds, and can negotiate and create the complex texts of our 'information age'. This entails empathising with worlds and peoples of the past, reading, writing and thinking critically in many media, sourcing, corroborating and contextualising evidence to support argumentation and understanding historical discourse. For Māori and Pacific students, these capabilities are important to empower them to see history as contested and contestable and open to their knowledge, critique and ownership. This project sought to explore first-year Māori and Pacific student experiences from historical disciplines to understand what historical literacy means to them and how they believe it should be taught.

Catherine Dunphy – Faculty of Engineering

Catherine Dunphy of Taranaki is the Kaiārahi for the Faculty of Engineering at the UoA and has been a member of the UoA Council. With over 10 years' experience in tertiary education, she has experience in policy development, Māori development, education, equity and student engagement and development. Her role as Kaiārahi is to ensure that the Faculty of Engineering can make a positive contribution to iwi, Māori and Pacific communities, businesses, and industry, and help support and broker these relationships. Catherine works with Māori and Pacific peoples to identify how engineering can make positive contributions, and where possible, support partnership opportunities to realise aspirations. Catherine is committed to ensuring Māori and Pacific students get the most

out of their time at university and ensure that academic, personal and professional development are centred.

Engineering Adding Value for and with Māori for all Aotearoa

This project sought to explore how lecturers and teaching staff understood their roles in relation to Māori and Pacific learners and how best to support Māori and Pacific students' success, confidence and abilities. The outcomes of this project were to support Māori and Pacific students in engineering, increase faculty knowledge of how to foster environments that promote Māori and Pacific student success, and Māori and Pacific graduates', learners', and engineers' definitions of success. In exploring how success is defined by Māori and Pacific students, it is hoped that the Faculty of Engineering can best support this.

Helena Kaho – Faculty of Law

Helena is of Tongan and New Zealand European descent. She is the first Pacific Islander to become a law school academic with a Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Laws Honours, and a Master of Law. She taught three law papers, LAW121G Law and Society in which she engaged with Pacific Island students in their first year at university; LAWGNRL 453 Pacific Peoples in Aotearoa: Legal Peripheries, a course that she developed which introduced a range of issues relevant to Pacific communities in Aotearoa; and LAWGNRL 428 South Pacific Legal Studies, a course she developed that is about comparative law considering legal issues from different Pacific jurisdictions with the core focus of exposing students to legal pluralism in action. She was also a Pacific Academic Advisor which involved supplementary support to an academic programme for Pacific students including comprehensive mentoring, liaising with tutors and course coordinators, and developing academic support initiatives.

Pacific Law Students' Views of Success as Pacific Students

This project sought to better understand Pacific Law students' views of success as Pacific students and how Pacific identity can be maintained while studying law. The purpose of this project was to incorporate resulting information to assist in the development of best practice in teaching and assessment and in supporting students. Unfortunately, Helena left the UoA in early 2018 three months into the fellowship. Her role as a Pasifika lawyer in the faculty was not filled.

Seulupe Dr Falaniko Tominiko – Unitec

Falaniko is of Samoan descent and is currently the Director of Pacific Success at Unitec. With a background in Pacific Studies and an interest in Pacific leadership, history, languages, arts and culture, Falaniko's work centres around leading the institution's commitment to supporting and progressing Pacific success. He also leads Unitec's Pacific Research Fono which was introduced to lift the institution's Pacific research capability and capacity. Falaniko is also a research fellow for Dr Melani Anae's Marsden project called Transnational Matai.

Fellowship Case Studies

Below we present a brief summary of two fellowship projects to highlight how individual fellows, and their He Vaka Moana projects, made a difference in their faculty and beyond. The third case study summary demonstrates the importance we placed on ‘growing the fleet’ of Māori and Pasifika teachers and researchers. Finally, we include a summary of our qualitative research findings into the fellows’ experiences of He Vaka Moana and their recommendations (all studies can be read in more depth in the MAI Journal Special Edition, 2020).

Sonia Fonua– Pasifika Student Success

Sonia has taught as a university science educator for 20 years, continually witnessing the inequitable outcomes in Māori and Pacific student achievement. She is a papālagi or Pākehā educator who lives as an integral part of her husband’s Tongan family; this has influenced her ontological and epistemological thinking as a wife, aunty, daughter-in-law, but in particular, as a mother of Tongan children. It is making a difference for her children and other Pacific and Māori children, that drives her passion for equitable outcomes in education.

Instead of finding ways that Māori and Pacific students could change so they succeed, Sonia purposefully and explicitly focused her project on teaching staff. She considers them as the ones who need assistance to build their cultural capital and critical self-reflection so they can understand and engage with Māori and Pacific students, not the other way around. Sonia says:

Science educators must understand that Māori and Pacific science learners want and need to feel welcome, valued, respected and included in their learning spaces. Yet the current New Zealand system, which emphasises delivering large volumes of Western modern science content according to Eurocentric ways of being, often contradicts core cultural values and practices such as tauhi vā. Such a system does not acknowledge or assist the cultural border crossing Māori and Pacific science learners must engage in to be successful in their university science studies. Science educators have the agency to challenge the current preference or habit of delivering science in a dehumanising manner. That is, the objectivity sought in science often ends in how it is taught, i.e. non-relational, depersonalized, focused on content and assessment, thus time spent on connecting and building relationships can be very foreign or is discouraged as unnecessary and considered a waste of time. Yet often they are unaware of the cultural contexts Māori and Pacific students exist in and have no means to learn about them. By exposing them to some ways of knowing and being within Māori and Pacific cultures, science educators are able to begin to disrupt and decolonise university science learning spaces by safely embedding Māori and Pacific knowledges, values and

cultures in them in a manner that will engage Māori and Pacific science learners, and benefit the learning of all science students.

The most impactful aspect of Sonia's project was the buy in and participation she engendered from her faculty colleagues. She set up two initiatives: 1) monthly gatherings of up to 25 staff who shared their challenges, successes and asked questions about Māori and Pacific students success; and 2) quarterly cross-faculty talatalanoa sessions to continue the exposure to ways to consider and strengthen Māori and Pacific student success, often attracting over 80 people who came to listen, talk and contribute to a safe space to talk about developing Māori and Pasifika cultural capabilities. Sonia describes talanoa as "talking about nothing in particular, and interacting without a rigid framework" (Vaioleti, 2006, p. 23) and as "complex but flexible, allowing for formal or informal conversation in different contexts or settings for different purposes" (Johansson-Fua, 2009) that enabled participants to determine the discussions that were purposeful and deliberate. Both initiatives lasted 90 minutes and provided ways for those present to consider their relationality and enjoy the journey with others—a luxury of time and space that is not common or encouraged in the university environment. At times, Māori and Pacific experts were invited to attend and share their knowledge and perspectives to provide intercultural support. Importantly, Sonia's project embraced the presence of both academic and professional staff, ignoring the institutional hierarchy and considered everyone's contribution equal, whether they were academic deans or lab technicians.

From the talanoa group, Sonia interviewed a select group of colleagues about their experience of engaging in the talanoa series producing a number of key findings:

- The university has an expectation of teaching staff to form positive relationships, but offers very little explanation or support of what this means in practice.
- There is often limited focus on forming any teacher–student relationship.
- Science teachers often consider their role to be to deliver content, not to build connections.

As a practical activity, Sonia engaged Māori teachers to support the talanoa participants to develop a pepeha. While most felt the pepeha made a significantly positive contribution to building relationships, others felt unsupported and discouraged by their colleagues (who had not participated in the talanoa). The disappointment is evidence here in this participant's voice who spoke about a colleague saying that doing a pepeha would not 'fix' Māori and Pacific student engagement:

When I discussed this [project] with other academics and my desire to be involved to make a positive change. . . . They start to want evidence and science because that's where I work. The kinds of questions I got were "Why should you be doing this?", "What's the real point?" . . . The number one question from my department was "Is that just token, just throwing a bit of Māori into your introduction? [It] isn't going to do anything." [Yet] they

wanted to solve the problem [of Māori and Pacific success]. (Ella, non-Indigenous lecturer)

Despite her constant work to bring relationality to the ‘hard sciences’, the most remarkable impacts of Sonia’s project have been the continuation of the monthly sessions, and the talatalanoa becoming regular activities in her faculty and the Faculty of Medical and Health Sciences, and attended from others in Arts and Education. Both initiatives are still well attended two years on and continue to provide a safe and productive space for staff to ‘talk about nothing and anything’ to do with Māori and Pacific student success. A continuing concern however is that despite the espoused commitment from the university and faculty to support Māori and Pacific student success, which Sonia has shown must include developing staff cultural competencies, this work is an add-on to her teaching and research workload.



Figure 6. Ongoing talatalanoa series at the Faculty of Science.

Abigail McClutchie – Māori Student Success

The impact of Abigail’s fellowship project that investigated the in-depth experiences of students on the Leadership through Learning programme was significant. Not only did Abigail gather qualitative evidence to demonstrate the shifts in student efficacy but the programme has continued to go from strength to strength supported from within her faculty/division. One of the outcomes from Abigail’s He Vaka Moana project was Te Tumu Herenga extending her fellowship time for another year. With this extra day per week she was able to write articles and disseminate the findings at internal staff development opportunities and externally through conferences. Leadership through Learning is a 12-week programme for Māori and Pacific tertiary students run by Te Tumu Herenga, Libraries and Learning Services at the UoA. Abigail’s fellowship publication reinforces that while Māori and Pacific student success in higher education remains a priority for the Tertiary Education Commission (Chauvel, 2014), success is still narrowly defined despite influential studies published a decade ago (Airini et al., 2010).

Through Leadership through Learning, Abigail explored the following research question:

What teaching and learning innovations in the Leadership through Learning programme impacted the student leaders' leadership, empowerment and transformation?

In Abigail's words:

The programme is designed to help students lead, empower, and transform through normalising their leadership and learning success. As a strategy, normalising success counters negative stereotypes, microaggressions, and the everyday colonialism and racism these students encounter. By normalising success, positive stereotypes are created that challenge the deficit framing faced by Māori and Pacific students. (McClutchie, 2020, p. 59)

The programme takes small cohorts (10–12 students) on a transformative journey to build self-efficacy, promote their unique identity, and reinforce positive stereotypes, teaching academic literacy skills, leadership, personal growth and professional development. A key point of difference in Abigail's fellowship programme is the importance of including the self in relationship to whānau/aiga, broader communities, the institute and tertiary study. What Abigail calls “a countercultural and counternarrative approach” (McClutchie, 2020, p. 60) works to reduce negative stereotypes and microaggressions experienced by Māori and Pacific students, establishing an alternative success norm.

Māori students in the programme found ways they could reciprocate Māori knowledge especially working collectively and bringing that to their lives outside of the university. For example, one Māori student learned how she could bring a Māori pedagogical approach to her paid work and share different ways of managing her staff in the “Western, mainstream world”:

So, working collectively rather than individually is where I'm at. What I see is that people can thrive when they work together, and that is how collective societies work.

In another example, one Māori student found belongingness at the UoA in ways they had not known before:

I think a lot of it is to do with being able to see ourselves and interact with ourselves in every space in this university—whether that's the lecturer, whether that's the students, or whether that's the content of the course as well. Especially the content! Just because, when you come to university, university is about individualising people. It's about making people competitive. It's about working against each other instead of working together. And there's like a sense of family that's created in Leadership through Learning, but you don't get that every day, like in a regular course at uni!

Abigail's fellowship project demonstrated that while teaching and learning environments vary across institutions, faculties and departments, there are ways that educators can normalise Māori and Pacific students' success. She leaves us with this persistent question:

Māori and Pacific students have graduated with degrees despite the challenges of an uneven playing field. Recognising that this unevenness persists, as this study has demonstrated, raises the question: What more can *you* do to normalise and empower Māori and Pacific students' leadership and learning success?

Ashlea Gillon: Growing the Fleet

Ash is a doctoral student at the UoA and a self-described research-teina. Her role has been to assist the principle investigators throughout the He Vaka Moana project; however, she has also been involved with the fellows' projects and provided research support to them also. Through He Vaka Moana Ash has been able to theorise about the importance of relationships and whanaungatanga within Māori and Pacific research and academic spaces. Her theory paper *Growing the Fleet: A Māori Re-Search-Teina's Perspective on Māori and Pasifika Re-Search Relationality* delves into her experiences as a Māori student, a new and emerging Māori researcher and academic, and the importance of tertiary institutions creating and supporting Māori and Pacific students to engage with Māori and Pacific researchers on projects such as these. In re-positioning research assistants as research teina, Ash provides a Kaupapa Māori framework for the importance of whanaungatanga, of building relationships across the institution, and of 'growing the fleet' of new and emerging Māori and Pacific researchers.

'We Don't Talk Enough' – Listening to Stories from the Fleet

One of our key evaluative activities for this project was a qualitative examination of the fellows' experiences of He Vaka Moana. Ethical approval was granted to conduct individual interviews with seven of the nine He Vaka Moana fellows at the completion of their fellowship year in early 2019 (the remaining two were unavailable within the required timeframe). Because the He Vaka Moana fellows and their projects were widely advertised within UoA (and publicly available on our project website) and the fellows had presented at two symposia, anonymity was not a concern. As such, the fellows and their projects are named here and throughout the report.

We share below a summary of three key themes that emerged when we asked the fellows about their experience of He Vaka Moana and the clear recommendations they would make going forward drawing on our publication (in press, HERD, 2020) of these results. We privileged our Vā-kā methodology as a thematic analytical tool to report here on three relevant and topical themes that emerged:

1. Pikipiki hama – To join or lash together as an important fellowship value of connecting, being in relationship, and being present.

2. Kae vaevae manava – To feed the soul through sharing, defining and demanding space, time, and resources to do the necessary work for Māori and Pasifika students.
3. Vā-kā the constraints of realising Māori and Pacific research spaces in the university and the complexities of working with non-Indigenous allies.

Pikipiki Hama – Connecting, Relating and Being Present



Figure 7. Creating space to meet, to talk, to create.

Coming together and making solid relational connections within the fellowship promoted what one fellow described as an essential ‘internal shift’ to approaching Māori and Pasifika student success. All of the fellows interviewed spoke in some way to the design of the fellowship that enabled formalised work time and space for Māori and Pasifika academic and professional teaching staff to come together, to connect, and relate in ways that are rarely made available in higher education. While varying forms of hui and fono in the university are not uncommon, rarely do they centre a research-based focus on Māori and Pasifika student success.

Sharing her practical experience of being a member of an actual ocean-going canoe, Abigail drew an analogy to the fellowship saying:

It’s about relationships ... we are all individuals, but on the waka we’ve got to be a unit, we’ve got to work together to get somewhere safely ... you are called on to be more present.

Jacoba who also has practical experience of paddling waka ama or outrigger canoes, emphasised that it is not only what she got from others, but importantly what she brought to the fellowship. Pikipiki hama to her is about:

Affirming who I am and what I bring and the possibilities to rekindle connections or make new connections I think it is quite powerful in a sense because you’re never alone in a waka or a vaka and your destination is not by chance, it’s planned.

Referring specifically to the fellowship Jacoba said:

It is understanding that there is strength in the collective and unity when we can come together right across the university, because one thing I have come to know with the people involved in He Vaka is the heart, the passion, the fight, the self-determination, the effort, the blood, sweat and tears, the grit to keep persevering in places that often your invisible labour is not counted in traditional academic measures.

Deliberately creating time and space to meet regularly was viewed as critical to maintaining and developing connections or nurturing the vā and relationships. Marcia said that:

Meeting regularly was the best thing for me because I had a space where I felt like everyone was going through the same struggles.

A formalised space and work loaded time commitment was viewed as vital and in stark contrast to the ad hoc or snatched conversations about Māori and Pasifika student issues “in the hallway.”

Melani, an experienced senior academic, felt that there are very few spaces in higher education to connect over Māori and Pasifika student success:

This is the first time I’ve had the opportunity to [engage with colleagues across the university]. This was the best thing that has happened in a long while at the university in terms of looking at Māori and Pacific success.

The role of relationality was described by Melani as a key element of the fellowship and a form of institutional decolonisation:

It’s decolonising what we have now, but re-indigenising using our Indigenous tools to make things better, for not only us but for New Zealand... looking back to give forward using our ancestral wisdom to prepare us for a future.

Jacoba recognised that the fellowship enabled her to connect with fellows beyond the “silo” of her own faculty:

Pikipiki hama is about seeing there are multiple horizons and how can we vision together, as a wider collective not just within the faculty but university wide, initiatives that are already underway or understanding who the key people are who you need to talk to, or understanding the resources that are available to you.

We see the potential for the He Vaka Moana fellowship model to extend beyond an inter-faculty fleet of researchers to an inter-institutional collaboration of researchers committed to Māori and Pasifika student success (see Recommendations for more information).



Figure 8. He Vaka Moana fellows share their work at the 2018 symposium.

Kae Vaevae Manava – Making Time, Taking Time

In higher education, high workload and burnout remain serious issues for Māori and Pasifika staff who are not afforded time to meet, talk and maintain those vital ontological and axiological relationships of being Māori and being Pasifika. Jacoba calls this the “invisible cultural workload” heaped on Māori and Pasifika staff, who carry out tasks of cultural duty that are not recognised by the audit culture of the university. While the 0.2-time release from teaching was seen as an extraordinary gift, safeguarding fellowship time was a constant juggle. Abigail saw prioritising the time was her way of “honouring the kaupapa”:

It’s really about prioritising the time at the beginning and [from there] certain relationships developed. I think those people that were able to connect early made [the fellowship] a priority ... the ones who showed up were about transformation ... the benefits we got were because we did it together.

Many of the fellows mentioned that forming and maintaining relationships takes time—the luxury of which we are not afforded in higher education. Although Pākehā fellow Julia was clear that she did not experience the kind of cultural workload that Jacoba refers to, she highlighted the lack of space offered in a content driven institution for those who want to learn more and engage with Te Ao Māori. Using the example of attending pōwhiri for new staff and students Julia said:

These things take time and they are important, not just culturally important but to get a sense of the culture and a feel for the people ... we haven’t got time ...but we haven’t got time not to either ... I think once you’ve got the mind shift you can’t go completely back but you never get the time [to continue to engage in maintaining relationships].

The Māori phrase *kanohi kitea*—the ‘seen face’, was used by one fellow to describe a person who takes time to be present as a demonstration of their commitment. The fellows demonstrated that nurturing and maintaining of the *wā* (space) and *vā* (relational space) by honouring their fellowship time and being present and actively involved was critical, and indeed expected, in a Māori and Pasifika led initiative despite issues such as time, workload and other pressures.

Consistently engaging all nine He Vaka fellows was not ‘smooth sailing’. Despite the 0.2-time release ‘gift’, two of the nine fellows contributed infrequently throughout the fellowship and one fellow did not appear in person at all. While most of the fellows relished the time to be together and talk, one of the infrequent Māori fellows commented that:

Sometimes I didn’t turn up for things because there would be a lot of talk to get things going. So, I have to admit that I didn’t turn up because I knew it would take too much time for things to get going and not have an outcome. Maybe me being selfish with my time, but I had other responsibilities.

This fellow’s comment could be a reflection of the high workload placed on Māori staff to engage when there are competing commitments. This comment could also reflect that building relationships through whakawhanaungatanga and talanoa takes commitment, time and energy. Those fellows who did attend spoke about the huge benefits to, not only project work, but their personal and professional relationships with the other fellows.

Those who irregularly attended He Vaka Moana events were commented on as “not contributing to the kaupapa” or “nurturing the vā”. From the nine initial fellows, a core of six He Vaka Moana fellows emerged. The fellowship demonstrated that nurturing and maintaining of the wā (space) and vā (relational space) by honouring their fellowship time and being present and actively involved was critical. Issues such as time, workload and other pressures were cited by those few who failed to find time. By the end of the fellowship, unsurprisingly, benefits to the individual fellows were related to their contribution to the vā of the group.

Vā-kā – Igniting Space, Holding Space, Demanding Space for Māori and Pasifika

The nature of the fellowship to strategically position a research ‘champion’ in each faculty across the university was viewed by the fellows as critical. Melani said that having the fellows “strategically placed and located” better enabled them to draw on their relationships and connections both within and beyond their faculty.

The requirement to include non-Indigenous fellows across faculties, however, generated some important discussion.

Julia reflected on her induction into the fellowship:

At the beginning I thought maybe this was a mistake, maybe I shouldn’t have done this fellowship, maybe it should have been a Pacific or Māori because maybe this is what it is really designed for.

Later, describing the productive discomfort of working through what she names as her “Pākehā paralysis” due to anxiety about getting it wrong and causing offence. For Julia, walking gently as a non-expert into Māori and Pasifika space is:

The responsibility of those that are coming into this country and the Pākehā of this country to really understand that we're not always right and it's okay to be told we're wrong about these things.

The Māori and Pasifika fellows discussed their views on how non-Indigenous allies can come alongside our vaka in ways that do not subsume or take over the leadership, intention or direction of the vaka.

Both Marcia and Abigail agreed that Māori and Pacific spaces such as the fellowship are hard fought for and need to be protected. Marcia named the problem:

We're in a university and there's a very limited number of us and there are so many Māori and Pacific topics that need support.

And Abigail provided this useful analogy:

I have fought this battle before, when it comes to limited seats on a train like this, they should go to Māori and/or Pasifika first. If there's space at the end, then sure, let other people on.

Recognising the tensions that arise from including or excluding non-Indigenous allies, Marcia usefully suggested creating space within the fellowship for just Māori and Pasifika to talk:

So, it's a comfortable space and we're not worried about offending anyone. But then I don't want to exclude them either. I don't know what the right answer to this is.

She later returned to this point to reiterate that:

I am of two minds. I think we have a lot of Māori and Pacific staff that could use these opportunities [to be a fellow]; that's one side. The other side is there are so few of us and so much work to do. What I think needs to be done is just call out the elephant in the room!

Jacoba took an inclusive view of non-Indigenous allies who were prepared to lash to her vaka:

If anything it's about a place of strength and please join us, it's about inviting everyone else to be part of it, not exclusive only to the researchers or exclusive only to those who were chosen, or exclusive only to Pacific and Māori academics because often the load is carried by the Pacific and Māori academics, again the invisible labour that isn't recognised ... So how can we actually be more inclusive of others saying, "Hey it's a collective responsibility here not just Pacific and Māori academics".

3 Discussion

Our discussion section highlights four specific challenges to creating change. We do not assert that a He Vaka Moana fellowship model is the one solution to transforming the higher education experience for Māori and Pasifika students and staff—the issues of under representation, systemic racism and problematically framed notions of success are far too complex to be solved with a single silver bullet. However, what our model does offer is a research informed initiative that is Māori and Pasifika led using Moana methodologies to increase the capability and capacity of Māori and Pasifika teaching and learning for our underserved groups of Māori and Pasifika students.

Challenges of Sustainability and Institutional Support

Ultimately, the fellowship's futurity, or not, comes down to the priorities of those in power who allocate resources such as staffing appointments, workload and funding—again highlighting the extent of institutional power and influence over Māori and Pasifika agency to create change. The institution is in control and can provide and remove the funding, staffing and priorities around what and why initiatives are sustained or not. Despite the voices of the fellows, the strategic objectives of our institution, and approaches to faculty leaders and senior leadership, the He Vaka Moana fellowship was not resourced with a 0.2 time release following its one year funding; except in one case where Library and Learning Services recognised the value of Abigail's project and agreed to extend her 0.2 time release for a second year.

Given the importance we place on the *vā*, on relationships and relationality, we remain committed to the relationships and projects created from He Vaka Moana and are culturally bound to contribute to sustaining those relationships into the future. We endeavour to continue to *pikipiki hama* and 'ignite the *vā*' with the fellows. For example:

- five of the He Vaka Moana fellows, plus our Māori research assistant, were supported to publish their research in a special edition of MAI Journal
- we facilitated writing for publication workshops, offered peer reviews, and created collective writing spaces and funded writing retreats
- we continue to attend and support a *talanoa* series in one faculty where space has been maintained following the He Vaka Moana fellowship for teaching staff to meet to discuss Māori and Pasifika student success.

Without a formalised commitment from the institution to fund and support initiatives such as this, the sustainability of Māori and Pasifika space again falls back on Māori and Pasifika staff as part of our invisible cultural workload.

In her interview, Julia, a Pākehā fellow and mathematician, discussed two critical aspects for change that she learnt from He Vaka Moana—that improving outcomes for Māori and Pasifika students takes time and that statistics is one very narrow indicator of a broad success story:

We need systemic change and cultural change, rather than statistical change. The statistical change will follow later, maybe two years, three years, maybe even ten years down the track. The more we keep going back and looking at the data the more we are going to head off in different directions and perhaps not the right direction.

Another of our fellows, senior academic Melani, referred to a study she conducted over 20 years ago around Pacific initiatives across the campus. Melani said:

I am sorry to say that little has changed in 20 years so that's how much importance the university places on Māori and Pacific student success. None. Nada in 20 years. I don't think the university can close their eyes anymore to the fact that the university is going to be browned.

Melani says the He Vaka Moana model should be ongoing and permanent, faculty-based with a focus around a Māori/Pasifika student issues. Stating that “nothing is created in a vacuum”, Melani continued:

The fellowship is something unique. We haven't done it before and are now in a great position to demand its recognition and implementation. You've got the fellows within those faculties, positioned to be able to lead. The key is getting senior leadership on board.

If the UoA were to formalise this fellowship, Melani suggested “we would lead the country, nationally and internationally”.

Numbers of Pasifika and Māori Academics

The importance of nurturing relationships in Māori and Pasifika spaces is not new. We have in fact been speaking, writing and researching the role of relationships and student success for decades, so why has so little changed? The tertiary sector continues to ignore issues of systemic racism that fail to prioritise the development, hiring, retention and promotion of Māori and Pasifika academics (McAllister et al., 2019; Naepi, 2019). Naepi (2019) argues that highlighting the critically low numbers of Pasifika academics can “hold government and universities accountable for their inaction against structural racism” (p. 220). Until the tertiary sector actively addresses these staffing inequities, our growing student body of Māori and Pasifika students will continue to rely on a small group of Māori and Pasifika academics to create space to talk about Māori and Pasifika student success outside of our academic workloads and responsibilities.

As for the small number of Māori and Pasifika academics in higher education, we are not enabled or supported to come together and talk, to talanoa, to wānanga or to pikipiki hama in ways that are mutually beneficial. Our bodies of theory and research have necessarily developed their own distinct approaches that emerged from, and are in response to, the issues that our diverse groups encounter. Kaupapa Māori theory (Henry & Pene, 2001; Irwin, 1994; Lee, 2008; Pihama, 2001; G. H. Smith, 2003; L. T. Smith, 1999), creates “culturally defined theoretical space” (Pihama, 2001, p. 77) that places Māori

language, values and beliefs at its centre. Similarly, Pasifika theory has developed innovative Pacific centred research approaches such as Kakala (Johansson-Fua, 2014; Thaman, 2008), Talanoa (Fa’avae, 2016; Vaioleti, 2006), Tivaevae (Maua-Hodges, 2001) and Vanua frameworks (Nabobo-Baba, 2006).

There is a need for increased and productive conversations between Māori and Pasifika researchers. Samoan criminologist Tamasailau Suaalii-Sauni (2017) identified a direct relationship between vā and Kaupapa Māori calling for “a more deliberate conversation between Pasifika researchers about how to go about engaging with Māori peoples and with research tools, concepts, and theories, including Kaupapa Māori” (p. 162). The time is ripe for Māori and Pasifika researchers to collaborate in ways that enhance our individual and wider collective agendas. We offer Vā-kā methodology and pikipiki hama as a way to facilitate this kind of purposeful and deliberate conversation.

Pro Vice Chancellor (Pacific) Damon Salesa and Pro Vice Chancellor (Māori) Cindy Kiro commented on this critical issue in their foreword in our He Vaka Moana MAI Journal edition:

Within universities Māori and Pasifika academics have catalysed or led many transformative intellectual and research developments, but they remain too few in number and in many cases are isolated. Collaborative activity serves a double purpose then: to bring about a revivification of Indigenous relationships of exchange and connection, and to support and develop researchers and teachers by creating communities of Indigenous scholarship, fashioning archipelagos that stretch across institutional space.

Not until the number of Māori and Pasifika academics and professional staff increases, and importantly, are supported to come together in “relationships of exchange and connection”, will there be a significant and noticeable change to Māori and Pasifika student success in higher education.

Non-Indigenous Allyship

The involvement of non-Māori and non-Pasifika research allies in Māori and Pasifika issues is necessarily, and frequently, debated. In this fellowship, fellows required approval from their faculty dean to receive their 0.2-time release. While the authors as project leaders were involved in the final selection round, initial nominations and decision-making powers were already in play, highlighting the omnipotent power of the institution to both overtly and covertly inform and shape our initiatives.

The often-stated reason for non-Indigenous inclusion in Māori and Pasifika initiatives cites the critically low numbers of Māori and Pasifika staff at the UoA but does not engage the systemic reasons as to why this occurs. Two recently published articles, ‘Why isn’t my professor Māori?’ (McAllister et al., 2019) and ‘Why isn’t my professor Pasifika?’ (Naepi, 2019), work powerfully in tandem to highlight the “active structural underserving” (Naepi, 2019, p. 221) and exclusion of Māori and Pasifika from academic roles in New Zealand universities. Despite ‘equity and diversity’ staffing policies, European academic

staff remain the dominant ethnicity accounting for between 56% and 83% of academic staff across different universities (McAllister et al., 2019). One argument is that non-Indigenous allies are necessary to ‘help’ us with our work because there are not enough of us. The other argument is clear—we need more Māori and Pasifika staffing and leadership in this area.

Risks and Adjustments to a New Global and Moana Norm

The completion of the He Vaka Moana research fellowship and the release of our special edition of the MAI Journal came at an unprecedented time in our global and Oceanic history. Not in our lifetimes have we as Māori and Pasifika people, academics and students, experienced such upheaval in our ability to nurture relationships. The vā/wā that we know is critical to our teaching and learning interactions with higher education students is being severely tested due to the COVID-19 pandemic, and as higher education institutions necessarily turn to online learning, we are gravely concerned that once again Māori and Pasifika students and their cultural needs will be dismissed amidst the urgency to meet the needs of ‘mainstream’ students.

For Māori and Pasifika staff, the potential sociocultural impacts are just as concerning. As we have presented throughout our two-year project, Māori and Pasifika staff are not provided space within higher education to collaborate, to talk, to theorise, to nurture and ignite the vā/wā. The rapid move to online learning reduces again the opportunities to both physically and intellectually nurture our teaching, learning and research relationships. Furthermore, there is a growing unease about a permanent move to more online learning as a cost cutting measure, and the potential impact this could have on Māori and Pasifika employment in higher education.

Damon Salesa and Cindy Kiro point to the importance of initiatives such as He Vaka Moana in these new and uncertain times as:

We turn to a new ocean, where so many of our online waters remain largely unknown. In these times both the inequalities with which we wrestle and the values with which we confront them are heightened. Innovative work that can offer insight at times like this becomes of special value.

Also required is the kind of intellectual innovation and courage displayed here. At challenging times such as these, it is tempting to simply try to weather stormy waters. But one of the lessons of the Tongan proverb “pikipiki hama kae vaevae manava” is that these are also times where communal strengths can form a secure and powerful basis for ongoing voyaging and discovery. Knowledge and courage, anchored in cultural knowledge, can be utilised so that we do more than merely ride out storms, and use their powerful forces to propel voyages further and faster, not merely to survive, but to thrive.

4 Conclusions and Recommendations

We are often asked to prove how this fellowship model is making a difference and how can it be scaled up and made sustainable. Attempting to answer these questions is at the centre of our ongoing research as we re-voyage often well-worn journeys traversed by Māori and Pasifika researchers before us in a quest to answer questions from power-holders who are either not ready or are unwilling to hear our answers. Perhaps these questions are better reflected back to higher education:

- What evidence does the institution have to show active work to meet strategic objectives around Māori and Pasifika as high priority groups?
- How does the institution know that what you are doing for Māori and Pasifika student success is working and who are you asking? And if it is not, why not?
- What changes are the institution implementing, what evidence is being sought and whose methods and methodologies are driving these changes?
- How is the institution supporting Māori and Pasifika staff to lead our own initiatives with time allocation and sufficient resourcing in line with strategic intentions?

As a number of the fellows mentioned throughout the project, little has changed in the past 20 years.

The contribution that we offer here through our experiences of the He Vaka Moana fellowship and our theorised methodology is just (another) beginning in our challenge to create change for Māori and Pasifika students and staff in higher education. We send the call out across the Moana for Māori and Pasifika researchers to pikipiki hama and work collectively to make change in higher education. Ahakoa he iti; although it is small, just one degree of change on a long ocean voyage of many thousands of miles will lead us to a very different destination.

Summary

Conclusion 1

Higher Education in Aotearoa New Zealand requires a renewed and active commitment to increased Māori and Pasifika success. Such a conclusion is not new, yet it is important that it is reiterated here as little has changed in the past 20 years.

What is new perhaps is the call for these initiatives to be Māori and Pasifika led, drawing on our knowledges, languages and ways of being. He Vaka Moana in this sense is a 'new' 'old' offering that seeks a way for us to work together in productive and self-sovereigning ways. For Māori and Pasifika led programmes that support Māori and Pasifika student success in higher education to be sustainable, there must be greater institutional commitment of time, workload and resources.

Recommendation 1

An increased national and institutional commitment to Māori and Pasifika led programmes for Māori and Pasifika student success, including a significant increase of Māori and Pasifika staffing appointments and workload recognition of Māori and Pasifika contributions and research.

Conclusion 2

Māori and Pasifika staff in higher education are underrepresented and overworked, leaving little time to come together to talk, create, research and teach—to pikipiki hama—in meaningful and productive ways to support solutions within our individual, diverse, heterogenous cultural knowledges and spaces. Nurturing the vā, having time to wānanga and strengthen those relationships that bind us as people of the Moana are vital to addressing both the retention and work satisfaction of Māori and Pasifika staff and the success of Māori and Pasifika students in higher education.

Recommendation 2

Recognise and support time for Māori and Pasifika staff (separately and together), to wānanga/meet/talanoa to create solutions from within Māori and Pasifika ways of being.

Conclusion 3

A genuine commitment to shift attitudes and change hearts and minds takes time and is not a short-term fix. Instead, Māori and Pasifika led programmes to support Māori and Pasifika student success must be formalized and made sustainable by committing to professional and academic development on teaching learning and research to create transformational change.

Recommendation 3

Formalize sustainable work roles, resourcing and research funds to match the policy rhetoric of Māori and Pasifika student success at institutional and national levels.

The Dissemination of Findings (See Appendix)

Three key resources emerged from this project, the most significant being a special edition of MAI Journal called He Vaka Moana, guest co-edited by the PIs with double blind peer reviewed article contributions from five fellows and our research assistant Ashlea Gillon.

MAI Journal Special Edition, 2020

Both PIs along with five He Vaka Moana fellows and our research assistant were supported to write and publish a special edition of MAI Journal co-guest edited by the PIs. Each article was double blind peer reviewed and published online to a national and international audience.

Securing a special edition for dissemination of the He Vaka fellowship projects was a long journey but is our major dissemination resource for this project. For more information, visit: <http://www.journal.mai.ac.nz/journal/mai-journal-special-issue-he-vaka-moana>

A number of other key dissemination activities throughout the project included:

Two, One-Day He Vaka Moana Symposia (2018 and 2019) held at Waipapa Marae and Fale Pasifika at the University of Auckland

Both days were highly successful, attended by staff, community leaders, senior leaders and two invited overseas Pasifika academics totalling over 200 people across both days.

Academic Audit Keynote 2018

The Pls were invited speakers at the 2018 Academic Quality Assurance symposium to share our work and research from He Vaka Moana.

Tasmania Invitation to Teaching Matters Conference

Pls were sponsored to visit the University of Tasmania to talk and present at a large conference about Indigenous fellowships and supporting Indigenous learning. This included a prestigious invitation to a community 'talking circle' at the Riawunna Indigenous Australian Centre.

Talatalanoa

The strength to strength growth of one project, the Talatalanoa series of seminars and wānanga for teaching and professional staff, to include community leaders as facilitators and university senior leadership.

University of the South Pacific Collaboration – Staff and Students

Both Pls and one fellow were invited to collaborate with colleagues and students at the University of the South Pacific (Tonga Campus) in 2019 to further disseminate He Vaka Moana and collaborate with Pasifika colleagues in the Pacific. From this collaboration has come two journal articles (in press), an opportunity to reciprocate and host two University of the South Pacific colleagues in New Zealand to attend the MAI doctoral conference. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19, we have not been able to travel to two further conferences).

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Appendices

He Vaka Moana Project Dissemination Plan

Title	He Vaka Moana – Māori and Pasifika Research Fellowship
Number	R/O 3715775
Researchers	Dr 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki and Dr Hinekura Smith
Organisations	University of Auckland
Designated media contact	

Key messages <i>Summarised messages from the research that can be clearly and simply communicated i.e. to media)</i>	COVID impacts on 2020 dissemination CLear disestablished, roles changed 2021 OD potential
Key resources	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> MAI Journal Special Edition, 2020 Both PIs along with six He Vaka Moana fellows and our research assistant were supported to write and publish a MAI Journal Special Edition co-guest edited by the PIs. Each article was double blind peer reviewed and published online to a national and international audience. Securing a special edition for dissemination of the He Vaka fellowship projects was a long journey, but is our major dissemination resource for this project. AKO Final Report provides a succinct summary of the projects goals, outcomes and findings. IIRC Video Project Recordings Both PIs and seven fellows were supported to submit abstracts to the 2020 International Indigenous Research Conference hosted by Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga. Due to COVID 19 this conference is online. Each fellow has given permission to record their project presentation for this conference which will also be held as a teaching resource for He Vaka Moana. The disestablishment of our former academic development unit CLear meant that we lost our He Vaka Moana website, therefore access and online storage is still being negotiated. HERD Journal Special Edition article on Indigenous Higher Education Research (in press).

	<p>A double blind peer reviewed article for the HERD Journal Special Edition article on Indigenous Higher Education Research. This article is a key dissemination resource as it discusses qualitative data gathered through interviews with the Māori and Pasifika He Vaka Moana fellows about their experience of the fellowship, how it has impacted their work with Māori and Pasifika students, the challenges they face as Indigenous staff and their recommendations to the higher education context.</p>
<p>Project highlights <i>Key outcomes/findings</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <p>Two, one-day He Vaka Moana symposia (2018 and 2019) held at Waipapa Marae and Fale Pasifika, University of Auckland.</p> <p>Both days were highly successful, attended by staff, community leaders, senior leaders and two invited overseas Pasifika academics totally over 200 people across both days.</p> <p>MAI Journal Special Edition publication (as above) http://www.journal.mai.ac.nz/journal/mai-journal-special-issue-he-vaka-moana</p> <p>Academic audit keynote 2018</p> <p>PIs were invited speakers at the 2018 Academic Quality Assurance symposium to share our work and research with He Vaka Moana.</p> <p>Tasmania invitation to Teaching Matters</p> <p>PIs were sponsored to visit University of Tasmania to talk and present at a large Teaching Matters conference about Indigenous fellowships and supporting Indigenous learning.</p> <p>Including a prestigious invitation to a community ‘talking circle’ at the Riawunna Indigenous Australian Centre.</p> <p>Talatalanoa</p> <p>The strength to strength growth of one project, the Talatalanoa series of seminars and wānanga for teaching and professional staff to include community leaders as facilitators and university senior leadership.</p> <p>USP Collaboration – Staff and students</p> <p>Both PI’s and one fellow were invited to collaborate with colleagues and students at USP Tonga in 2019 to further disseminate He Vaka Moana and collaborate with Pasifika colleagues in the Pacific. From this collaboration has come two journal articles (in process), an opportunity to reciprocate and host two USP colleagues in NZ, supporting two USP doctoral students to attend the MAI doctoral conference (note: unfortunately COVID-19 impacts meant we</p>

	have not been able to travel to two further conferences)
Scope for international interest	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tasmania connection and invitation • Develop and support relationships with USP key stakeholders and other institutions in the Pacific region • Panel presentations at AARE and Assoc Pacific Studies: Decolonisation and the trans Pacific • Developing international Indigenous methodologies
Workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • An official MAI Journal Special Edition launch is planned (COVID impacted) as part of a one-day dissemination workshop now planned for November. • Teaching and Learning Symposium 2018 and 2019 (as above)
Next steps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider future research collaborations with USP and inter-institutional collaboration to extend He Vaka Moana and our Vā-kā methodology which acknowledges that Aotearoa New Zealand is part of Oceania and the Pacific region.

Project Dissemination Communications Strategy

External

Channel	Audience	Publish Date	Status	Notes	Owner
Ako website			✓		
Ako Alert			✓		
Media release	MAI Journal publication	August 2020			
Ako social media			✓		
Other org social channels					
Other org publications	Internal, stakeholder and sector			Annual report	
Other org digital channels					
External events	International				

Internal

Channel	Audience	Publish Date	Status	Notes	Owner
Email	National Team				
Email	Board and Caucus members				

Email	Government bodies (e.g. TEC)		✓		
Hubs	National public			Workshop intro opportunity then in-house event	
Workshops	National public			See other page	
Events	Internal, stakeholder and sector				

Ethics PIS and CF



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Participant Information Sheet

He Vaka Moana: Navigating Māori and Pasifika Student Success Through a Collaborative Research Fellowship

Principal Investigators: Dr 'Ema Wolfgramm-Foliaki, Dr Hinekura Lisa Smith

Research Assistant: Ashlea Gillon

Tēnā koe, Malo e lelei

The project:

He Vaka Moana is a strength-based project that is framed by Oceanic principles and methodologies. We position our project on what connects us (Māori and Pasifika) as people – what sustains us, that is the ocean. We draw from our shared history of our tūpuna who navigated the vast Pacific Ocean on purposefully built vessels using Indigenous methods of navigating to successfully reach their destinations. Our project is based on a model that has been tested and evaluated at international and local levels whereby champions of teaching and learning across faculties work individually and collaboratively to examine existing practise and to develop innovative ways for addressing issues of strategic priority to the institution. In the context of our project, we look specifically at ways to advance the success of Māori and Pasifika students in higher education. Exploring what works, how success is defined in the community, how as a university we listen to those stories and the difference it makes for our teaching and learning.

Invitation to participate:

- As a He Vaka Moana research fellow or as someone who has been part of the FMHS talanoa group you are invited to participate in these interviews and talanoa/hui focus groups so that we can understand your experiences of the research fellowship and how we can better improve our practice and the He Vaka Moana Research Fellowship model.

- Your participation is voluntary.
- You may withdraw your participation at any time before or during the interview or talanoa / hui without giving a reason and without any penalty to you.
- You may withdraw your data up to two weeks following the interview.
- Your interview talanoa / hui will be both audio and video recorded.

What participation involves:

We will arrange a suitable time and venue. You may choose to participate in an individual interview or a talanoa / hui (small focus group) of 2 or 3 participants. The talanoa / hui will be with 'Ema, Hinekura and Ash for 1–1½ hours. Before the interview or talanoa / hui you will be asked to read and sign a consent form.

During an individual interview we may prompt you for more information. You can choose at any time not to answer a question. You may also ask at any time for both the audio and video recording to be turned off. During a talanoa / hui participants cannot request recordings to be turned off. To withdraw your participation during a talanoa / hui you may choose not to answer or you may leave the room.

Both interview and talanoa/hui will be audio and video recorded. Given that there may be other people in the talanoa/hui individuals may not decline being recorded, you can however, choose not to participate or not to answer any question. Recorded interviews and talanoa/hui will be transcribed. You will be offered the opportunity to view your transcript once the interview has been transcribed. You have an opportunity to edit and delete your information only in the transcript which should be returned no more than two weeks later to the project research assistant.

Use of video footage:

Once your final transcript and video clip has been reviewed by you and you are satisfied that it is a fair representation of your experience as a He Vaka fellow we seek your permission to use your clips for future research and teaching purposes. You have the option to consent or decline this request in the consent form.

Data storage and retention:

Your data will be stored securely on password-protected computers and/or in locked filing cabinets. It will be kept for a period of six years and then destroyed. Your consent form will be kept for six years, after which it will be destroyed. It will be stored in a locked file separate from your interview data.

Findings from the overall project will be written up potentially as journal articles, research reports, presented at conferences, and used to improve our practice. The purpose of this interview is not to evaluate your project but seeks to understand your experience of He Vaka as a collaborative research fellowship model. There is the possibility that you may be identifiable due to small numbers of potential participants and the fact that your names, positions and research projects have been published online and presented in public and institutional fora.

Further questions or interests:

Please contact:

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For any concerns regarding ethical issues you may contact the Chair, the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee, at the University of Auckland, Research Office, Private Bag 92019, Auckland 1142. Telephone 09 373-7599 ext. 83711. Email: ro-ethics@auckland.ac.nz

Approved by the University of Auckland Human Participants Ethics Committee on for three years, Reference Number

