

Unitec New Zealand Limited

Meeting of Unitec Academic Committee

2nd December 2020

Title	Māori Postgraduate Supervision Adviser
Provided by:	Associate Professor Marcus Williams and Professor Jenny Lee-Morgan
For:	APPROVAL

Recommendation

That the Committee supports this proposal to appoint a Māori Postgraduate Supervision Adviser at Unitec.

Purpose

The purpose of this paper is to provide information to the Academic Committee on the proposed appointment of a Māori Postgraduate Supervision Adviser. This comes to Academic Committee because the proposal seeks to resolve challenges which are pan-institutional and not specific to a programme or a school. In addition, the proposal will resolve an ongoing set of challenges which if addressed, create an academic development opportunity in our postgraduate programmes which support the institute's core values and the priorities in Te Manaakitia te Rito.

Key Points

- A Māori Postgraduate Supervision Adviser position would be created to ensure Māori student success at postgraduate level
- The position would support all programmes offering postgraduate study, by providing much needed kaupapa Māori research teaching and supervision expertise
- The position would primarily support Māori students wishing to utilise a kaupapa Māori research methodology by providing much-needed co-supervisory capacity with that expertise.
- The position would also assist students to navigate postgraduate studies including ethical and cultural considerations, and support those students in becoming part of the Maori and Indigenous emerging research community
- The position would also provide advice to other staff on kaupapa Māori research methodology and on Māori research in general

Information/Background

There has been a lack of expertise in Māori research and Kaupapa Māori methodology at Unitec since key positions changed and with some departing staff. This issue has been exacerbated by

disruption of programmes in the last five years and the dis-establishment of the Postgraduate Research and Scholarships Committee. Leaders of Level 9 programmes, supervisors and students have been for some time expressing concern about the pressure to find appropriate expertise and the lack of human resource therein. Consultation has occurred with the Director of Māori, the staff in MAIA, the Director of Ngā Wai a te Tūi and the Unitec Te Tumu, Executive Director Student Success. With full support from all parties, the recommendation to appoint the proposed position, come out of these consultations.

In the last two years, Unitec has developed a strategic focus around improving Māori success and has implemented a raft of initiatives to implement this; evidence of improvement is already measurable. Concomitant with this, the establishment and rapid growth of *Ngā Wai a te Tūi; Māori and Indigenous Research Centre* at Unitec brings high-level research capability and national profile to the institute. The staff in Ngā Wai a te Tūi, which includes two Professors of Maori Research, are primarily focussed on delivering the externally funded, socially critical research that sustains and funds the research Centre.

Currently Ngā Wai a te Tūi do not provide supervision expertise, nor do they have the capacity. However, Ngā Wai a te Tūi staff contribute to the postgraduate life of the campus as examiners, informal workshops and hui, membership on Unitec's Ethics Committee and through whanaungatanga activities and support. Subsequently, the Centre hosts 'Mai ki Wairaka' – a nationally networked and funded by Ngā Pae o te Maramatanga; the Māori Centre of Research Excellence. Ngā Wai a te Tūi recognise that Māori postgraduate research is an important part of growing emerging researchers in the sector.

This programme, the national reputation of the Unitec's Māori and Indigenous Research Centre and the high level of research capability therein, present an opportunity to host the proposed position of Māori Postgraduate Supervision Adviser at Ngā Wai a te Tūi, pending ELT funding approval.

Unitec is making good progress in better serving Māori students, but there are gaps particularly in the postgraduate space. There are only four available Māori staff on the Supervision Register and none of are experts in Kaupapa Māori methodologies and can teach across disciplines. There are currently 23 postgraduate students in the institute and Māori. While this is a small number, interest in kaupapa Māori research is growing and Research Degree Completions for Level 9 Masters accrue twice the rate of funding for Māori and four times, if the thesis is in Te Reo.

These facts, coupled with a Māori research centre of high repute and capability, there is significant opportunity to develop this area of Unitec's educational offering.

Contributors

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