

# **Monitoring first year Maori Students Enrolled in Selected Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences Courses.**

**A report prepared for  
The Dean of the  
Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.**

**by**

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## 1.0 Introduction

This section provides an introduction to the key issues relevant to Maori participation in tertiary institutions. In 2002, the Maori and Psychology Research Unit from the University of Waikato undertook an evaluation of Te Rau Puawai Workforce 100. This project was a joint initiative between the Ministry of Health and Massey University aimed at increasing the Maori mental health workforce by encouraging Maori to enroll and graduate with a Maori mental health related tertiary qualification. A component of that evaluation was a comprehensive literature review focused on issues of relevance to Maori participation in tertiary institutions. Given that this is the most recent review of literature in this area, the key issues identified in that review have been summarized below. Please note that any of the information included in this section should not be sourced to this report. Please refer to *Nikora, L.W., Levy, M., Henry, J., & Whangapirita, L. (2002). An evaluation of Te Rau Puawai Workforce 100: Technical Report Volume 2. Hamilton, New Zealand: Maori and Psychology Research Unit, University of Waikato.*

For those interested in the issues described below it is recommended that you refer to the above report.

### 1.1 Participation

Figures from the Ministry of Education (2002a) show that there has been a steady increase in Maori tertiary enrolments, from 20,201 in 1994 to 29,513 in 2000, with Maori comprising a total of 14% of all tertiary enrolments. Although, there has been growth in enrolment figures this growth has been attributed primarily to growth in attendance at wananga. Maori are less likely to study at University during the core tertiary age years of 18-24. As at July 2001, 6.9% of Maori aged 18-24 were enrolled at University, as compared with 22.8% for non-Maori. The Ministry of Education (2002a) also report that Maori are more likely to be enrolled in lower level programmes of study. In 2000, 66.6% of all Maori tertiary students were recorded as being enrolled in diploma or certificate programmes as compared with 33.4% who were enrolled in degree or post-graduate programmes (Ministry of Education, 2002a).

### 1.2 Successful Participation

A number of factors have been identified as impacting on the successful participation of Maori students in tertiary education. These include the transition and adaptation to unfamiliar tertiary environments and tertiary study, inappropriate support systems, financial barriers, unwelcoming educational environments, lack of social and/or academic support and racism. It has been noted that no one factor can be attributed to unsuccessful participation as it is the complex interaction of a multitude of factors that lead to poor outcomes within tertiary education.

A number of studies have commented on tertiary educational institutions being alien, unwelcoming or hostile for indigenous and minority students. Also mentioned is also made of the high number of Maori students who are first generation participants in tertiary education, for whom adjusting to the practices and rules of a tertiary environment

without the support of whanau is particularly difficult. A number of models of tertiary retention are based on the premise of social and academic integration into tertiary education systems, to some extent requiring, on the part of students, separation from the norms of past communities, and transition and incorporation into the new tertiary environment. However, such models have been questioned on the basis that the underlying assumption of these models appears to be that those from cultural backgrounds different to that of the dominant institution need to assimilate to the institution, with institutionalized attitudes relying on students assimilating to the culture of academia. It has been argued that this assumption needs to change if the experiences of students are to be altered.

Concepts of dual socialization and biculturalism seriously challenge assumptions of separation, transition and incorporation, the proposition being that individuals not totally separate but instead be supported to transit between two cultures. In relation to this, the critical role of the institution cannot be overstated, however it is often lessened in retention and participation studies. International literature has found that successful minority students are those able to create the personal, environmental, academic and social supports required to negotiate the tertiary environment. However, it is important to note that the ability to create these supports does not rest with the individual student but also with the institution to facilitate the development of such supports. Specific forms of support which have been identified include cultural mediators, role models, mentors, ethnic enclaves, learning communities and support services. The literature also suggests that in order to successfully 'participate' minority students often do so at the expense of their own identity and culture.

## **2.0 Implementation of the Faculty Monitoring and Support Initiative**

### **2.1 Background**

This initiative was funded by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) Supplementary Funding Grant allocation and was undertaken by the Maori and Psychology Research Unit. The aim was to implement a support system in FASS which would enhance retention rates for Maori students in the Faculty. Currently, there are a number of different support systems provided by various Departments in FASS (for example the Kaupapa Maori tutorial system in the Department of Psychology), however there has not been a centralised system of support for Maori students provided in the Faculty.

### **2.2 Implementation**

A monitoring and support system for Maori students enrolled in selected first year FASS courses was trialed in the 2002 B Semester. This system involved contacting Maori students by phone at regular intervals throughout the semester, with the specific purpose of checking on progress, identifying issues of relevance to their academic progress, identifying and suggesting strategies to deal with those issues, and to refer students to the appropriate assistance within their specific courses and Departments. Student contact telephone details were provided to the project team by FASS. In relation to privacy issues it was deemed that the student contact details were being used within the parameters for which they had been provided, that is, the provision of academically focused services.

Prior to implementation consultation was undertaken with key FASS staff members such as the Dean and relevant course coordinators. The purpose of this consultation was to explain the proposed system and identify any resources required, for example the provision of course outlines, the identification of the support services available such as tutors, lecturers and/or course coordinators, and the provision of time for the project team to attend initial course lectures to inform students about the implementation of this support system for Maori students. The informing of students within lectures included an explanation of why and how the support system was being implemented, the nature of the support being provided (i.e. phone contact) and that participation was voluntary.

The project team consisted of a supervisor, project coordinator, and two research assistants. The project coordinator, responsible for the overall management of the project, was a Maori graduate student from the Maori and Psychology Research Unit. The research assistants were Maori students who had completed at least first and second year level study, preferably in the specific FASS courses targeted. Groups of students were allocated to each research assistant, if possible on the basis that they had completed specific courses, although this was not able to be achieved in all cases. To assist the research assistants provide the necessary information and referral strategies to students, they were provided with an information pack consisting of the course outlines, course details, support services available in specific Departments, as well as the support services

available campus wide, for example Disability Support Services and the Teaching and Learning Development Unit. Decisions regarding when to contact students were made on the basis of the assessment due dates for each course, with the majority of students being contacted a week prior to an assessment due date. The rationale for this timing was to ensure that students were progressing with their assessments and to advise on any necessary strategies should students be having difficulties.

The aim was for each student to be contacted three times throughout the semester. The first cycle of calls were made at least a week prior to the first assessment due date; the second cycle were made directly after the mid-semester break; and the final calls were made towards the end of the semester prior to exams and final assessment due dates. Each call to students was based on a standardized interview schedule (See Appendix 1). The first call included informing students of the research and gaining their verbal consent to participate. The final call to students included questions aimed at evaluating the monitoring and support system. For each cycle of calls a maximum of three attempts were made to contact each student. Despite several attempts being made to contact students, a number of students were unable to be contacted during each cycle.

## 3.0 Findings

### 3.1 Enrolment details of students

A total of 3377 students were enrolled in FASS courses for 2002, of which 608 identified as Maori. Out of this 608, 462 Maori students were enrolled in first year/level one courses in FASS. This project targeted 'B' semester level one courses in Anthropology, English, Geography, Political Sciences and Psychology. These courses were selected due to their relatively high number of Maori students enrolments. There were a total of 212 enrolments in these courses by Maori students\*. The total number of Maori students enrolled in Semester B level one courses was 195. The total number of Maori students targeted by this project was 182, representing 93% of the total number of Maori students enrolled in Semester B level one courses. The majority of students participating in this initiative were first year students, although a small number of students taking 100 level courses were second, third or graduate year students.

The category "Multiple Courses" refers to where a student was enrolled in one or more of the targeted courses. It was important to include this category as students were grouped and allocated to research assistants based on the papers they were enrolled in. It was necessary to have 'multiple courses' as a separate group in order to prevent them being called on several occasions to enquire about different courses.

Table 1

The number of enrolments by gender and study level enrolled in targeted FASS courses.

Courses	Gender		Total
	<i>Male</i>	<i>Female</i>	
<b>Multiple Courses</b>	12	27	39
<b>Anthropology</b>	9	21	30
<b>English &amp; Classical Text</b>	2	7	9
<b>Geography</b>	7	12	19
<b>Political Sciences</b>	8	13	21
<b>Psychology</b>	18	46	64
<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>182</b>

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\* This is the number of enrolments as opposed to the actual numbers of Māori students. Number of enrolments is higher than the actual numbers of Māori students due to enrolment in more than one course.

### 3.2 Number of students contacted for each of the three call cycles

Table 2  
Number of students contacted for each call cycle.

Courses	Cycle 1		Cycle 2		Cycle 3	
	<i>Student contacted</i>	<i>No contact</i>	<i>Student contacted</i>	<i>No contact</i>	<i>Student Contacted</i>	<i>No contact</i>
<b>Multiple Courses</b>	17	22	13	24	10	4
<b>Anthropology</b>	13	17	9	18	13	2
<b>English and Classical Text</b>	2	6	0	6	0	0
<b>Geography</b>	7	12	7	12	4	2
<b>Political Sciences</b>	4	16	4	17	4	0
<b>Psychology</b>	32	32	30	29	18	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>107</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>119</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>133</b>

Table 2 shows that in the first two call cycles approximately 41% of the total students enrolled in the targeted courses were contacted. This decreased significantly in cycle three to 27%. The major reasons students recorded ‘no contact’ were research assistants receiving no answer on three separate occasions of attempting to contact the student. The second most common reason was that being predominantly first year students, a high number of students targeted by this initiative were residing in the Halls of Residences, thus being dependent on a communal telephone system. These students proved particularly difficult to access. Other reasons for no contact included no telephone number being provided on the enrolment forms held by FASS; contact details provided by FASS were not current; students withdrawing from courses; and students choosing not to participate in the monitoring and support system.

The noticeable decline in contact made with students in call cycle 3 was attributed primarily to the policy that if no contact had been made with students in *both* cycle’s one and two no further attempt would be made to contact these students in the final cycle. A further reason which may have impeded the ability to contact students in cycle 3 was the additional workload faced by students at the end of courses, for example pending exams and the submission of final assessments for courses. In addition, due to an administrative error, a research assistant did not attempt to contact a small group of students in call cycle 3.

A total of 15 students choose not to participate. In general, the majority of these students were not first year students and reported that they were confident academically and had good support networks such as family members or peers who were also studying above the 100 level. Although choosing not to participate, the majority stated they supported the monitoring and support system for first year students.

### **3.3 Assessments Due and Completed**

There were four different types of categories for assessments. These included short assignments and tests completed in labs/tutorials; larger written assignments; exams; and other assessments such as tests that did not fit exam criteria. For those students that were contacted the majority of academic assessments were either completed and/or in progress to be completed. It should be noted that no additional checks were made as to the accuracy of the self reported information, for example with course coordinators to verify the assessments reported by students as completed.

### **3.4 Issues reported by students**

Six key themes emerged as impacting on students ability to successfully complete their assessment tasks. These were (1) unfamiliarity with the academic environment and the terminology used (2) not confident in accessing available resources e.g., tutors/lecturers; (3) lack of support; (4) timetable clashes; (5) academic planning; and (6) 'Other' which included external commitments such as family and becoming ill. The most salient issues raised were unfamiliarity with the terminology used in the academic environment and being unsure who, how and where to contact appropriate people for assistance.

### **3.5 Strategies reported by students**

Students were asked to describe the strategies which they had implemented to address the issues identified as impacting on their ability to successfully complete their academic tasks. Six key themes emerged, these being: (1) access to and effective utilization of the resources provided by tutors/lecturers; (2) effective time management skills; (3) utilizing peer, tutor and/or lecturer support; (4) scholarship information; (5) academic planning; and (6) other strategies such as effectively managing an academic workload with external commitments such as family and becoming ill. The most common strategy was being able to access and effectively utilise the academic resources available to them. Students also reported being appreciative of peer and tutor assistance, particularly for issues such as improving study skills. The assistance provided by this monitoring and support strategy, in terms of being reminded about pending assessment due dates and generally having someone available to provide advice relevant to successful study and course planning was seen as beneficial by the majority of students contacted.

### **Who did we refer students to?**

An important component of this initiative was the referral of students to support services available within the University. The primary support services students were referred to were Course staff (coordinator, lecturers and tutors) library tutorials, the Teaching and Learning Development Unit (TLDU), health and counselling services and academic planning services, for example the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences office.

The majority of referrals occurred in the first call cycle and were predominantly focused on encouraging students to access course coordinators, lecturers and tutors. In addition, some students were also encouraged to access services such as the TLDU for assistance with writing, study and efficient time management skills, and to medical and/or counselling services. Some students on being informed of such services reported that they were unaware that these services could be accessed free of charge.

### **Student views on the monitoring and support initiative**

Students were provided with the opportunity to comment on the monitoring and support initiative. Overall, a number of students reported that they liked being called and that this initiative had increased their confidence to seek help. Some students did comment that they would like a specific contact person that they could access face to face. It should be noted that only small numbers of students provided comment in this area.

### **Evaluation of the Monitoring and Support Strategy (Call cycle 3)**

All 49 students who were contacted in call cycle 3 reported that this initiative was beneficial and useful. The students reported that the reminders for assessment due dates, the advice provided in relation to contacting specific people (course coordinators, lecturers and tutors) and the advice provided in relation to institutional processes such as request for extensions, incompletes and/or withdrawals were all helpful. A number of students also reported that the implementation of this strategy demonstrated that FASS were genuinely interested in their successful progress and had assisted in providing them with a sense of belonging to the Faculty. In addition, students reported that the research assistants being past students in the papers that they were currently enrolled in, contributed to encouraging and fostering an ongoing relationship. This was viewed by some students as a motivator to complete pending assessments and to act on the advice provided, particularly in relation to accessing key people relevant to their courses.

Students were asked whether they thought this intervention should continue. All students contacted (49) recommended that this intervention continue for future first year Maori students enrolled in FASS courses, with a small number suggesting that this initiative be available for second year students also. There was variation among students in relation to how the monitoring and support system should ideally be structured and implemented. Some reported that simply keeping in contact with students was important, whilst others stated that more frequent calls might be beneficial. Some students indicated a preference for face to face contact with the research assistants. The importance of this diversity was highlighted by some students who stated that strategies for each student would differ, thus emphasizing the importance of investigating individual student needs. Of note, was that contact be established early with Halls of Residence management to ensure that mechanisms were established to ensure that students residing in the hostels were able to be more easily accessed.

### **3.6 Enrolment Data for Maori students enrolled in Level 1 'B' Semester courses 1998-2002**

Table 3 shows total Maori students enrolments, pass, fail and incomplete rates for the Level 1 'B' semester courses(1998-2002) targeted for this initiative. Total enrolments in these courses have decreased from 327 in 1998 to 212 in 2002. Pass rates for Maori students have ranged from 54% in 2000 to 61% in 1998 and 2002. Fail rates for Maori students have ranged from 2% in 1998 to 15% in 2000. Students who did not complete

papers (incomplete) ranged from 30% in 1998 to 19% in 2001. There was a noticeable rise in incompletes from 2001 (19%) to 2002 (25%).

Table 3

Maori student pass, fail, and incomplete details from 1998 to 2002 for first year “B semester courses targeted in this research.\*

Year	Total Maori student enrolments	Pass	% of total enrolments	Fail	% of total enrolments	Incomplete	% of total enrolments
<b>2002</b>	212	130	61	29	14	52	25
<b>2001</b>	255	149	58	39	15	49	19
<b>2000</b>	260	141	54	40	15	70	27
<b>1999</b>	254	153	60	27	11	74	29
<b>1998</b>	327	199	61	5	2	99	30

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\* The pass, fail and incomplete percentages may not total 100% in any given year, as the table does not include figures for students who have withdrawn and transferred.

## **4.0 Discussion**

### **4.1 Success of the monitoring and support system**

All students contacted were unanimous in their support for this initiative, pass rates have increased slightly and fail rates decreased slightly, suggesting that the implementation of this initiative was successful. However, although this initiative was primarily aimed at decreasing the 'incomplete' rate for Maori students, the data obtained shows a 6% increase in the numbers of Maori students who recorded 'incomplete' as their grade from 2001 to 2002. It is important to note that this small, tightly focused initiative was a pilot project and did not control for external variables, for example the provision of extra support or alterations in levels of existing support systems offered by various Departments. Therefore, it is difficult to offer conclusive explanations for movements in fail, pass and incomplete rates. Essentially the data from this project is a snapshot in time, from which inferences can be made. To ascertain in more detail the specific trends which are occurring, further monitoring and analysis of specific Departmental course data, across a number of years, is required.

Whilst recognizing that limited conclusions can be drawn, it can be reliably suggested that this initiative did serve to address a number of key issues relevant to the retention of Maori students in tertiary education. The literature reports that multiple factors can impact on successful participation by Maori students in tertiary education, including the transition and adaptation to unfamiliar tertiary environments and tertiary study, inappropriate support systems, unwelcoming educational environments, and lack of social and/or academic support. These issues can be particularly salient in a student's first year of study. The monitoring and support system implemented in FASS was focused specifically on addressing these issues. The data collected clearly indicates that issues such as unfamiliarity with the environment and tertiary study were salient for first year Maori students studying within FASS and the strategies reported by students and suggested by the research assistants were focused primarily on ways of addressing these issues.

### **4.2 Facilitating Access to Necessary Resources**

From the data collected, there were two key themes which appeared to be of particular importance. The first was that in order to increase the level of support provided to Maori students, referrals were made to the relevant course convener/ coordinator/ lecturer/tutor/support services. An outcome of this strategy was that students appeared to gain the confidence to directly access those resources which were vital to their successful participation in courses. It appeared to be well understood that the role of the research assistant was not to resolve issues for students, but to provide the necessary information and strategies so that students were, on an ongoing basis, able to themselves access the resources needed. Supporting the importance of providing this type of support for first year students, was that the majority of those who choose not to participate in the support and monitoring system were at a higher level of study and were confident in negotiating the University environment. This indicates that Maori students participating within this tertiary institution for the first time require a specific and focused type of support, which differs from that required by students engaged at higher levels of study. The data from

this project indicates that support focused on building the confidence of students to access necessary resources is particularly beneficial for first and second year Maori students.

Enhancing access to resources through the provision of information and increasing confidence is important, however it is critical to note that the support system does not consist only of the provision of referral strategies. Its success is particularly reliant on Faculty staff, both academic and administrative, recognizing and understanding the particular challenges faced by first and second year Maori students in terms of negotiating the tertiary environment and being committed to addressing those challenges.

### **4.3 Genuine Interest in the Success of Maori Students**

The second theme to arise was that the presence of the support and monitoring system assisted in promoting a sense of belonging to FASS and the University for Maori students. This is best highlighted by a comment from one student that the “implementation of the strategy demonstrated that FASS was genuinely interested in Maori students being successful within their courses”. This is an important finding as it is clear from the literature that unwelcoming and hostile tertiary education environments are a significant barrier to participation by indigenous students. Working to create an environment that is actively visible in genuinely welcoming, encouraging and celebrating the success of Maori students appears critical if FASS are to enhance successful participation by Maori students.

### **4.4 Diversity of Support Initiatives**

All students who were asked whether the support and monitoring initiative should continue recommended that the intervention continue for first year Maori students enrolled in FASS, with a small number suggesting that the initiative also be available to second year students. There was variation among students in relation to their preferences for how support initiatives should be structured. For example, some students preferred face to face contact, whilst others felt that regular telephone contact was advantageous. In relation to telephone contact, some thought more frequent contact would be useful, for example every two weeks. Regardless of the specific timeframe suggested, the key issue was that contact was consistent and prior to due dates for assessment. This diversity suggests that support initiatives may also need to be diverse in their approach, utilizing a number of different approaches and being responsive to the differing needs of students. This will require each Department to investigate the specific needs of and play an active role in the delivery of support initiatives to Maori students.

### **4.5 What can staff in FASS do now?**

This report has focused on the implementation of a specific monitoring and support system. Whilst, recommendations for further implementation of this initiative are discussed in more detail below, the project highlighted that there are a number of tools that all Faculty staff members can utilise to address the challenges faced by first and second year Maori students. These tools are aimed primarily at addressing issues relating to the transition and adaptation to unfamiliar tertiary environments and tertiary study, unwelcoming educational environments, and lack of social and/or academic support.

As a starting point it is important that staff are aware of how issues of unfamiliarity and unwelcoming tertiary environments can impact on a student's confidence to access staff (both teaching and administrative) for necessary information. It is also essential to recognize that the first year for Maori students appears critical in determining ongoing success within the tertiary institution. Successful participation at first year level provides a firm foundation, not only in that students complete 100 level papers and are able to move to 200 level, but also in terms of the development of skills required to successfully negotiate the tertiary environment in subsequent years.

Recognising and understanding the impact of the issues described above can aid staff in identifying simple strategies for 100 and 200 level courses. These may include: ensuring course requirement information is clear and consistent, with particular attention given to emphasizing the people who are available to provide assistance, and actively encouraging and welcoming students to utilize those resources; being approachable; being clear about IC requirements, how students can avoid an IC grade, where to seek help if they are having trouble, where to go if they need to seek an extension, and actively encouraging students to seek that help if necessary.

The tools described above are not exceptionally special and are already utilised to some extent by staff. It is also evident that these are tools that can be utilised by all staff to support Maori students and are in no way limited to use by only Maori staff in FASS. However, what may not have been previously recognised is the critical importance of staff utilising these tools and how additional emphasis on ensuring first year Maori students are successfully negotiating the tertiary environment can potentially make a huge impact on the lives and success of Maori students within FASS.

#### **4.6 Design and implementation issues**

Given that the monitoring and support project was a pilot initiative, a number of design and implementation issues emerged. Of most importance were accessing students and preparing students for the role of research assistants.

##### **Planning**

It is apparent that in the implementation of such an initiative planning the optimal start period is at the beginning of the academic year. Prior to this, a planning phase is required. During the planning phase contact details need to be accessed, assistants recruited and trained, course convenors contacted, relevant course outlines and other course information collected, information on Department and University wide support systems collated, information management systems established, and Halls of Residence management contacted.

##### **Accessing Students**

As is evident from the findings, accessing and contacting students proved to be an issue. Although there were a number of reasons for non-contact, primary reasons were inaccurate/amended enrolment details or being unable to contact students by phone.

Although access to enrolment details were provided by FASS and gave a good starting point to access students, this information was sometimes not accurate. In some cases contact details were not available and students had since transferred or withdrawn from courses. This issue is primarily about good planning and information management systems. It is important that discussions are held with the Faculty Office to establish systems for the provision of enrolment details as well as a process for the regular updating of these details. It should be noted that the visits to each class by the project supervisor and coordinator were useful in relation to informing students of the initiative. This was also useful for informing students about who to inform if their contact details had altered or if they had any questions about the support system.

Although students were asked to suggest a time they would be available to be contacted, a number of students were unable to be contacted. This suggests that the initiative needs to include a variety of mechanisms for establishing and maintaining contact with students. For example, as more courses move to Class Forum (online learning) this may be an additional contact tool which could be investigated. Maintaining contact via email is also another option, although this relies on students being familiar with and regularly utilising email.

A specific issue relating to contacting students was accessing students residing in the Halls of Residence. Discussions need to be held with Halls of Residence management staff to identify the best way of accessing these students. It is apparent that early contact with these students is required, however it also appears that creative ways of achieving ongoing contact with Halls of Residence students will need to be developed. Such strategies need to be in place prior to the implementation of the support system.

### **Timing of Calls**

Three calls were made to students over the duration of the semester. Whilst there were varying comments on the frequency of calls, it appeared important that the calls made were prior to assessment due dates and decreased during the later part of the semester as students were busy with final assessments and exam preparation. This suggests that it may be more useful to contact students more frequently at the beginning and middle of the semester.

### **Workforce requirements**

The vital component in this monitoring and support system was the students employed in the role of research assistants, as they held the responsibility for contacting students. Essential skills required by these students included good interpersonal skills, an understanding of the initiative and its aims, and good time management and organizational skills. They were also required to know who the course coordinators were for each course, to be familiar with the course outline, specifically assessment due dates of when course assessments were due, and to be familiar with the support systems operating in various Departments and across the University. Such knowledge was critical as it ensured that accurate information was provided to students. It proved to be a considerable advantage if the research assistants had completed the courses previously,

not only due to familiarity with course content and staff, but also as this provided a role modeling component to the initiative.

Because this initiative was focused on the provision of strategies and referrals it was important that the students selected were able to recognize the boundaries of their role. For example, their role was not one of counselor, academic advisor or course tutor but of offering advice about where to seek the assistance needed. This is whilst continuing to maintain an ongoing relationship with the students, for example allowing students to express their feelings and then referring on to appropriate sources for help such as course staff, administrative staff, counselling or medical services. That the information collected suggested students felt comfortable and safe to express their concerns to the research assistants indicated the research assistants were successful in creating an environment of trust, whilst at the same time working within the boundaries of their role. As this was critical to the initiative, the research coordinator over the duration of the research kept a close check to ensure these boundaries were being maintained.

#### **4.7 Conclusion**

It has been found that successful minority students are those that are able to create the personal, environmental, academic and social supports required to negotiate the tertiary environment. However the important point is made that responsibility for creating such supports does not rest solely with adaptation and assimilation by the individual student but with also with the institution to facilitate the development of such supports and create an environment welcoming of Maori students. This simple support and monitoring initiative, based on literature which has identified issues of unfamiliarity and unwelcoming tertiary environments as barriers to successful participation for Maori students, is one way of facilitating the development of support for first and second year Maori students.

It is important to emphasise that no one factor can be attributed to unsuccessful participation, as it is a complex interaction of a variety of factors which leads to poor outcomes. The monitoring and support initiative is a simple form of support which can operate successfully as a high level system of support within the Faculty. However, the success of such an initiative is dependent on the commitment displayed by the individual Departments to its implementation and to ensuring that Maori students are well supported within individual courses.

## 5.0 Recommendations

### **It is recommended:**

- 1) That the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences establish a Faculty Committee, whose focus of responsibility would be on the responsiveness of FASS to Maori students.
- 2) That the first task of the above Committee be the commissioning of a Five Year FASS Responsiveness to Maori Strategic Plan.
- 3) That the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, through the Committee recommended above, establish a Faculty support and monitoring system for Maori students. Responsibility for the implementation of this initiative should rest with the Faculty Office and Faculty Committee, not with Maori staff in the Faculty.
- 4) That each Department within FASS undertake a thorough analysis of its course data for Maori students during the past 5 years, with the aim of identifying specific course and Departmental retention trends for Maori students. Each Chair of Department would be required to report to the Chair of Departments meeting on the trends identified and the Departmental progress being made in the provision of support to Maori students.
- 5) That progress on the above initiatives be monitored annually. The Dean of FASS, should be ultimately responsible for ensuring progress is monitored and Departments held accountable.

## 6.0 References

- Ministry of Education. (2002a). *Nga Haeata Matauranga: Annual Report on Maori Education 2000/2001 and Direction for 2002*. Wellington: Ministry of Education Group Maori.
- Ministry of Education. (2002b). *Participation in Tertiary Education*. Wellington: Ministry of Education.
- Nikora, L. W., Levy, M., Henry, J., & Whangapirita, L. (2002). *An evaluation of Te Rau Puawai Workforce 100*. University of Waikato, Hamilton.

## 7.0 Appendices

### 7.1 Appendix 1

#### FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCES SUPPORTING MAORI STUDENTS ENROLLED IN FIRST YEAR COURSES

Kia Ora. My name is ..... I'm calling you as part of an initiative being implemented by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. The Faculty has designed and formed this initiative to monitor the progress of Maori students who are enrolled in first year papers provided by The Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS). The goal of this initiative is to improve the pass grades for Maori students and to lower the incomplete rates for Maori students.

Every three - four weeks I will be ringing you to see how you are progressing with your coursework and your assessment. I will also be directing you to additional assistance available should you need this. Our conversations are confidential. Should there be any need to discuss your progress with anyone else your permission will be sought first. In addition, your input is voluntary. At this point do you have any questions?

This project is being supervised by Michelle Levy from the Maori and Psychology Research Unit. You are welcome to contact Michelle should you have queries or questions about this initiative (e.g., govt. funding). Michelle can be contacted on 07 856 2889 (x8607), email [levym@waikato.ac.nz](mailto:levym@waikato.ac.nz) or in J1.24.

#### Background information:

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Student ID: \_\_\_\_\_

Contact details (telephone; e-mail, cell-phone, other):  
\_\_\_\_\_

What time of the day is the best time to contact you? (Circle the response)

*Morning*                      *Midday*                      *Afternoon*                      *Evening*

What course(s) are you enrolled in? (Circle each course stated)

#### **Psychology:**

0518.102B Social Development Psychology 1

#### **Political Science:**

0524.102B NZ Government & Politics                      0524.103B International Relations

0524.105B TG People and Policy                      0524.108B Politics in Ancient World

***Anthropology:***

0532.102B Societies in Change

0532.102B TG Societies in Change

0532.102B NET Societies in Change

***English:***

0201.105B New Zealand Literature 1

0201.110B Classical Texts

***Geography:***

0516.101B Geographies of Change

**Student Response Sheet**

**Name of Research Assistant:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Time:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Name of student contacted:** \_\_\_\_\_

**Course:** \_\_\_\_\_ (use a separate sheet for each course)

**Assessment due: (from course outline enter brief description and date due)**

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**Assessment completed:**

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**Current issues (including whether issues from the last call have been addressed):**

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**Strategies suggested:**

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**Referred to:**

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**Other comments:**

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**Additional questions for the final phone call made to student:**

- 1) What do you think of this intervention? (prompts you may wish to use include - have you found it useful; has it been of benefit to you?)

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- 2) What could we have done differently for you? (prompts may include -what did you like; what was useful; what was not useful?)