



Staff making a difference with our Māori and Pacific students

Celebrating 25 years of Tuākana at our University

Tuākana is a University-wide learning community for Māori and Pacific students. It offers small-group learning, whakawhanaungatanga, wānanga, face-to-face meetings and linkages to key services and support. Our professional staff play a key role in the programme's success.

Professional staff who are involved in Tuākana help ensure our Māori and Pacific students feel welcome and supported, academically and pastorally, at our University. Research shows our students who engage with Tuākana are more likely to not only maintain their grades, but improve them.



Michael Steedman BSc (Sport and Exercise Science)
Kaiārahi, Faculty of Science

"For some of our students, Tuākana is a place to connect with people from a similar background and ask questions in an environment that isn't intimidating," says Michael.

During his five years at the University, Michael's role has changed from working directly with students to providing strategic advice and project management. His work includes identifying opportunities to establish collaborations between University research and local Māori communities.

"I'm a conduit. I connect people. My end goal is to show students that the work they can do with a Science degree has real-world value."

Jonaan McLeod BA (Māori Studies)/LLB
Kaitakawaenga Māori - Māori Liaison Officer, Equity Office - Te Ara Tautika

Jonaan has been involved with Tuākana in three different ways - first as a student, then as a Tuākana Coordinator in the Faculty of Law, and now as the Māori Liaison Officer in the Equity Office.

"As a Law student, I was juggling being a mother, a worker and a student, and I needed all the support possible. I approached the Pouāwhina Māori at Law School. Not only did she help me academically, but she ensured my whānau were at the centre of our approach.

"Tuākana students are the leaders of tomorrow - ngā rangatira mō āpōpō - who will carve the pathway for our descendants. I am proud that Tuākana is a product by, of, and for our people."



Tulele Masoe BSc (Applied Mathematics), BE(Hons) (Civil and Environmental)
Tuākana Coordinator, Faculty of Science
Learning Assistant, Te Fale Pouāwhina - Student Learning Services

Tulele joined Tuākana as a first-year Science student in 2006. Now, after completing his BSc in Applied Maths and his BE(Hons) in Civil and Environmental Engineering, he supports Māori and Pacific students as they navigate the rigours of academic study.

"I was blessed because I had staff at the University who really looked out for me while I was studying. They helped me grow as a person, and I consider them my mentors and friends. What motivates me now is working with Māori and Pacific students to help them succeed and achieve their goals. Knowing that someone's life is changed permanently is what gives me satisfaction."