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Bachelor of Science (BSc) majoring in Biological Science, 2014

Postgraduate Diploma in Science (PGDipSci), Biological Science, 2014

Master of Science (MSc), Biological Science, Characterisation and pathogenicity of *Phytophthora colocasiae* on taro, 2016



Coming from a small school and being a shy person, University was initially daunting. But that changed when I became involved in Tuākana tutorials. Tuākana provided a supportive learning environment where I gained the confidence to ask questions and contribute to group discussions. The supportive environment gave me the confidence to know I could finish my degree (even though science was not my strongest subject in high school!).

I was so grateful for all the help from Tuākana that I wanted to help other Māori and Pacific students, so in my second year I became a Tuākana tutor. It was a privilege to guide and advise students to achieve their best. In my fourth year I became a Tuākana coordinator of Biological Science. This provided many opportunities, including embarking on summer studentships, attending networking events and developing my masters project on Pacific agriculture.

As a Pacific student I know that my ancestors made big sacrifices so I could get a tertiary education. I wanted to honour them by working hard and earning a degree. My University journey has made me more culturally confident and that has informed my decision to study Biological Science. I am aware of the connection between science and its importance for our Pacific communities. Having completed my masters, I hope one day to earn a PhD to further advance the scientific knowledge of and among our Pacific communities.