

# MAORI AND PACIFIC ISLANDS GENERAL STAFF CAREER DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT THE UNIVERSITY OF AUCKLAND

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This is a very practically based report that describes the development of a career development module. It aims to cater specifically for two different groups; Maori staff, the indigenous people in New Zealand, and Pacific Island Staff, who have come from the Cook Islands, Samoa, Tonga, Fiji, Nuie, and Tokelau Islands. While this latter group is diverse and encompasses many nationalities, the overall numbers are not large enough to make a range of separate groupings feasible. The term “general staff” covers a wide occupational grouping including administrative, technical, researchers, librarians, security and childcare workers i.e those who do not teach.

## **Background**

In 1996 when the EEO Advisory Committee, at the University of Auckland, was developing a triennial plan for 1997 –1999, they identified training for Maori and Pacific Island Staff as a key EEO objective.

The EEO Advisory Committee didn’t know how this was to be done, but they envisaged a training programme (or two), with external trainers, that would be exclusively tailored to Maori and Pacific Island staff professional development needs.

1. The State Sector Act 1989 requires employers in the education services to operate an equal employment opportunities programme which will, amongst other things, recognise
  - *The need for greater involvement of Maori people in the Education service; and.....*
  - *the aims and aspirations, and the cultural differences, of ethnic or minority groups.*
2. Treaty obligations also call for an equitable distribution of resources

In terms of local demography:

Maori represent 2% of the general staff, and Pacific Islands staff have a slightly lower representation at 1.8%. These rates are significantly lower than the proportions in the wider community (11.1% and 10.3% respectively) and are lower than the public sector in general (8.1% and 3.3%).

	Auck. Region	Public Service	Auck Uni
Maori	11.1%	8.1%	2% (35)
Pacific Islands	10.3%	3.3%	2% (29)

Career development is seen as a means of recruitment and retention for all general staff, and given the under representation of Maori and Pacific Island staff, it is a particularly appropriate strategy.

## Barriers

1. A major barrier loomed in reduced funding. Successive cut-backs three years running, and two in the third year, made serious in-roads into training budgets. Whereas in 1997, it was not unusual to employ external trainers, by 1999, considerably tightened finances across the whole organisation made this less of a reality.
2. A second issue is whether or not it was possible to conduct this sort of programme under the provisions of the New Zealand Human Rights Act 1993. While this could be a special topic in itself, I will touch only briefly on the legal position.

Under section 22 of the Human Rights Act 1993, it is unlawful to discriminate in “opportunities for training” on the grounds of “race, ethnic or national origins”. However, section 73 of the same Act contains some exceptions.

- ”(1) Anything done or omitted which would otherwise constitute a breach of any provisions of this Part of this Act shall not constitute such a breach if-
- (a) It is done or omitted in good faith for the purposes of assisting or advancing persons or groups of persons, being in each case persons against whom discrimination is unlawful by virtue of this Part of the Act; and
  - (b) Those persons or groups need, or may reasonably be supposed to need assistance or advancement in order to achieve an equal place with other members of the community. “

Given the circumstances of this project, the EEO Office was confident that:

1. It was being done with good-will.
2. There is evidence of under-representation of Maori and Pacific Islands staff needing for assistance or advancement.
2. The State Sector Act requires education services to operate an equal employment opportunities programme which will, amongst other things, recognise
  - *The need for greater involvement of Maori people in the Education service; and.....*
  - *the aims and aspirations, and the cultural differences, of ethnic or minority groups.*

I will just digress further here, to briefly mention a case that went before the Complaints Review Tribunal which has caused much misunderstanding about the legality of targeted training programmes. The Complaints Review Tribunal is the body that determines whether or not there has been a breach of the Human Rights Act.

In 1996 the Tribunal heard the case of Amaltal Fishing Co Ltd v Nelson Polytechnic. Amaltal alleged that Nelson Polytechnic had breached section 22 of the Human Rights Act 1993 by running a fishing training programme exclusively for Maori students. Although the Polytechnic may well have had grounds under section 73 of the Human Rights Act for conducting a programme, they did not to respond to the allegations or defend their case. In the absence of any defense being presented, the Complaints Review Tribunal found in favour of the complainant.

Accordingly, it was not the nature of the training programme which was found to be in breach of the legislation, but rather the failure of the respondent, Nelson Polytechnic, to use the exceptions available.

## **METHOD**

Having decided that it was a worthwhile and useful project, a sub group of the EEO Advisory Committee was established comprising of Maori and Pacific Island staff reps, EEO Advisor, and the Deputy Director, Centre for Professional Development. Further Maori and Pacific Island general staff were co-opted to have a balance of gender and occupations.

### **The Project**

The project consisted of four main stages:

1. Questionnaire on career development needs and preferences
2. Meeting with the 2 Focus Groups to discuss career development suggestions
3. Feasibility study of implementing recommendations
4. Reporting back to the two groups
5. Producing a career Development Training Plan.

### **The Questionnaire**

The project was advertised as one of a number of general staff training programmes and Maori and Pacific Staff were invited to fill in a questionnaire about their career development experiences.

Although intended to provide a preliminary needs analysis for the Focus Group meetings, the responses proved to be very useful so staff were encouraged to continue to fill them in after the Focus groups were over. Appendix 1 provides a summary of the tick box responses.

By 16 September 1999 there had been 16 responses from Maori and 13 responses from Pacific Islands staff. Although this was a small sample representing only about 20% of Maori and Pacific Islands general staff, it is possible to draw some comparisons. Significant differences between the two groups were that 68% of Maori had currently or recently been involved in career development but only 30% of Pacific Islands staff had similar training. One explanation offered was that some Pacific Islands staff may miss out on training opportunities by "self selection" especially when they hold administrative positions and are particularly aware of financial constraints in their department.

Interest in career development activities for unanimous, although one staff member who was leaving the University, was unable to participate in further activities.

Only 50% of Maori respondents had a position in mind that they would like to aim for, but all but one of the Pacific Islands staff had a clear career aspiration. Of those who provided details of their current position and the one they aspired to, it was most common for respondents to want to move from from L2 secretaries to departmental managers.

## **Focus Groups**

Two Focus Groups were held which attracted which attracted 13 Pacific Islands general staff women and 8 Maori general staff (2 men, 6 women). A number of staff who were unable to attend have asked to be kept informed of any further activities.

The two focus groups discussed:

1. What training opportunities would you like to see provided?
2. Who else should be included in the training?
3. Can you think of any solutions to help reduce the barriers that are experienced by Maori and Pacific Islands general staff?
4. How should career development for Maori and Pacific Islands general staff be promoted?

## **Outcomes**

The first result was that separate training programmes for Maori and Pacific Island staff was not the preferred option. There were some activities which were only relevant to a Maori, or a Pacific Island audience, but the most popular idea was to have joint seminars and then be given information about existing programmes, via a Maori and a Pacific Island email network. A proposal consisting of three key elements was developed from the suggestions collected in the focus groups.

### **Draft Career Development Proposal:**

#### **1. Two Email Newsletter Networks**

This will contain information such as:

- Policy Guidelines on Career Development
- An outline of CPD courses especially relevant to administrative and technical staff wishing to advance beyond level 2
- Contact details of staff who can enrol staff in courses or provide advice on career development.
- Information on extramural courses available for administrative/managerial training
- Course information on Maori Language Programmes offered through CPD or Maori Studies Department
- Course information on Pacific Island Language /Culture Programmes offered through the Centre for Pacific Studies
- Information on relevant awards scholarships and funding opportunities
- Where to obtain advice on academic courses
- Information on cultural events
- General information of interest to Maori and Pacific Island staff

#### **2. Networking Opportunities**

Social gatherings such as a lunch each semester to up-date staff on career development opportunities and to introduce new staff.

#### **3. Seminars**

Seminars to discuss topics like University structure, job changing and guest speaking Maori and Pacific members of staff who can share their own experiences with the group.

A very successful lunch attended by forty Maori and Pacific Island staff was held to launch this proposal. In the following months committees were established to produce the Maori and Pacific Island email news letters, these were named Kaimahi and Pasifikan Nius, respectively. A seminar programme for the year was decided.

The metaphor that came to mind during this process was that of designing a set of clothes. Initially it was to be exotic outfit sewn with luxurious materials, but as the design progressed there was no money for this creation and it became a more home-made garment with modest materials. The major benefit of the finished article is that, although more utilitarian, than first envisaged, it is owned by the group and, is probably more serviceable and enduring. However, at this stage it is yet to be a proven success.

## Appendix 1

## SURVEY RESULTS

Maori (18) Pacific Islands (16)

1.What is your level and position?	Cross section of levels 2 – 6, managers, advisors secretaries, clerical workers, kaiako			Cross section of levels 2 –5, managers, library assistant, clerical , departmental assistant		
	YES	NO	NR	YES	NO	NR
2. Have you recently/currently been involved in any career development activities?	60%	34%	6%	31%	69%	0
3. Would you be interested in participating in any/further activities related to career development?	100	0	0	94%	6%	0
4. Is there a position you would like to aim for?	50%	0	50%	75%	19%	6%
5. Do you think career development would be best achieved for you through-						
a) specific skills training (eg accountancy or computer skills)	50%	12%	38%	94%	0	6%
b) cultural training (eg language protocol)	44%	12%	44%	63%	20%	18%
c) personal development (eg assertion)	60%	12%	28%	75%	6%	19%
d) mentoring	60%	6%	34%	81%	6%	13%
e) seminars/support group on career development	44%	22%	33%	93%	0	7%
f) furthering qualifications (eg uni papers or AIT study	44%	22%	33%	93%	0	7%
g) other	28%	0	72%	25%		75%
6.Is there anything which has, or might prevent you from pursuing career development activities such as:						
a) time	55%	17%	28%	38%	24%	38%
b) funding	55%	12%	33%	82%	6%	12%
c) lack of information	50%	17%	33%	69%	19%	12%
d) relevant courses being available	55%	12%	33%	75%	12%	12%
e) lack of support from the department	50%	12%	38%	44%	31%	25%
f) family circumstances	28%	28%	44%	31%	38%	31%
g) other	5%		95%	12%		88%

## Appendix 2

<b>Suggestion from Maori Focus Group</b>	<b>Who attends</b>
• More specialised training available for technical staff	All
• Develop a Certificate of Uni Administration – composed of a module of CPD courses relating to the job	All
• Training on change management, understanding restructuring	All
• Understanding Treaty of Waitangi and cultural awareness training (myth busting) by department or cluster and note attendance in salary review	All
• Advice on career development from Maori General Staff Advisors and appeals process for study applications	Maori
• Counselling available for redundancies	All
• Information provided for new staff about training and employment opportunities and about prominent Maori like PVC	Maori
• Formalise the Maori email Network with all new staff being entered as they sign on	Maori
• Newsletter supplement in Next Week about Maori events	Maori
• Advice on up-to-date information about career development and reminded when courses are coming up (by email?)	Maori
• People in leadership positions should express their support of Maori career development	Maori
• Lunch to up-date staff on career development.	Maori and PI

## Appendix 2 (cont)

<b>Suggestions from Pacific Islands Focus Group</b>	<b>Who attends</b>
• CPD courses are excellent and should be promoted	All staff
• Pacific Islands Language Classes	PI staff
• Ongoing (1 per week) Web page training	All staff
• Extramural studies like business management.	All
• On job training eg regulations, calendar, financial. Understanding University structures, line management, funding	All
• Workshop on moving from one job to another	All
• Faculty based training (eg Med. School) where time away from work is a problem	All
• Cultural Awareness by Department (all ethnic groups)	All?
• Information about who to go to for support	PI Staff
• HoD awareness of training/developmental needs	HoDs
• Lunch for Maori & PI Staff to provide up-date on career development	PI/Maori
• Newsletter	PI Staff
• “Cultural Events” Column in Next Week to publicise events from all ethnic groups	All ethnic groups
• Workshop at General Staff Conference	PI Staff
• Pacific Islands Women’s network	PI women