



Signing the MoU: Peter Coolbear with Margie Scotts, Tumuaki/Chief Executive of ACE Aotearoa.

Ako Aotearoa signs Memorandum of Understanding with ACE Aotearoa

An important part of Ako Aotearoa's brief is to support the improvement of teaching and learning in the Adult and Community Education (ACE) Sector.

In the middle of the year ACE Aotearoa, the national lead agency took over from the Tertiary Education Commission the responsibility for the coordination of professional development for ACE practitioners and groups. Ako Aotearoa is very pleased, therefore, to sign a MoU with ACE Aotearoa committing us to working in partnership to support the enhancement of teaching and learning practices in adult and community education.

This has several mutual benefits; not least that Ako Aotearoa can provide capability development support to ACE Aotearoa while in turn gaining a greater understanding of this very diverse sector through its national body. The relationship will also ensure that any funding support provided by Ako Aotearoa in the future will leverage off work already being undertaken by ACE Aotearoa.

*E te ti, e te tā, koutou ngā pītau whakarei o ngā waka, koutou ngā uri o ngā maunga whakahi, o ngā wai whakaika, ānei te mihi matakuikui ki a koutou i runga i ngā āhuatanga o te wā. Kua tae tātou ki te marama o Hakihea, ā, kua tau ngā hihi o Tamanuiterā ki te whenua. Ko te tūmanako ka tau ngā manaakitanga o te wāhi ngaro ki runga ki ā koutou i te roanga o tēnei marama, tae atu ki te Kirihimete me te tau hou. Me whakatinana hoki tātou i te whakatauaiki a ō tātou nei tipuna,
"Ko te pā harakeke e kore e ekehia,
he tapu, he tapu, he tapu"*

Welcome

As we approach the end of the year, many of Ako Aotearoa's projects have come to completion and are featured in this, the third issue of *Ako Aotearoa Alert*. We are excited by the progress we have made this year, and there have been many highlights.

Notably, our new website is live and has created considerable interest and much favourable feedback. It is still (and will always be) a work in progress as we build a one-stop shop for tertiary educators and develop communities of practice on the site. An important feature is our National Register of Research and Implementation Projects on Tertiary Teaching in New Zealand, which identifies over 670 projects undertaken between 2006 and 2008.

The inaugural symposium of the Ako Aotearoa Academy for Tertiary Teaching Excellence was held in October. Membership of the academy comprises past winners of the Tertiary Teaching Excellence Award, and it was inspiring to bring them all together to share ideas and start to develop a vision about what such an expert group might do in the future.

We were also very pleased with the response to our National Project Fund, with 72 expressions of interest across the Research and Implementation and Māori Initiative Project streams. Nineteen applicants have now been invited to develop full proposals, and we are on track to make funding decisions on these by the end of the year. The first three Ako Aotearoa doctoral scholarships have already been awarded, and these are featured in this newsletter.

Meanwhile, we have now approved our fiftieth regional hub project, with many of the early ones now reaching completion.

None of this would have been possible without some great support from across the tertiary sector. We very much appreciate your input and your help, and we are always interested in hearing from you as, together, we continue to improve educational outcomes for New Zealand's tertiary learners.

Very best wishes for the holiday season.

Dr Peter Coolbear
National Director, Ako Aotearoa

The new Ako Aotearoa website – use it to your advantage

We have been delighted with the feedback so far on our new website, which went live at the end of September. Tertiary teachers and support staff are already discovering how they can use it to their advantage as we continue to develop the site as a one-stop shop for information on New Zealand tertiary teaching and learning.



Justin Sampson demonstrating the new website to the ITP Teacher Development Advisers' Forum in Wellington.

Building the site

One of the key priorities we identified in the Ako Aotearoa strategic plan was the development of a comprehensive web-based resource for tertiary educators. The drive for this grew out of the fact that there is currently an enormous range of information scattered across the Internet relating to tertiary teaching and learning, most of which is not easily accessed or even well known. Therefore, our intention from the outset was to build a unique site through which New Zealand tertiary educators could obtain a comprehensive range of current information as easily as possible.

Building a site of this complexity has been a major undertaking for our knowledge manager, Justin Sampson, working with the developers, Catalyst, and project manager Sue Frame. We also looked to other similar organisations' websites for ideas and comparison, particularly those of the Australian Learning and Teaching Council in Australia and of the Higher Education Academy in the UK.

Features

Several key features support our aspirations for the site to become a one-stop shop for teaching and learning in New Zealand tertiary education: a resource centre with a wide range of content on topics about tertiary teaching and learning, a mātauranga Māori section dedicated to a growing range of Māori teaching and learning resources, the facility to host communities of practice concerning teaching and learning, and, not least, a comprehensive national register of current research and implementation projects relating to the tertiary sector.

The resource centre

We were always clear that a leading feature of the website should be a resource centre that offers a wide range of content on topics about teaching and learning drawn from all areas of the New Zealand tertiary sector. Organised by topic and discipline, the range of information currently available on the site is just the beginning. Content is growing daily and is displayed under such titles as Assessment, Pacific Peoples, Distance and Flexible Learning, Quality Improvement, Supporting Learners, and Supporting Staff. Examples of the disciplines listed include the creative arts, education, the humanities, law, and the social and behavioural sciences. In due course, we will extend this resource base to include links to international resources that are relevant to New Zealand practice.

Mātauranga Māori portal

Also displayed as a separate link from the website homepage, the section titled Mātauranga Māori displays the site's Māori-related resources in six key categories. For ease of use, visitors can search the resource categories of; Māori concepts of teaching and learning, Māori student participation and achievement, supporting Māori staff, teaching and learning in a Māori environment, teaching and supporting Māori students, and te reo Māori in tertiary education. Direct access to this section can be gained through the portal www.akooteaoroa.ac.nz/matauranga-maori

Communities

One of our prime objectives is for the site to support communities of practice so that tertiary educators can interact with us and each other using discussion forums, news, calendars, blogs, and wiki-type pages. The site already has several active communities, including LDNET, which is a learning design resource, a cooperative education community featuring case studies of work-integrated learning, tools and techniques for scenario-based e-learning, and the Academy for Tertiary Teaching Excellence.

Richard Coll, chair of the New Zealand Association of Cooperative Education (NZACE), believes that their community will increase collaboration and reduce duplication of research. He says, "Developing the cooperative education community of practice by working in partnership with Ako Aotearoa has provided a wonderful opportunity to develop a more coherent, cohesive community that can work together to address New Zealand's critical skills shortage in target areas in a manner that is research-informed." Richard also sees benefits to learners through "a more coherent community" offering "valuable access to information about cooperative education programmes".

Scott Diener, Associate Director of IT Services at the University of Auckland, has set up the latest community of practice. Called Web3D, Scott's community is a source for resources, information, and collaboration around the use of virtual worlds in tertiary education.

Justin Sampson, who is Ako Aotearoa's knowledge manager and coordinator of the website, is enthusiastic about the future for the communities. He comments, "As more people become aware of the facility and appreciate how it can support their teaching, they will become enthusiastic about sharing information, discussing ideas, and developing materials with other like-minded individuals from whichever part of the sector."

Anyone interested in establishing a community of practice on the site should contact Justin at J.Sampson@massey.ac.nz. Ako Aotearoa has some funding available to support the initial development of new communities.

National Register of Research and Implementation Projects

We are delighted to provide New Zealand tertiary educators with a unique tool offering registered users immediate access to information about 670 current and diverse projects relating to teaching and learning across our tertiary sector.

This register will be of particular interest and benefit to anyone who is about to undertake research within the tertiary sector. Through the register, they will be able to locate current research activity in their area of interest, and this has the potential to reduce duplication. More important is the potential to provide opportunities to network with other researchers in the field. This is where we see the greatest benefit. Such networking will provide greater opportunities for collaboration, discussion, and sharing ideas.

Projects

If you are involved in a relevant project (whether funded by Ako Aotearoa or not), you can use a project workspace on the website as a way of, for example, discussing ideas or sharing files with other project participants. It will also be useful as a way of sharing information about the project and its findings with the public.

The website sets out the results of two significant, recently completed projects – Taking the Lead: Strategic Management for e-Learning (Tom Prebble and Andrew Higgins), which you can link to directly through www.akooteaoroa.ac.nz/takingthelead, and Inquiry-based Learning (Rachel Spronken-Smith, University of Otago).



One of the northern hub website events. With Justin are (left to right) Leilana Murphy, The Professional Bar School; Andy Ironside, The Good Shepherd College; and Mary Churchward, also from The Professional Bar School.

Website roadshows

Since the website went live, Justin has been giving presentations on the site to delegates at conferences, such as the recent Eastern Institute of Technology Conference in Taradale, and running demonstrations with groups organised by the regional hubs. Those visits included sessions in the south hub region for Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology and the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, and Tai Poutini on the West Coast. Northern hub sessions were held at AUT University for various university, polytechnic and private training establishments, and at the Northern Institute of Technology. The central hub organised sessions at Tairāwhiti Polytechnic in Gisborne, Universal College of Learning in Palmerston North, and Wellington Institute of Technology and the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand in the Wellington area. There was also a presentation to the Academy for Tertiary Teaching Excellence during their recent inaugural symposium.

More information about the roadshow events will be included in the regional hub sections of this newsletter. Our thanks go to all those who attended the sessions. It was a pleasure to meet you and receive positive and constructive feedback about the site.

We trust that all visitors to the site will find it increasingly helpful to their work as educators in the tertiary sector. It is a work in progress, and we appreciate your feedback at any time. You can email us directly using akowebsite@massey.ac.nz

Academy in the limelight



Members of the Ako Aotearoa Academy for Tertiary Teaching Excellence together for October's inaugural symposium, with keynote presenters (seated centre) Ron Smith of Concordia University (Canada) and Mark Israel of Flinders University (Australia).

In January 2008, a small, energetic, and highly focused group of tertiary teaching award winners set about the enormous task of taking the embryonic idea of a tertiary teaching academy and turning it into reality. The group, known as the working group, developed, in close collaboration with Ako Aotearoa's staff and board, a draft structure for the new Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence. This structure set out the aims and objectives of the academy, its relationship with Ako Aotearoa, its initial membership base, its executive committee's terms of reference, its features, and activities to engage its membership for the 2008 academic year. The group decided that a symposium should be the only activity for this year and that this should be of the highest quality, with overseas speakers of the highest calibre. They spent much of their time planning for this symposium, which was held in Wellington on 16 and 17 October.

The symposium, which corresponded closely with the launch of the new Ako Aotearoa website, was attended by about 50 percent of eligible academy members, eligible members being all the winners of Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards since the inception of the award system. The symposium started with formalities befitting this prestigious event, including an address by the Associate Minister for Tertiary Education, the Hon Maryan Street. The two invited overseas speakers, Ron Smith of Concordia University in Canada and Mark Israel of Flinders University in Australia, then gave a great team-teaching presentation that looked at international perspectives on tertiary leadership. Both speakers not only stayed for all the symposium sessions but also continued to contribute their expertise throughout the two days.

There were many workshops offering a fresh look at various aspects of teaching and learning. One focused on the future role of the academy. Part of this process was to dissolve the working group and elect a new committee, the Academy Executive Committee. A new, somewhat larger executive committee was then formalised. This body is charged not only with implementing the wishes of the academy's members but also with elevating the academy in a way that will allow it to meet its aims and objectives.

Attendees overwhelmingly attested to the success of the inaugural symposium: brilliant speakers, networking initiatives, sharing of ideas, new things to try or explore, and, most importantly, a new professional association to improve professional practice.

The Ako Aotearoa Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence has arrived, is healthy, and will take its rightful place promoting and supporting quality teaching in our nation's tertiary institutions and organisations.

Newly elected executive committee



The Academy Executive Committee Members are (from left to right) Katharine Dickinson (University of Otago), Peter Mellow (AUT University), Sydney Shep (Victoria University of Wellington), Tracy Riley (Massey University), Julia Bruce (Wintec), Donna Buckingham (University of Otago), Marc Wilson (Victoria University of Wellington), and Karl Dodds (Christchurch Polytechnic Institute of Technology).



Academy members working together during the 'interactive classroom presenter' workshop.

BY KIRSTY WEIR

Ako Aotearoa national funding update

National Project Fund

The first round of Ako Aotearoa's National Project Fund closed recently, and we received a substantial number of applications across the funding streams. We have been delighted with the response and growing interest in the fund, especially given the relatively short lead-in time available to applicants.

Research and implementation projects

We received 52 expressions of interest, 31 of which were research-based, and the remainder were implementation projects. Thirteen project teams have been invited to submit full proposals for further consideration. The projects to be funded will be announced early in the new year.

Māori-initiative projects

The panel worked through 20 applications, made up of six research projects and 14 implementation projects. We have invited six project teams to submit full proposals. Again, the projects to be funded will be announced early in the new year.

Doctoral scholarships

Fifteen applications were received, and the panel selected three doctoral scholarships for funding. We are delighted to announce that the three supervisors to receive funding are Dr Chrystal Jaye, Department of General Practice, University of Otago; Professor Stephen May, College of Education, University of Waikato; and Dr Lisa Emerson, School of English and Media Studies, Massey University. Dr Jaye will supervise a thesis investigating the workplace crisis in the area of general practice and what role the alignment of curricular objectives with desired teaching and learning outcomes might play in addressing this issue. Professor May will oversee a project investigating how adult Māori learn te reo as a second language. Dr Emerson will supervise a participatory action research project to develop an information literacy and writing skills programme to assist students in developing their written academic voice. We extend our warmest congratulations to these awardees.

The four members of the doctoral panel are Professor Patricia Johnston, Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi; Professor Kerry Shephard, University of Otago; Associate Professor Alison Young, Unitec; and Professor Ian Evans, Massey University (chair).

Professor Evans comments, "I thought it was exciting that so many people who are not necessarily specialists in tertiary educational strategies are thinking about the way their discipline can be taught more effectively. There was particularly strong interest in areas of tertiary education that we know are intrinsically challenging for students, such as learning a second language, so it is encouraging that learning processes are being considered and investigated. Many really excellent proposals were received, and the panel found it very difficult to be able to select only three from the outstanding field, but in the end we wanted to represent the range and diversity of topics. The scheme is a little different from other doctoral scholarship initiatives in that the funding is awarded to the investigator/supervisor rather than to the student, but it is clear that, in most cases, suitable students had been thought about and an appropriate pool of talent identified."

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the three selection panels for their contribution and their diligent consideration of each application.

The closing dates for the 2009 funding round will be announced early in the new year through the Ako Aotearoa website.

Collaboration funds

During December, National Office will be selecting two to three collaboration projects for funding.



Doctoral panel: from left to right are Professor Kerry Shephard (University of Otago), Professor Patricia Johnston (Te Whare Wānanga o Awanuiārangi), Professor Ian Evans (Massey University), and Associate Professor Alison Young (Unitec).

Good Practice Publication Grants

As with the National Project Fund, we have been delighted with the response to this initiative. We received 44 applications for consideration. From those, 28 applicants will be funded to develop a publication on their recognised good practice. The full list of successful grant recipients will be available on our website shortly.

For 2009, there will be up to three closing dates for grant applications. These dates will be announced early in the new year on the Ako Aotearoa website.



Nominations now open for the 2009 Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards



The year 2009 will bring with it a new round of nominations for the awards and the opportunity for a new group of dedicated, passionate, excellent teachers to be recognised by the tertiary sector and New Zealand in general. We have already been working hard to promote the awards for the coming year, and we strongly encourage organisations from wider areas of the sector to become involved. During 2008, regional hub staff have been conducting workshops on how to prepare a quality application. They are happy to offer assistance to any tertiary educator/s interested in making an application.

Changes to the 2009 criteria

The former Minister for Tertiary Education, the Hon Pete Hodgson, has now approved our proposed refinements to the existing criteria, and these offer clarification to specific areas of the application process. This supports a sector-wide approach that reinforces Ako Aotearoa's inclusive vision for fostering and celebrating good practice in tertiary teaching.

The criteria covering eligibility for nomination have been modified to explicitly include teams of staff as well as individuals and have been changed to specifically include all sectors of tertiary education.

For 2009, each application will be limited to 8,000 words, and any appendices, including references and student evaluations, will be included within that count rather than being additional to the 8,000-word limit.

Another change is that supplementary audiovisual evidence can no longer be included. In their review of process, the panel considered the value of such evidence very carefully and have concluded that, at best, it tends to be illustrative of the written material and to be promotional or anecdotal rather than providing additional evidence. We are also concerned about disadvantaging applicants who do not have the resources to produce this type of material to a high standard.

You can download nomination forms, criteria, and guidelines from our website: www.akoaoaterrora.ac.nz. If you have any questions about any part of the process, please contact your Ako Aotearoa regional hub or contact National Office at info@akoaoaterrora.ac.nz. Nominations close at 5 p.m. on 31 March 2009.

Ako Aotearoa conference sponsorship

We would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the organisations that we have supported this year through our conference sponsorship programme. Whether our level of involvement is major, minor, bronze, gold, or platinum, we are committed to working closely with many organisations and collaborative groups across the tertiary sector. Looking ahead to our sponsorship programme for 2009, we welcome enquiries from organisations involved in conferences related to teaching and learning in the tertiary sector. Please email J.Tanner-Lloyd@massey.ac.nz to discuss your conference or event in more detail.

We finish 2008 with sponsorship of the following;

Symposium on Tertiary Assessment and Higher Education Student Outcomes Policy, Practice, and Research

17–19 November, Wellington
www.victoria.ac.nz/education/SYMPOSIUM/index.aspx

Spotlight on Tertiary Teaching and Learning Colloquium for the Southern Region

19–20 November, Dunedin
<http://hedc.otago.ac.nz/magnolia/spotlight/Welcome.html>

New Zealand Association for Research in Education Education in Change: Policies, research, and practice to improve student outcomes

24–27 November, Palmerston North
<http://www.eenz.com/nzare08/>

West Coast Tertiary Providers Forum Tertiary Teaching and Learning Regional Conference

27–28 November, Shantytown
<http://tppweb.ac.nz/events.php?ID=18>



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