YUNI-TOK

Your guide to engaging with Pasifika students
INTRODUCTION

It is my pleasure to bring you this edition of Yuni-Tok (pidgin for ‘university talk’). The overall objective is to ensure that we at the Pasifika Directorate work with you, the lecturer or service provider who interacts with Pasifika students, to accomplish your tasks successfully.

We provide here some background information that you may find useful including some information on demographics, the Pasifika@Massey Strategy, a discussion of Pasifika values, an explanation of student behaviours you may encounter, stereotypes that should be avoided, some pedagogical approaches and a few phrases you might like to learn from the most commonly spoken Pasifika languages at Massey University.

More importantly, we feature a few of our Pasifika students who share their thoughts and opinions on their academic journeys here at Massey.

Please feel free to provide us with your feedback.

I hope that you will find this resource useful.

‘Ofa atu,
Associate Professor Malakai Koloamatangi
Director Pasifika
Office of the AVC Māori and Pasifika
DIVERSITY OF LEARNERS
“New Zealand’s demographic distribution is changing, with an increased diversity of ethnicities - particularly in the Auckland region, where most of the national population growth is expected to take place. Provision models will need to cater for the different needs of our diverse national and international student demographics, and will need to take into consideration the relevance and outcomes of our offerings to produce graduates and research that meet the standards of a 21st century university.” (The Road to 2025, 2015, p.7).

WHO ARE WE?
The distinction between Pacific Islanders and Pasifika: Pacific Islanders or “P.Is” refers to natives or peoples of any of the islands in the Pacific. ‘Pasifika’ is the name used for the Pacific Island population in New Zealand. Although these terms are used interchangeably, it is important to note this difference between them.

Pacific Peoples: The Pacific region commonly associated with the many Island states spans over a quarter of the globe, from Palau in the West to Rapa Nui in the East. It is important to remember this fact when working with Pacific peoples as although there are many commonalities there are also just as many cultural features that distinguish the diverse peoples of the Pacific. The Pacific region is the most linguistically diverse region in the world, for example the Cook Islands is made up of 15 different Islands and home to six different dialects while there are over 850 languages spoken in Papua New Guinea.

Pasifika in Aotearoa: The Pacific Island communities of New Zealand are now a multi-generational and ethnically diverse group of people. With a growing number of second and third generations being born in New Zealand, this has meant that the already diverse Pasifika community has further diversified since the early migration patterns of the early 50s and 60s. Although Pacific Island migration occurred in response to New Zealand's post-war labour shortage, the 1970s saw huge numbers of Pacific Islanders moving to this country in the hopes of securing a better future for their families. Education was seen as the vehicle through which success and prosperity could be attained.
As of 2016, Pasifika students comprise about 4.6% of the Massey University student population. Below is a breakdown of the major Pacific ethnic groups students identify with. However, it must be noted that the figures do not adequately represent those students from Micronesia, Melanesia and smaller island nations of Polynesia such as Tuvalu, and Rotuma.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ethnic Group</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Samoan</td>
<td>42.3%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cook Island Māori</td>
<td>12.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan</td>
<td>17.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niuean</td>
<td>4.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelauan</td>
<td>1.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fijian**</td>
<td>18.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Pacific Groups</td>
<td>9.4%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Number of Pasifika students enrolled as at September 26, 2016

**Figure also includes Indo-Fijians

“I chose to study at Massey University because they were the specialists in my chosen field of study and had a worldwide reputation for producing some of the best aviation students in the world. Massey University helped me grow as a person and helped me develop an understanding of the need for...young Pasifika people to step up, make their dreams a reality and strive to make their mark in the world.”

Vilingatoni John Hasiata (Tonga, Papua New Guinea)
Bachelor of Aviation Management

“I chose Massey University because of its excellent reputation for research. Massey offers an amazing journalism and media studies programme.....it provides excellent journalism experience, both theoretical and practical, and the PhD itself unlocks personal creative potential and further develops practical research interests and skills.”

Angie Enoka (Samoa)
Studying towards a PhD in Media Studies
Pasifika Doctoral Scholarship recipient (2015 & 2016)
The relationships between the different components of the Growing Pearls of Wisdom: Pasifika@Massey 2020 strategy are depicted in the above diagram, which presents the strategy in Pacific conceptual style as a shell. The Pasifika student – ‘the precious pearl in the shell’ - is at the centre of this strategy. Pasifika values that emanate from Pasifika beliefs and ways of being, wrap around the student, providing a solid foundation that holds together all the subsequent layers of the shell.

The Six Strategic Goals outlined in The Road to 2020 (now Seven Strategic Goals in The Road to 2025) represent the outer layer of the shell. These provide a platform for Strategic Actions (second layer), which link the Massey’s Road to 2020 Goals and the five Pasifika@Massey 2020 Strategic Goals, the third layer of the shell.

From the student to the outer layers of the shell are five two-directional arrows representing the five Colleges of Massey University. Colleges play a fundamental role both in the educational achievement of Pasifika students at Massey and in contributing towards the achievement of the strategic goals in the Pasifika@Massey 2020. Other key internal service providers and external partners, stakeholders, and champions also have a responsibility to work collaboratively with the Pasifika Directorate so that Pasifika educational achievement is on a par with that of other Massey students.
PASIFIKA VALUES

These principles characterise Pasifika people and communities and are demonstrated in their customs, practices, and ways of being. The values are interconnected and some have been combined for the purposes of showing how they may be seen by Pasifika students in their learning experiences.

Reciprocity and Relationships: as they are to all people, relationships are of the utmost importance to Pasifika students. However as Anne Fitīsemanu (2015) points out, Pasifika people connect with others “through our hearts before we connect through our heads.” In a tertiary context, this might be seen in the way Pasifika students interact with each other, which often involves a lot of laughter and food. Through our Talanoa, students noted the importance of the first lecture and how introductions were made by the lecturer and fellow students, which would then set the tone for future lectures.

Although it does depend on the lecturer or tutor concerned, creating an environment where students feel comfortable enough to connect with staff and other students is important. For example lecturers being personable or approachable, sharing experiences of when they were students, making the effort to connect with students at their level, would be of significant benefit to Pasifika students.

Service and Inclusion: Pasifika people love to help others and often work well in collective settings. Service therefore is a significant part of Pasifika students’ lives, whether at home, at church or in the community. Don’t be afraid to encourage Pasifika students to participate in lectures by requesting active participation. This participation could include simple tasks, group discussion leadership roles and the facilitation of student feedback. Small as those tasks may seem, it can help students to feel valued!

Respect: the concept of respect is held reverentially by Pasifika students, and is often a reflection of their home environment, where elders, parents and older siblings are held in high regard by virtue of age, gender, experience and position in the family or community. This often spills over into the educational arena and may account for the way in which students view and speak to lecturers, tutors and people in positions of authority.

Spirituality: for many Pasifika students, spirituality – particularly the Christian faith – is a vital part of their lives. How this is manifested in individual students’ lives varies but church activities may take up a lot of their time. In the lecture setting, some Pasifika students may feel uncomfortable if jokes are made about their faith or spirituality. It may be unintentional on the lecturer’s part however it is important to be mindful of this.
**Leadership:** A common belief held by Pasifika people is that in order to lead, one must follow. This, in line with the value of service, might go some way in explaining why Pasifika students may not exhibit qualities one would think leaders should possess. Pasifika students may view leadership differently based on how they see leadership within their home and community contexts.

However, it is vital to embrace the diversity of what leadership may be or look like to Pasifika students. It is generally accepted within most Pasifika cultures to avoid self-praise. This may be deemed as a lack of confidence. However, in the context of Pasifika this would be seen as humility; a socially accepted and expected leadership quality. Other students might be more outspoken, perhaps reflecting an increased confidence in their generation or perhaps not being the first in their immediate families to attend university. Whatever their motivation for study, it is important to encourage Pasifika students to achieve their aspirations through their studies, thereby influencing other Pasifika students to do the same.

**Family:** Pasifika societies are collective; an individual will always identify themselves within the context of their families and wider communities. This is demonstrated in the way that many Pasifika students will put the interests of their families before their own. For example school holidays that do not coincide with University holidays often present challenges for Pasifika students to navigate family obligations while balancing study commitments. Often Pacific students are the eldest of their siblings still living at home. This will mean that while parents are away the eldest is often left with the responsibility to look after younger siblings.

**Love:** A universal value, underpinning much of what people do. However in a Pasifika context, it is the showing of care and concern for others that drives students to prioritise family events or issues or helping a friend out over completing an assignment or studying for an exam. Love for Pasifika is manifested in our actions particularly in the way we are expected to put others before ourselves. Although this is not ideal in terms of assignment deadlines and course or degree completion, it is the reality for many of our Pasifika students.

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**What is Talanoa?**

Talanoa is a Polynesian word which broadly means ‘to talk or converse’. As a Pacific concept it highlights the importance of communication in an effort to better understand a person, a situation or an issue. The concept necessitates the need for an environment where people can feel comfortable enough to share their thoughts. A ‘Talanoa’ session was held with Pasifika students to garner their views on how we should engage more effectively with them.
“At times it was not always easy to ask or accept help but often it only took one person to listen, support, push or remind me of my desire to make a difference. Choosing an academic path was never about getting ahead, rather it was about fulfilling a deeper purpose. It was about making a positive difference in both my life and the lives of others. It was about trusting and finding myself. It was...life-long relationships that mattered.”

Chanel Tamahaga (Tahiti, Niue, Cook Islands)  
Master of Teaching and Learning (Secondary) with Distinction  
2016 Pasifika Excellence Award recipient

“It has been a blessing to study at Massey University for the fantastic support and many opportunities that it provides for Pasifika researchers like myself. Migrating from Samoa with my wife and three sons for the duration of this project, Massey University has made the transition into the New Zealand way of life an enjoyable experience for us all.”

Rev. Alesana Fosi Pala’amo (Samoa)  
Studying towards a PhD in Social Work  
Pasifika Doctoral Scholarship recipient (2015 & 2016)

“My (Pasifika and Massey University) community involvement has contributed to my educational journey in two ways: improving my communication skills in terms of public speaking as well as helping me work better within a team to become an efficient team player.”

Sabrina Betham (Samoa)  
Studying towards a Bachelor of Sport Management  
2016 Pasifika Community Award recipient
BEHAVIOURS

Eye contact: it is quite common for people from the Pacific to avoid eye contact. This is not a sign of disrespect or disinterest, but in fact the opposite. When engaging in conversation with Pasifika students looking down or away are very common behaviours. This is particularly common when speaking to someone with authority.

Sitting in the back: often Pasifika students will congregate together in the back of the lecture theatre/classroom. This is often a behaviour displayed to show humility (Luke 14:8-11) and not always to do with being shy (see the above section on ‘spirituality’ for more information).

Taking things literally: through our Talanoa with some students the term “There will be no extensions given” often said by lecturers is taken quite literally. Often lecturers state that extensions will only be granted for serious reasons. We understand that this is meant to give the impression that extensions will not be handed out lightly but the dilemma of what is deemed serious and by whom then becomes the deciding factor of when an extension is requested. This is just one example of how often Pasifika students take most things literally. Be mindful that the language you use, with an awareness that many of our Pasifika students come to university with little to no cultural capital and understanding of the ‘common’ functions and unwritten rules of tertiary study.

Stereotypes/assume nothing: it is important to deconstruct common beliefs about Pasifika peoples – The colloquial term ‘fresh’ is often used to describe the Pasifika accent and pronunciation of the English language. Often this accent is associated with being illiterate and/or uneducated. To help avoid this common mistake keep in mind that Tonga for example has more PhDs per capita than any other country in the world. It is also stated by UNICEF that Tonga has one of the highest literacy rates in the world with over 99% of the adult population being able to read and write in both English and Tongan (UNICEF, 2012).

Using an individual’s accent as a means to assess their academic capacity can be misleading. It is also important to remember not to mimic their accent or make obvious changes to the way you speak when communicating to Pasifika students.

The Pasifika population in New Zealand is an evolving and highly diverse group of people. It is important not to assume that all Pasifika students were born in the Pacific. Almost two thirds of the entire Pasifika population in New Zealand was born here and often regard English as being their first language.
It is common knowledge in most spaces that certain familial obligations for Pasifika people often requires time out from everyday preoccupations. Funerals can be eventful and very time consuming for Pasifika students. There is often a feeling of scepticism associated with Pasifika students and attending funerals and the time required for traditional practices around death and mourning. Be aware of the language used when talking about extensions for funerals and other family obligations. There is awareness with Pasifika students that their non-Pacific peers and teaching staff often question the authenticity of Pasifika familial obligations.

It is important not to allow deficit views of Pasifika communities and families to influence how you view Pasifika students. A large percentage of Pasifika families are living with socio-economic challenges but this is not a reality for all families. Pasifika families may not have the same cultural capital in spaces like tertiary study; however they are always willing to support each other where they can. This goes for members of the family who are studying at university.

**TEACHING APPROACHES – CLASS CONTENT:**

**Token content:** where Pasifika content is able to be included academic staff need to ensure that it is not tokenistic. The Pacific is home to unique sources of knowledge and indigenous epistemologies that will add value and diversity to the learning of all students.

**‘Common sense’**: avoid being ambiguous. Assuming that all students will understand things that are ‘common’ for most New Zealanders has the potential to affect all students from diverse backgrounds, not just Pasifika. Remember that your common sense does not necessarily equate with universally held beliefs - one’s common sense is always contextual and underpinned by life experiences.

**Supporting academic success**: it is important not to over remediate class content. Any concentrated efforts to dumb-down content will patronise Pasifika students and support notions of Pasifika students having a ‘free-ride’ through university.

**Being overly lenient**: balance is needed – be understanding and accommodating of cultural expectations but not to the extent that you end up being overly lenient. If difficulties arise as a result or you have any concerns about a student’s lack of engagement and attendance due to cultural reasons, the Pasifika Directorate and other Pasifika staff will be able to safely navigate that space using culturally appropriate methods.
Group work: Pacific cultures are community centred and have strong collective values. Working within a group or a collective is a familiar concept for most Pasifika students. This however does not mean that all Pasifika people prefer to work in groups. Group work can be an effective tool used to nurture confidence within the context of the classroom as it is often difficult for some Pasifika students to voice concerns and/or disclose intellectual opinions or views individually.

“Hard work is a key aspect in achieving academic success, as well as one’s faith and the support that comes from family and friends. There will be obstacles and times where we fall short but having the courage and perseverance to keep pushing until the very end makes it all worth it.”

Siaosi Koloamatangi (Tonga)
Bachelor of Science - Massey Scholar
2015 & 2016 Pasifika Excellence Award recipient
Currently completing his Honours year.

“I have actively taken part in tutorials including the ones held exclusively for Pasifika and Maori students. I was too self-conscious of asking questions in lectures so...tutorials gave me an excellent opportunity to ask tutors questions face-to-face.”

Shabeena Hussain (Fiji)
Bachelor of Health Science (Hons)
2016 Pasifika Excellence Award recipient

“Personally it was not easy coming straight from Fiji into a new environment where the workload and expectation was far greater than anything I had encountered. However, I found that my involvement with the (Pasifika) club brought a sense of ease....and helped me to balance my own workload with the commitment to the club and my peers.”

Andre Fatiaki (Rotuma)
Bachelor of Science
2016 Pasifka Community Award recipient
USEFUL INFORMATION

PASIFIKA STUDENT SPACES
Each campus has a designated space for our students to study and relax in, as well as connect with our Pasifika staff.

• **Fale Manaaki** (Albany) - QA 2.22, Level 2, Quad A Building, East Precinct
• **Fale Pasifika** (Manawatu) - ICC/YFC Building, Rehab Road
• **Fale Bilong Iumi** (Wellington) - Building T33

PASIFIKA COLLECTION AT THE LIBRARY
The Albany campus library houses a research collection of Pasifika material. The Pasifika collection is on Level 3 and books can be identified by a frangipani label on the spine of the material. The collection holds books, print journals, and audiovisual material with Pasifika content.

PACIFIC RESEARCH AND POLICY CENTRE (PRPC)
The Pacific Research and Policy Centre is the Pasifika research knowledge hub for Massey University. It was established to give focus and new impetus to the already considerable research activity by Massey researchers in the Pacific.

PASIFIKA STAFF
If you have any questions or would like to discuss how best to navigate a situation which involves a Pasifika student, feel free to contact us. There are dedicated Pasifika staff available on each campus to assist with student pastoral and academic needs, and would be more than willing to assist you.

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Pacific Research and Policy Centre:  
Research Officer/Coordinator - Dr. Litea Meo-Sewabu (Manawatu)  
L.Meo-Sewabu@massey.ac.nz  
ext. 83520
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pasifika nation - language</th>
<th>Salutation</th>
<th>Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cook Islands</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Te reo Māori Kuki ‘Āirani</em>&lt;br&gt;(Rarotonga Dialect)</td>
<td>Kia Orana Ine Meitaki Maata Kia Manuia</td>
<td>Greetings Please Thank you Farewell (Lit. to go well or be well)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Fiji</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Vosa Vakaviti</em></td>
<td>Ni sa bula Yalo vinaka Vinaka Au lako mada yani Ni sa moce</td>
<td>Greetings Please Thank you Excuse me (To get past someone) Goodbye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tonga</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Lea faka-Tongá</em></td>
<td>Malo e lelei Fakamolemole Malo ‘Aupito Tulou ‘Alu a Nofo a</td>
<td>Greetings Please Thank you Excuse me Farewell (Said to the person leaving) Farewell (Said to the person staying)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Samoa</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gagana Samoa</em></td>
<td>Talofa lava Fa’amolemole Fa’afetai lava Tulou Tofa soifua</td>
<td>Greetings Please Thank you Excuse me (To get past someone) Farewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tokelau</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gagana Tokelau</em></td>
<td>Fakafeiloaki Tālofa Ni/ Mālo Ni Fakamolemole Fakafetai lahi lele Ke manuia te aho Tofa Ni</td>
<td>Greetings Hello Please Thank You Have a nice day Farewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Niue</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Vagahau Niue</em></td>
<td>Fakaalofa lahi atu Fakamolemole Fakaauve/Oue tulou Fano a koe Nofo a koe Koe kia</td>
<td>Greetings Please Thank you Farewell (Said to the person leaving) Farewell (Said to the person staying) Good bye</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Tuvalu</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Gana Tuvalu</em></td>
<td>Fakatalofa atu Fakamolemole Fakafetai lasi Tofa la</td>
<td>Greetings Please Thank you Farewell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Vanuatu</strong>&lt;br&gt;<em>Bislama</em></td>
<td>Halo Nem blong mi… Plis Tangkyu Lukim Yu</td>
<td>Greetings/Hello My name is… Please Thank you See you later</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### PASIFIKA PRONUNCIATION 101:

Follow this guide to help with pronouncing Pasifika names and places. An honest and heartfelt attempt to pronounce a student’s name correctly would be a great way to build rapport, and would show the student that you care. Pacific names have meaning and history. Therefore showing respect in your attempt to pronounce their names will also show respect for who they are and where they come from.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cook Islands</th>
<th>Te reo Maori Kuki Airani is very similar to Te reo Maori of Aotearoa.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘R’ Pronounced as a soft ‘rolled’ R.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>‘B’ is pronounced ‘MB’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘Q’ is ‘NG’ with a released G sound like finger</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘G’ is pronounced like NG in sing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘C’ is ‘TH’ (‘then’) The word Moce would be pronounced ‘Mothe’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘D’ is pronounced ‘ND’ for example Nadi would be pronounced Nandi</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>‘NG’ is pronounced like the English ‘ng’ in “Sing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘T’ is pronounced with as little sibilant sound as possible almost like the English ‘D’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>Unlike the Tongan T the Samoan ‘T’ has a strong sibilant sound</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘G’ is pronounced like the English ‘NG’ in “Sing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>F’ in Tokelau is pronounced like the English ‘W’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The ‘F’ sound pronounced in this way is accompanied by an ‘H’ quality.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This ‘H’ quality is more noticeable in front of the vowels A, O and U.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The Tokelauan H is a glottal fricative, and before the vowels ‘I’ and ‘E’ it sounds the same as English.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>An ‘H’ before an A, O or U is pronounced as if it were spelt with an HY. For example the word Huke would be pronounced Hyuke or Heeyukeh.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>G’ is pronounced like the English ‘NG’ in “Sing”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>‘T’ when followed by an E or an I is pronounced like an S. For example Mate would be pronounced Mase.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
REFERENCES


Massey University, *Shaping the Nation, Taking the Best to the World - The Road to 2025*, Massey University, 2015.

