

# Welcome to the LIMELIGHT

June 2018

All the latest news from the Ako Academy of Tertiary Teaching Excellence, the organisation of national tertiary teaching award winners

## A note from the President

Kia ora koutou, colleagues, fellow educators, students, and everyone who cares about learning and teaching. Let me add my welcome to this latest edition of Limelight.

As you will have divined, there have been changes at the top of our (thankfully un-hierarchical) organisation. I'd like to say a heart-felt thanks to Selene Mize (Otago University) for her long, recent tenure as President, that followed a period on the Executive, that followed a period representing the Academy on the TTEA Panel itself. Clearly, Selene has not learnt to say "no", and for that we owe her a great deal.

Thanks also for the efforts of Tony Zaharic (Otago University), whose term on the Executive has also come to an end, and a kia ora to Charles Fleischmann (University of Canterbury), Gail Harrison (Whanganui Learning Centre), James Oldfield (Unitec Institute of Technology) and Brad Hurren (Otago University) – your enthusiasm (and technical competence) is most welcome.

To business. Feedback from our 2017 Symposium was extremely positive, with a smattering of suggestions and requests that we shall try to satisfy this year. The next iteration of this tertiary teaching and learning conference as 'Talking Teaching 2018: Engaging Teaching, Inspiring Learning' will be held in late November at the University of Canterbury! Details are in the next article, and thanks so much to Charles Fleischmann for twisting arms down Christchurch way.

Part of the Symposium will once again be open to all-comers, but we are planning lots of Academy-only time: the first day will focus on the Academy (allowing us to properly welcome our new whānau), and we'll close the third day with the traditional Academy hour (or two). My challenge to you is to seize this opportunity to communicate what you do that inspires the best out of your students, your institutions, and yourself. Make me want to be a better teacher, and show me how. Challenge thrown down.

Selene has also put her hand up, along with Te Taka Keegan (University of Waikato and Class of 2017), to represent us on a group tasked with reviewing the TTEA criteria and process. This is a seriously big deal, and I feel warm and safe in the knowledge that these two are playing a part. There is more information in Ian Rowe's article below. I'm informed also that the appraisal process for the 2018 TTEAs is well under way, and decisions are on the verge of being made.

Finally, there have also been changes at the 'top' of Ako Aotearoa. You may be aware that Stanley Frielick, who spoke at the 2017 Symposium, has stepped down from the role as Director. A permanent Director will be appointed in the next couple of months, but the Executive were thrilled to have the chance for a sit-down with Acting Director, Helen Lomax, earlier in the year. I think we all came away with a sense that the future for our collaboration is bright. To this end, we will set aside a bit of the first day of the 2018 Symposium for the Academy Executive and Ako to co-facilitate a discussion about what that can look like.

I'll close by asking you to help the Executive to support our Academy, our community, towards the future.

*Ngā mihi maioha,*

*Marc*



## Talking Teaching, last year and this

The 2017 Academy symposium, held in Dunedin at St Margaret's College at the University of Otago, was a popular and convivial occasion. Much of the programme was open to non-Academy members, and 92 came, along with 62 from the Academy itself. Over 90 percent of attendees rated the experience highly and would come again.

Of the non-Academy attendees, three were from Ako, 53 from the South Island, 29 from the North Island, and seven from Australia. Forty-one were from Polytechnics, 38 from Universities, seven from educational commercial entities, five had higher education affiliations and one was from the ACE sector.

St Margaret's was an excellent venue, with comfortable meeting spaces, and outstanding food. A highlight was the symposium dinner. The theme was understanding food through stories and showcased the skills of the Food Design Institute of Otago Polytechnic. After a generous seafood platter entrée, there was a Latin American main set to music by Warwick Murray. The memorable dessert revived a Polytechnic student food design event with some drama.

Now to this year's meeting, which is the Academy's tenth! On such an auspicious occasion it seems fitting to be taking ourselves to the University of Canterbury's brand new Engineering facility, and once again making a significant part of the symposium open to all-comers. As with last year, we will be Talking Teaching, setting the bar high to inspire and engage. We promise there will be new tricks for your teaching toolkit, teaching showcases, and opportunities to engage with the scholarship of teaching and learning, and to wrestle with some of the big-picture challenges we face. In short, something for everyone. As usual, this doesn't happen without you so, please, save the date!

- 28 - 30 November (28 November is the Academy-only day)
- 2 nights accommodation (with travel) provided at Rochester & Rutherford Halls of Residence (members only)
- Online registration will open late June



# The Auckland Century 2 Physics Project

*Richard Easter, University of Auckland*

Academic programmes can simply coagulate over time, with new topics being crammed in alongside the classics. Any changes confront hard choices and can end up as tweaks that take you to the top of a nearby hill while leaving more distant mountains unexplored.

We tackled this dilemma head-on within physics at the University of Auckland, launching a major reevaluation of curriculum and pedagogy. Its inception in 2015 coincided with our centennial as a stand-alone Department so we dubbed the project 'Century 2'. The goal is to offer a top notch programme in physics and related specialisations with excellent educational outcomes and strong student engagement. We wanted a programme to convince students to study physics, to do so at Auckland, and to graduate with the skills they need to realise their aspirations.

The biggest change was a move to "Studio Physics" (or SCALE-UP) [<https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SCALE-UP>] for our core Stage One courses. This approach originated at North Carolina State University and has been adopted at MIT and over 200 other colleges in the United States, but is new to New Zealand. There are no lectures, with students spending most of their 'class' time working in small groups on problems, investigations, experiments and practical challenges. This approach can deliver dramatic learning gains relative to traditional lecture-format courses.

We engaged Dr Kathleen Foote, a young physics education expert, whose PhD focussed on the common characteristics of successful Studio programmes. Katie helped lead the planning and transition in 2016 and delivered our first Studio courses in 2017. In the process we renovated our first year laboratory space, added circular tables (recycled from the old lab benches), put whiteboards for group work on the walls, and installed a decent AV system. Our initial goal was to be at least as good as the traditional lecture/lab format that Studio replaced. We exceeded that target and are building a real cohort inside our undergraduate programme. Our students are learning to collaborate on complex and often open-ended problems.

Simultaneously, the Stage Two programme was reorganised into three core courses with stronger prerequisites in both physics and mathematics, adding a weekly tutorial where students solve problems in groups that reinforce recent lecture material, itself delivered with active learning strategies. Together these changes slashed the failure rate, boosted the average passing grade, and visibly improved engagement – all while we lifted expectations for student performance and delivered more challenging content.

This year we have introduced a similar programme at Stage Three, and in 2019 will do so at Stage Four. By the end we will have created clear and self-explanatory pathways for students, but with an ongoing commitment to continuous improvement in all the courses.

The process has been a fascinating intellectual adventure. Not only has teaching become an increasingly shared enterprise across the department, but we have connected our programme to the latest developments in physics education research. As scientists and academics we are committed to evidence-based practice, and the conversations happening as part of Century 2 have expanded our understanding of both our subject and ourselves.



## Transform teaching through Cooperative Inquiry

*Ksenija Napan, Massey University*



A transdisciplinary group of seven New Zealand academics from Massey University, Whitecliffe College and Stellaris are redefining transformative teaching in tertiary education. These like-minded group members meet monthly using an action research method known as Cooperative Inquiry (CI).

The CI approach uses repeated cycles of personal action and group reflection on teaching practices to enable breaking down of discipline and institutional silos for the development of innovative teaching practices that can engage all students. This novel approach has been presented at international tertiary education conferences, published recently in the *Journal of Transformative Education*, and has led to subsequent project collaborations among group members in other areas of research.

Ksenija Napan (Massey University) initiated this group in 2014 and Frances Denz (Stellaris Group) joined in 2017. Both are in the Ako Academy. The other members, all exceptional teachers, are Jenny Green (School of Nursing), Judy Thomas (School of Health Sciences), Mal Green (School of Communication, Journalism and Marketing) and Warwick Stent (School of Accountancy) from Massey, and Lynnemaree Patterson from Whitecliffe College.

## National Education Summits

Professor Welby Ings has been appointed to the National Education Summit Advisory group. The chair is Judge Andrew Becroft, and the other members are Marian Hobbs, Sir Lockwood Smith, Etta Bollinger, Professor Rawinia Higgins, Dr Debbie Ryan and Deborah Walker. This initiative is designed to provide coherence between ideas submitted by thousands of New Zealanders through a national 'education conversation' and the Government's reviews of large sections of the education system including Tomorrow's Schools, NCEA and the PBRF.

Professor Ings says, 'Our brief is to hold the government accountable to what people are saying. The group is ideologically diverse but connected by a vested interest in New Zealand developing a world leading education system built on collective aspiration and insight.'

Welby was awarded the inaugural Prime Ministers' Supreme Award for teaching in 2002. He is a strong advocate of educators who innovate and drive education through their humanity rather than via an anxious pursuit of quantifiable data. He sees the Education Summits as part of a wider flow of national engagement that feeds in to a more co-created education system that will better equip us for futures that we cannot fully comprehend. At the core of such an education system he believes is the intimate relationship between learners and responsive, creative and trusted teachers.

He has discussed the potential of the Summits and review process on Morning Report on Radio NZ, and expanded his educational philosophy in a keynote address to the 2017 New Zealand Educational Institute Conference: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EqCr2yDMsfw>, and a TEDx talk: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aumxbgOdkRU>





# Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards Review

*Ian Rowe, Regional Manager, Ako Aotearoa Central Hub*

Ako Aotearoa's previous director Dr Stanley Frielick participated as a panellist on the 2017 awards committee. At the awards debrief he raised a number of questions.

These included: what is the purpose of the awards and how can they be made more inclusive? How do Academy members make an impact on the quality of teaching in and outside of their organisations? What does the investment by the Tertiary Education Commission produce and how much value is added? Who can change the system and who is accountable for those changes? Should Ako Aotearoa be shifting its value proposition from 'excellence' to a focus on capability building? How can the awards criteria be made consistent with the soon to-be-adopted professional teaching standards?

Subsequently the Board of Ako Aotearoa set terms of reference for a review.

These included :

- Review the focus and relevance of both the process and criteria for the TTEA
- Review the fitness for purpose (current and future) of the current approach, construct and focus of the TTEA
- Review similar models from other jurisdictions
- Review opportunities for alignment with the new strategic direction of Ako Aotearoa focused on building educational capability and establishing professional standards
- Review the perception, impact and opportunities for future impact of TTEA on/in the sector
- Develop recommendations for a revised TTEA process and criteria to achieve equitable recognition of excellence across the diversity of the tertiary sector's sub-sectors (ACE, PTEs, Wānanga, Polytechnics, Universities) and Māori and Pasifika
- Develop modifications and options for consideration by the Ako Aotearoa Board and Minister
- Review the potential opportunities and challenges for wider use of past and future awardees in building educational capability of the sector and promoting tertiary teaching

A sector wide team of 12 including immediate past Academy President Selene Mize and Te Taka Keegan met on 8 May to scope that work. Material from that discussion will go to the Board for its next meeting.



## Professional standards for teaching

*John Milne, Ako Aotearoa*



When I first started teaching tertiary education in the 1980's I was impressed by the well-crafted learning activities that I helped to teach. I started as a demonstrator in first-year biology labs and thirty years on, I still remember some of them. I was amazed to see day old hen eggs with a blood system and a beating heart; students seemed to be too.

In the 1980's there was no formal teacher training in the university sector. As lab demonstrators we met with senior teachers to discuss content of the labs but that was it. My implicit understanding of the role was to act merely like the seniors. We were expected to build our capabilities as adult educators on the job without any understanding of a sound educational approach.

I witnessed incredible teaching back then, but I believe it would have been much easier for everyone if they had been provided with good professional learning to help develop teaching capability. A guide, such as teaching standards to identify good practice, would have been a great help. If we were able to then reflect on our teaching behaviour in light of the guide, it would have greatly helped my teaching ability.

Ako Aotearoa is exploring how teaching standards can help to build capability. There have been a number of promising initiatives. The Ako Aotearoa funded project Hei Toko i te Tukunga introduces teaching approaches that can enable Māori learner success. It contains teaching exemplars of Whanaungatanga, Ako and Manaakitanga to provide a solid foundation of teaching practice.

ACE Aotearoa have developed a teaching standards framework for use with adult and community education. At this foundation level, the teaching standards are helping to identify the performance and expertise required to teach.

Some New Zealand universities are using the UK based Higher Education Academy professional standards and processes to help staff reflect on their teaching expertise ([www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf](http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/ukpsf)). These organisations use teaching standards to help the educator identify what is required for good teaching and can give a process to develop capabilities. Over 100,000 academic staff have gained recognition of their teaching expertise by engaging with the HEA's Professional Standards Framework.

It is a challenge to help tertiary teachers develop their capability while they are busy doing the job of teaching. Professional standards for teaching could help build institutional and personal capability. This would help those early career lab demonstrators get off to a flying start as they develop their teaching expertise. Teaching standards would help established staff develop too, but that is another story.

# News from the Ako Aotearoa regional hubs

## SOUTHERN HUB

*Neil Andersen, Regional Manager, Southern Hub*

The Academy's representative on the Hub Advisory Group, Rua Murray (University of Canterbury), was farewelled at the March meeting after four years service. In his place, we are delighted to welcome Karyn Paringatai, from Otago University.

We have been encouraging and developing Regional Hub Funded projects – Bridget O'Regan (Hub Project Manager) reports that there are nine new projects approved so far this year. Impact evaluations for projects that have been completed are also in hand. In addition, we have explained the role of Ako Aotearoa and the Academy to international visitors from Yale and the University of Kentucky.

The Hub's 'Projects in Progress Colloquium' is on November 12 and everyone is invited. We also look forward to working with members of the Academy when the annual 'Talking Teaching' symposium at the end of November comes to Christchurch for the first time.

## CENTRAL HUB

*Ian Rowe, Regional Manager, Central Hub*

Since 2013, the Central Hub has run a series of Academy seminars in Wellington, Palmerston North, Napier and New Plymouth. The format has been for three recent award members to present for 15 minutes about their teaching, including how they went about writing their portfolio, followed by a facilitated discussion.

Despite brilliant presentations and good discussions with participants, attendance has slowly declined, so a new format seems appropriate. In discussion with John Milne, the new Advisor Professional Learning at Ako Aotearoa, we have decided to try a similar format via Zoom.

There will be obvious advantages; anyone with a computer and the free Zoom participation software can engage, it will not be restricted to the Central Hub, it will be recorded and made available on our website, will not involve travel and disruption for Academy members, and could be offered by discipline groupings or other categories of delivery.

So, around September or October you may find yourself being asked to contribute to an online seminar. You will get plenty of warning, there will be a koha, it will be fabulous, and you will enjoy inspiring people to excellent teaching.

## NORTHERN HUB

*Ruth Peterson, Regional Manager, Northern Hub*

The most recent Regional Hub project to be completed is 'Why lecturers use exemplars and how they use them', led by Eleanor Hawe (University of Auckland). The project team found that lecturers recognised the value in using exemplars to support student learning about what constitutes quality, and to support their successful completion of an assessment task. Their selection of exemplars was influenced by their impact on student commitment, motivation and overall outcomes.

Another Regional Hub project, led by Diane Johnson and Sophie Nock, completed in 2016, underwent its third impact conversation in March. The project, 'Bridging to Tertiary Study: A Support Resource for Māori students', produced an instructional package relating to the teaching of academic writing. It is comprised of three self-access units, freely available online here: <https://ako.aotearoa.ac.nz/download/ng/file/group-5/20145-final-report-appendix.pdf>

## Academy Executive

The current Executive has nine members. Feel free to contact them at any time with any matters relating to the Academy.



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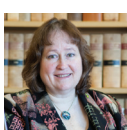
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