

# AUT pushes for diverse journalism

Ethnic mix in communication studies lags behind Auckland's changing demographics.

By Sarah Lockwood

Initiatives to recruit more ethnically diverse journalism students are long overdue, says associate professor David Robie, director of AUT University's Pacific Media Centre.

The university's student body is now 44 per cent non-Pakeha. But in communication studies, non-Pakeha students make up only 30 per cent of the roll. And Robie says the proportion is lower still among the school's journalism students.

"While the demographics in Auckland were changing dramatically, we weren't waking up to that fact and making changes," he says.

However, the proportion of non-Pakeha taking journalism at AUT is higher than the national average of non-Pakeha journalists, which is 17 per cent.

AUT recruitment relationships manager Linda Strickson-Pua says to encourage more

diverse students the School of Communication Studies needs to employ more Maori and Pasifika staff and the curriculum needs to have a Pasifika focus.

"I'd like to see the knowledge-base – the values, the culture – we teach in our university coming from the area we live in, so the journalists we're producing can go out there and report well on the community we have in Aotearoa-New Zealand.

"We live in the South Pacific and it's ridiculous that our curriculum reflects a very white Western society."

AUT equity policy advisor Kitea Tipuna says the school has traditionally been very mainstream, with a mainstream curriculum and mainstream staff.

In his final year in the school,

Tipuna was the only Maori student in a class of 80 students.

"I think it has improved a little bit over the last decade," he says.

He questions whether the school is systemically capable of teaching Maori students, and whether, for example, one experience on a marae over three years is enough.

He also says Maori are sceptical of the media, and choose to study at institutions like Waiariki Institute of Technology or AUT University's Te Ara Poutama.

"We [Maori] do resistance education. We'll go into a system that's either fringe media, or prepared to challenge mainstream media."

Robie says there is a lot of

ground to make up, and recruiting Maori and Pasifika students is a pressing priority.

The school's diversity committee, which was set up earlier this year, recently ran an initiative called Conch Day.

Twenty-five Year-12 and 13 Maori and Pasifika students from Auckland schools were invited to participate.

They visited the university's television and radio stations, attended a few lectures and did some live on-air interviews and digital media productions.

Both Maori and Pasifika students and Pacific Island Media Association journalists spoke about the course and opportunities in the media.

"It was a tremendous success for the students," says Robie.

He says a lot of the students wanted to be journalists anyway. They are even more keen now after having had a taste of what journalism students do at AUT.

He says next year there will be two Conch Days, and the diversi-

ty committee will encourage staff to be more proactive about going into high schools to talk about the course and opportunities in the media industry.

"We can't wait for them to come to us, we have to go out and find them."

The school will also continue to award its Pasifika scholarships. Since 2003 it has sponsored nine Pasifika students at AUT.

Robie has also proposed a Diploma in Pacific Journalism, which would be open to all journalism students wanting to challenge themselves and learn wider cross-cultural reporting skills.

The journalism curriculum leader, associate professor Martin Hirst, says a problem is making room for it within the existing and already crowded curriculum.

"We're looking at David's proposal along with a number of other initiatives to improve the journalism curriculum."

"We live in the South Pacific and it's ridiculous our curriculum reflects a very white Western society."

## Cannibalism no 'dark fantasy'

By Amy Williams

Cannibalism was an ingrained cultural practice among pre-European Maori, according to AUT University's professor Paul Moon.

In his inaugural address following his appointment as a professor, Moon outlined findings from more than three years of research on Maori cannibalism.

"A lot of people won't agree and that's just tough – that's nothing new," he told *Te Waha Nui*.

The address was based on his forthcoming, yet-to-be-named book, due for publication next year.

Moon said previous research on Maori cannibalism tended to be either postmodernist or revisionist in view.

He said the postmodernist approach tended to excuse cannibalism as acceptable within the context of Maori culture, forgetting it had real victims.

Revisionist histories suggested cannibalism had never occurred and was a "dark fantasy" used to justify harsh colonisation methods.

Moon said he took a fresh look at the original evidence, which included eyewitness accounts, oral history and archaeological findings.

"I can honestly say with my hand on my heart I have no doubt, whatsoever, that cannibalism was practised in this country," he said.

For Moon, a more interesting question is why cannibalism

occurred. Post-battle rage was the most likely cause, he said.

Whakatauki (proverbs) suggest post-battle cannibalism was a socially-sanctioned practice. To eat one's enemy brought their ultimate humiliation, he said.

The idea that Maori ate their enemies "to consume the mana of the dead" was a misconception, said Moon.

In his research he consulted Tuhoe and Ngapuhi, who confirmed the traditional belief one's mauri (life-force) departed the body immediately after death.

Moon's research found cannibalism stopped shortly after New Zealand was colonised.

The arrival of European cultures and their values caused Maori to become aware of their own cultural identity.

The desire to preserve that new-found identity led to Maori abandoning the practice. "If you eat the practitioners of a culture you're devaluing that culture," he said.

Moon has been on the staff of AUT's Maori development faculty Te Ara Poutama since 1993.

He was welcomed to the professoriate by AUT vice-chancellor Derek McCormack, who described the lecture as "logical, clear and interesting" and an "important occasion for the life of the university".

Moon's most recent book was *The Newest Country in the World: A History of New Zealand in the Decade of the Treaty*.



PAUL MOON



PHOTO: DOUG COLE

MULTI-TALENTED: Advertising student and artist Alexander Bartleet with his award-winning work.

## 'Forgotten objects' artist wins \$10,000

An AUT University advertising student has won the \$10,000 Mazda Emerging Artist award.

Alexander Bartleet, 21, has also been made a finalist in the prestigious Wallace Art Awards.

Bartleet, who has a Bachelor of Fine Arts, was up against 83 other fine arts students from throughout New Zealand.

His painting *It Remains* is receiving strong praise. Award judge John Daly-Peoples described Bartleet's work as "something between a painting, a sculpture and an installation".

Bartleet incorporates what he calls forgotten objects into his paintings.

"I'm interested in sediments and the effects of history and time.

"People have different readings of my work, which I like," he says.

Bartleet is passionate about both advertising and art, but he says there can be conflict.

"In the art world some people frown upon trying to do both art and advertising."

He would love to make a living from his art and says he feels pressure to build on his success.

"My next step is to get an exhibition," he says.

— Angus Bennett