



AMERICAN INDIAN STUDIES

Statement of Support for our Māori Colleagues and Staff at the University of Waikato September 14, 2020

We, the American Indian Studies Department and the Center for American Indian and Indigenous Studies at the University of Washington stand in support of our highly esteemed colleagues, the Māori academics who have spoken out about long-term, unresolved systemic and casual racism they have experienced at the University of Waikato.

In June of 2019 many of our faculty and graduate students traveled to the University of Waikato as part of the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association's (NAISA) annual meeting, which the University generously hosted. Based on this deeply moving experience, we came away understanding the University of Waikato as a global leader in Indigenous studies. Not only did the University of Waikato house many of our discipline's leading scholars, including Brendan Hokowhitu, Rangī Matamua, Leonie Pihama, Linda Tuhiwai Smith, Alice Te Punga Somerville and Pou Temara, but it also had extensive programming to support Māori students and deep relationships with Māori communities. Based on our experience we understood the University of Waikato as a model to be emulated. Therefore, learning about the extensive racism that has driven off, demoted, and ostracized these brilliant colleagues and their work is all the more disappointing. This is a deeply deplorable situation not only for the University of Waikato, but for the larger global discipline of Indigenous Studies.

Recent research by Joanna Kidman, and Cherie Chu, 2015, (<https://tinyurl.com/y2ozmwfn>) shows that despite the proliferation of formal institutional commitments to diversity, gender equity, and New Zealand human rights legislation, most Māori academics in New Zealand universities personally experience or have witnessed structural or everyday racism in their work environments. It is crucial that these, institutional practices are exposed and resolved wherever they are identified. These Māori faculty and staff have suffered multiple micro and macro aggressions. The faculty have been cut out of academic committees, had their multiple achievements ignored and disappeared, and their existence vanished from University correspondence. Likewise, there is a record of inequity in pay and promotion for Māori staff and Māori faculty have no strategic advancement plan. Finally, we are extremely disturbed by the University of Waikato's move to disestablish long held relationships with Māori communities, the heart of Indigenous knowledge and reciprocal and responsible scholarship. These issues are associated with the ongoing colonization that Indigenous peoples are facing across the globe, which must be actively challenged. Specifically, we call on:

The University of Waikato Council to sincerely seek out, reject, and eliminate structural and casual racism at the University of Waikato. Furthermore, we encourage that they immediately set in place procedures that protect Māori academic endeavors and uphold the responsibilities that the University owes to the Māori who are the stewards and First Peoples of the lands you are on.

We ask that you Vice-Chancellor, Professor Neil Quigley immediately establish a safe, equitable, fair work environment for Māori faculty, staff, and students. We call on the University Council to hold Professor Quigley to account in this matter.



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The University of Waikato to establish fair, transparent policies for staff to safely lodge complaints about racism and for these complaints to be dealt with in line with Kaupapa Māori values and principles of fairness.

The University of Waikato to actively demonstrate its commitment to the Treaty of Waitangi, to mātauranga Māori and te reo Māori in every aspect of the management and operation of the University.

The University of Waikato to establish fair, transparent and equitable hiring practices and meaningful career pathways for Māori academics.

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