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MEDIA RELEASE

Māori scholars to learn from indigenous American counterparts

Two Māori scholars will study the business and education practices of indigenous counterparts in the United States of America as recipients of Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Awards. Eruera Tarena (Ngāi Tahu, Ngāti Porou, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui) from Te Tapuae o Rēhua will research contemporary indigenous organisation design at Arizona State University Tempe and the University of Hawai‘i, while Veronica Tawhai (Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Uepohatu) from Massey University will research citizenship education at the Center for World Indigenous Studies.



Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Scholar Award recipients Eruera Tarena and Veronica Tawhai

Eruera Tarena has worked in various roles for Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu for six years, and is now manager of strategy and relationships for tertiary education initiative Te Tapuae o Rēhua, a joint venture between Te Rūnanga o Ngāi Tahu and a number of South Island tertiary education institutions. He is currently undertaking a PhD in management at the University of Canterbury, specialising in the place of culture and politics in the design of contemporary indigenous organisations. On his Fulbright exchange Eruera will spend time with both Native American and Native Hawaiian scholars. He will use the established Tribal Critical Theory (TribalCrit) framework to investigate the features and mechanisms of contemporary indigenous organisations, establish if there is commonality in their design, and build an understanding of what makes an indigenous organisation. Eruera will divide his time between Arizona State University’s Center for Indian Education, the world’s oldest centre focused on indigenous education, and the Hawai‘inuiākea School of Hawaiian Knowledge at the University of Hawai‘i’s main Mānoa campus in Honolulu.

Eruera looks forward to putting his own knowledge of iwi organisations into a wider context, and sharing knowledge with indigenous communities around the world. “The findings of this pilot study will enable analysis of the features and mechanisms of iwi corporates within a context of broader understanding of indigenous organisations. The practical implications of such knowledge will be of great relevance to indigenous peoples across the globe as they seek to design institutions to manage collective assets and forge new futures,” he says.

Veronica Tawhai, a lecturer in Māori development at Massey University’s School of Māori Studies, Te Pūtahi-a-Toi, will collaborate with indigenous political educators to assess the transformative potential of citizenship education, which she says has to date has failed to adequately reflect the realities, experiences or perspectives of colonised indigenous peoples. “What is urgently needed is a new notion of citizenship education: one that is transformative, encapsulating the experiences of indigenous peoples including the ongoing effects of colonisation and its consequences for

indigenous communities in areas such as education, health and justice, and the education of all citizens as to their responsibilities to the restoration of indigenous wellbeing.”

Veronica will spend three months at the Center for World Indigenous Studies in Olympia, Washington, an independent, non-profit research and education organisation dedicated to wider understanding and appreciation of indigenous peoples’ ideas and knowledge, and the social, economic and political realities of indigenous nations.

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Fulbright New Zealand was established in 1948 to promote mutual understanding through educational and cultural exchanges between New Zealand and the United States of America. The Fulbright programme offers a range of prestigious awards for New Zealand and American graduate students, academics, artists and professionals to study, research and teach in each other’s countries. Fulbright New Zealand offers over 70 exchange awards each year – half to students and half to scholars – and more than 1,500 New Zealanders and 1,200 Americans have benefited from a Fulbright award to date. The programme is mainly funded by the US and New Zealand governments with additional funding from award sponsors, private philanthropists and alumni donors.

Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga (NPM) is a world-class Centre of Research Excellence consisting of 16 participating research entities and hosted by The University of Auckland. NPM conducts research of relevance to Māori communities and is an important vehicle by which New Zealand continues to be a key player in global indigenous research and affairs. Its research is underpinned by the vision to realise the creative potential of Māori communities and to bring about positive change and transformation in the nation and wider world. Visit www.maramatanga.ac.nz

*See www.fulbright.org.nz for details about Fulbright awards and how to apply, or download a Media Fact Sheet of further background information here:
www.fulbright.org.nz/wp-content/uploads/2011/03/mediafactsheet.pdf*

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