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MEDIA RELEASE

Māori scholar to share knowledge of school communities in the US



Māori scholar Dr Melinda Webber (Ngāti Whakaeu, Ngāti Kahu, Ngāti Hau) from the University of Auckland's Faculty of Education will share her unique knowledge of Aotearoa school communities with American counterparts at the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay later this month, with the help of a Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Travel Award.



Fulbright-Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga Travel Award recipient Dr Melinda Webber

Melinda is currently a fulltime qualitative researcher on the University of Auckland's Starpath Project – a pioneering research project focused on transforming educational outcomes for New Zealand students who are under-achieving at secondary school and under-represented in tertiary education. She is also co-principal investigator on a Ngā Pae o te Māramatanga-funded research project entitled *Ka Awatea: An iwi case study of Māori student success*.

Melinda looks forward to sharing her knowledge of Māori education, cultural identity development and adolescent social psychology with a range of academic departments and programmes at her host institution. She will give presentations on the Starpath Project to staff of the University of Wisconsin–Green Bay's similarly-focused Phuture Phoenix programme, on racial-ethnic identity of adolescent New Zealanders to the university's Department of Human Development, and on Māori identity in the 21st century to the First Nations Studies programme.

Melinda says her exchange will benefit the collective knowledge of both communities, and herself as an indigenous scholar. "Communities in both countries face similar challenges and much is gained for the peoples of our countries through the exchange of knowledge and ideas. This award will enable me to establish new research networks to support my career aspirations, and to grow my research skills and knowledge. It is an opportunity for me to grow as an academic and to extend my research profile in the broad fields of indigenous education and cultural and social psychology."

This year Fulbright New Zealand celebrates its 65th anniversary of bilateral educational and cultural exchange between New Zealand and the United States of America. In that time it has granted more than 3,000 awards for New Zealanders and Americans to study, research, teach and present their work in each other's country, with the aim of promoting mutual understanding between peoples of the two partner countries.

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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 1,600 New Zealanders and 1,300 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 one of New Zealand's seven Centres of Research Excellence and consists of 16 participating research entities and is 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/mediafactsheet

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