Purpose and positive impact: How students develop interest in preparing for their futures

Jane Fletcher & Charlie Devenish, Victoria University of Wellington

Careers services have long struggled with engaging students to prepare for their futures early and consistently during their time at University. We work hard in diverse ways to avoid the final semester comment of “I didn’t know there were all these opportunities to help me gain experiences in addition to my studies.”

So, how do we engage students to take the initiative in driving their professional and personal development?

Experiences need to mean something to the student, align with their values and connect to the bigger picture of their life’s goals. We have seen enormous impact when students become agents of change and partner with us, achieving positive results for themselves, the University and external stakeholders. Sharing these stories through various channels also inspires others to take action.

Victoria University of Wellington has a firm commitment to sustainability and connecting with progressive organisations who value social responsibility. As a University with a tradition in, and a commitment to, civic engagement, we aim to foster confident, critically informed and civic-minded graduates. As such, we have been focussed on providing extra-curricular opportunities for students to benefit society and enhance their employability. This presentation will look at how our students get on board and what difference it makes when they do. We will share recent learnings and discuss both short and longer-term successes from current students and alumni.

Learning outcomes

- Understand the value for students who have stepped outside their comfort zone, affected change and connected to their community
- Consider opportunities to link learning and extracurricular activities to career development and confidence for students about their futures
- Examine a range of ideas to collaborate with students and inspire their peers as well as external stakeholders

Presenters

Jane Fletcher, Victoria University of Wellington

Jane Fletcher is Manager of the Careers and Employment team at Victoria University of Wellington. Jane has almost 20 years’ experience in the tertiary education sector within careers and employability in the UK and NZ. She has a background in business and marketing as well as TEFL and a degree in Economics and Languages. Her love for travel, different cultures and the outdoors has taken her far and wide but New Zealand is now home with her family.

Charlie Devenish, Victoria University of Wellington

Charlie Devenish is the Civic Engagement and Leadership Programmes Manager in Careers and Employment at Victoria University of Wellington. Prior to joining the University Charlie worked for 8 years in Wellington’s community sector in a range of community development and civic engagement roles.