Serving our Pasifika students and community: A weaving of stories
Riki Welsh, University of Canterbury

Being a Pasifika student can bring some of the hardest challenges and the greatest accomplishments unseen to many others who experience education through other contexts. The ‘unseen’ part can be problematic, but it is this insight that Pasifika staff bring as a strength to an organisation, having once been Pasifika students themselves. The ability to connect with students through this shared experience, allows for the stories of Pasifika students to be enhanced and utilised to create systems where Pasifika students can flourish.

This presentation will examine how the speakers experience of academia informed the decisions made later on when designing programmes, systems and supports for Pasifika students, and how the voices of current students are kept in the process. Three programmes in particular will be looked at as case studies, these revolve around (1) Outreach, (2) Tutoring and Academic Support, (3) Mentoring and Pastoral Care Support.

Learning outcomes
- Insights around barriers and success for Pasifika students, and how they and their families attempt to address them.
- Methodologies used for the development of three of the University of Canterbury’s main programmes for Pasifika students.
- Pasifika student voices on their experiences in tertiary education.

Presenter
Riki Welsh, University of Canterbury

Riki Welsh is Niuean Samoan born and raised in Christchurch. He studied at the University of Canterbury (UC) before becoming a staff member in 2010. Currently Riki is the Team Leader for Pacific Development at UC where he is responsible for the day to day operations of the team including designing, developing, and delivering specific programmes and services for Pasifika Students. Outside of work, Riki was the founding chairperson for PYLAT (Pacific Youth Leadership And Transformation) which is an organisation that assists Pacific young people to participate in democracy.