Educating for Equity: International Collaboration in Indigenous Health Education

An international gathering of academics from Australia, Canada and Aotearoa/New Zealand was held at the University's Waipapa Marae on Friday, 2 December. The meeting was part of the Educating for Equity project, a research collaboration funded by the International Collaborative Indigenous Health Research Partnership (ICIHRP). A highlight of the visit was the signing of a Memorandum of Agreement between the three countries to resolve ways of working together that can help to realise mutual benefits. Included in the agreement title was a Māori proverb, which summed up the collaborative nature of the project, "Nāku te rourou, nāu te rourou, ka ora ai te iwi." With your basket and my basket, the people will live.

The agreement is an expression of the relationship between researchers at The University of Auckland and colleagues from the University of Calgary, University of British Columbia, Queen's University, Laurentian University, Northern Ontario School of Medicine, University of Melbourne, University of Queensland, University of Western Australia and University of Otago. The 26 named investigators, most of whom are Indigenous, bring a wealth of collective expertise in Indigenous health education, research, clinical practice and public health.

The Educating for Equity project commenced in 2010 and seeks to strengthen co-operation in Indigenous health and education through sharing of knowledge, theory, experiences, ideas and resources. A major focus of the project will be investigating innovative approaches to Indigenous health teaching and learning in the area of chronic disease, with a view to improving the wellbeing of Indigenous peoples in each country.

The project’s lead investigator, Dr Rhys Jones, reflected enthusiastically on the meeting. "It is a privilege to be part of such an amazing team, and it was an honour to be able to host our international colleagues in Aotearoa. I am excited about the next four years and am confident that we can contribute to advancing Indigenous health outcomes."

Contributed by: Kathleen Kramlinger-Wills

Pictured from left at Waipapa Marae: Educating for Equity Project Lead Investigator, Dr Rhys Jones, Te Kupenga Hauora Māori, The University of Auckland (left); Australian Country Lead Investigator Professor Helen Milroy, Director of the Centre of Aboriginal Medical and Dental Health, The University of Western Australia (middle); and Canadian Country Lead Investigator Dr Lynden Crowshoe, Director of the Aboriginal Health Programme, University of Calgary (right).