SUPERVISOR/S: Patsie Frawley and Claire Breen

PROJECT TITLE: Learning and living at Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato The University of Waikato; a disabled person’s experience

FIELD: Law, Education

DIVISION/SCHOOL: DEDU - School of Education

PROJECT LOCATION: Hamilton

PROJECT ABSTRACT:
This Summer Scholarship project focuses on discovering what access and inclusion looks like for students with lived experiences of disability on the Hamilton, Tauranga and ‘Net’ campuses of Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato University of Waikato. The project will collect, co-develop, and tell key stories of engagement across aspects of learning and living as a student at the University of Waikato. The project team will seek an opportunity to present this material to the University Executive and the University of Waikato Accessibility Services at the completion of the project. This project would be suitable for someone studying Law, Education, Social Sciences, Health, or Engineering and who has an interest in disability, access and inclusion. The summer scholar will work with a small group of students who are interested in, and have experiences of, accessibility and inclusion relating to lived experiences of disability. The University of Waikato Accessibility Services will assist with recruitment of students. The summer scholar will co-develop the project scope and approaches that will result in at least 5 narratives of ‘learning and living at Waikato; a disabled person’s experience’. The scholar and co-researchers will be supervised by the academic staff in the research approaches of photovoice and other arts-based modes of research relevant to the project. The outcome will be a collection of written/audio/visual narratives that will be used to depict and then analyse access and inclusion experiences and opportunities at the University of Waikato. This research project will use the United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD) as an analytical framework. It will focus on Accessibility, which is one of the eight key principles of the UNCRPD. In particular, Article 9(1) of the Convention obliges States Parties to “take appropriate measures to ensure to persons with disabilities access, on an equal basis with others, to the physical environment, to transportation and communications…and to other facilities and services”. The right to education is another fundamental right articulated in the UNCRPD. In particular, Article 24(4) notes that ‘States Parties shall ensure that persons with disabilities are able to access general tertiary education, vocational training and lifelong learning without discrimination’. (emphasis added). Embedded in these principles is the concept of universal accessibility and an understanding and recognition of human diversity. Together these principles of equality, diversity and accessibility should underpin planning of buildings, learning approaches and materials and all forms of physical and social engagement in a university. The aim for an institution like the University of Waikato should be that it is universally accessible so any person can see themselves here and be here learning, working, socialising, exercising, living alongside their peers and in a community of inclusion. This project will help shape approaches to making this happen.

STUDENT SKILLS:
- Computer competency in word and endnote
- Experience in using literature databases
- Experience/knowledge of qualitative research methods
- Strong academic writing skills
- Excellent communication skills
- Experience engaging with people with disabilities (desirable)
- Lived experience of disability (desirable)

PROJECT TASKS:
- Complete a rapid review of literature, legislation and policy on disability access and inclusion in the university sector.
- Meet with supervisors and the co-research group to develop the study plan.
- Engage with co-research group to assist them to collect information to inform their narrative (eg data collection through photos, video)
- Run one focus group with co-researchers where narratives are shared and reviewed
- Co-facilitate an analysis group with co-researchers and supervisors to engage with narratives using the UNCRPD as an analytical framework
- Draft an overview report
- Develop a presentation to present to University Executive and Accessibility Services

EXPECTED OUTCOMES:
- Student’s Research Poster (as per clause 6 of the Scholarship regulations)
- A written rapid review of literature, legislation, policy and practice of disability access in universities
- A written report of the study with appendices of each narrative (may be an interactive report)
- A draft paper/opinion piece for publication