MEDIA RELEASE

Wednesday 16 February 2022

Scholarships create opportunities for local Pasifika students

e-Learning Porirua, the charitable trust that for over 20 years delivered the Computers in Homes programme across the Porirua basin, has signed a deal with Te Herenga Waka — Victoria University of Wellington to fund undergraduate scholarships for Pasifika students from Porirua.

The scholarships, to be known as The Graham Kelly Engineering and Computer Science Scholarships for Pasifika Students, are named in honour of former Porirua and Mana Labour MP Graham Kelly, also co-founder and long serving former chair of e-Learning Porirua.

e-Learning Porirua will formally wind up at the end of March, with its remaining cash reserves helping to fund the scholarships. The trust ceased operations at the end of October last year, saying that it could no longer afford to wait for promised funding. Government funding for the Computers in Homes programme was withdrawn in 2017.

The scholarships will be funded through a donation of $90,000 from e-Learning Porirua's reserves and a matching donation of $90,000 from the university. Two scholarships, valued at $9000 each, will be granted annually and paid in three annual instalments of $3,000 per year, starting in 2023.

The Chair of e-Learning Porirua, Chris Lipscombe, says that the trustees are excited by the opportunity to further their work through this partnership with the university. 'Pasifika families have made up a large proportion of the people going through our classes,' said Lipscombe. 'This is a tangible way that we can continue to help the community that we have been part of for so long.'

The university says that this gift demonstrates the trust's strong commitment to supporting young Pasifika in Porirua and surrounding areas, who intend to study Engineering and Computer Science at Victoria University of Wellington.

e-Learning Porirua

Helping bridge the digital divide

Porirua City Community IT Educational Trust

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'The endowment created by the trust's generous gift will provide scholarships in perpetuity to a community it has served for more than 20 years,' says Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban, Assistant Vice Chancellor (Pasifika) at Victoria University of Wellington.

'These scholarships will help provide talented and deserving students the opportunity to prepare for successful careers in Engineering and Computer Science, ' says Dale Carnegie, Dean of Engineering at Victoria University of Wellington. 'We see this as a real game-changer, not just for the students but for the university.'

The scholarships are in keeping with the university's strategic plan that includes the goal of Pasifika students making up 8.1 percent of enrolments by 2025.

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Photograph caption:

Graham Kelly (centre) holds a copy of the pledge agreement signed by e-Learning Porirua and the Victoria Foundation, flanked by Associate Vice Chancellor (Pasifika) of Victoria University of Wellington Luamanuvao Dame Winnie Laban (left) and Chair of e-Learning Porirua Chris Lipscombe (right).

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