**University of Otago tops Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards**

The University of Otago has underlined its credentials as having some of the best tertiary teachers in the country with huge success at the national Tertiary Teaching Excellence Awards.

For just the third time in the awards’ history, Otago teachers have secured four of the nine awards, which were announced this morning by Ako Aotearoa. Two of the four coming out of the University’s School of Business.

Associate Professor Diane Ruwhiu from the Department of Management secured one of two prestigious Kaupapa Māori awards.

The award is due recognition for Associate Professor Ruwhiu, who has been teaching at the University for 20 years and has been working to develop Māori content within programmes in the Otago Business School. Her victory is the fifth Kaupapa Māori Award win by an Otago teacher in the past seven years.

Associate Professor Ruwhiu says that teaching matters because a “reciprocal” and “collaborative” learning community creates an environment of responsibility and respect for everyone involved.

For Professor Hazel Tucker from the Department of Tourism, winning a national award was the perfect follow-up to winning an Otago Teaching Excellence Award in 2020.

“I’m absolutely delighted to have won this award as it has reinforced my passion for the difference we can make as educators and confirmed that I’m on the right track,” says Professor Tucker.

Alongside these two wins, Dr Latika Samalia of the Anatomy Department and Professor Tim Cooper from the School of Arts also received Teaching Excellence awards for their areas of expertise.

Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) Professor Pat Cragg says the awards are an important illustration of the value of teaching at the University.

“We are immensely proud of all our teachers and in particular of the four award winners this year who deliver outstanding experiences for our students,” she says.

“Their passion and enthusiasm for the craft and the skills they employ showcase their significant value to the vast number of students they teach.”

Awards panel chair Dr Graeme Benny says the standard of the nominations in 2021 has been high.

“The quality of the overall nominations clearly supports the view that the New Zealand tertiary education sector is fortunate to have professionals teaching with such skill, dedication and commitment to learners.

“The panel thanks all nominees for the time and effort they put into preparing their nominations and encourages them to continue their excellent work.”

You can read more about [Associate Professor Ruwhiu](https://www.otago.ac.nz/otagobulletin/news/otago832740.html) and [Professor Tucker’s](https://www.otago.ac.nz/otagobulletin/news/otago832657.html) awards at the [Otago University Bulletin Board](https://www.otago.ac.nz/news/news/otago832212.html).