

Success by stepping out of your comfort zone: AUT's Noah Mataia

22-year-old Noah Mataia has just completed an AUT Bachelor of Business, majoring in Accounting and minoring in Finance. Samoan and hailing from West Auckland, he will soon be starting a sought-after role as a Graduate Analyst in the financial crime team at Deloitte. Noah is also one of two Project Leads for AUT's flagship university preparation programme – UniPrep, a five-week initiative designed to assist new students in their successful transition into tertiary studies.

As UniPrep Project Lead, Noah was responsible planning, recruiting, training and co-ordinating a team of 45 'Navigators'; liaising with university academic and support staff; as well as leading a group of senior navigators who have collectively co-created key aspects of UniPrep's support and engagement programmes for more than 300 students enrolled in the 2020 programme.

For Noah, stepping outside of his comfort zone as helped secure him get to where his today.

Mentoring a crucial component of university life

Noah says he chose AUT because of the strong mentoring systems available, and the practicality of courses the University offered.

"It hasn't always been smooth-sailing – but the fantastic mentoring systems here helped me through and built in me a strong sense of resilience and determination to finish my three years with that important piece of paper."

"I'd also heard a lot about the amazing people and culture of the University and ultimately wanted to become a part of it."

And Noah is a mentor himself. Since getting involved with the AUT Oceanian Leadership Network and UniPrep in 2017, Noah has himself been a mentor navigator, and then a Senior Navigator. He admits to being really nervous at first, and the youngest of a group of 16 mentors. Looking back, he says that being on the UniPrep team was one of the best things to happen to him in his tertiary education journey.

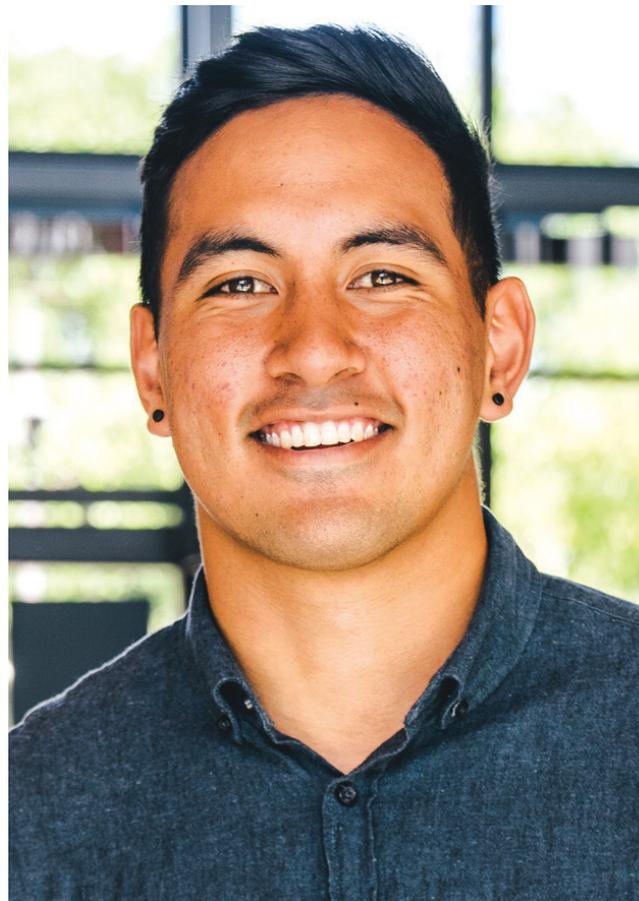
"You can participate in growing and guiding the youth of Aotearoa and our Pacific communities, whilst at the same time being put in a space where your own leadership and resolve is constantly developing," says Noah.

"I had also always been quite set on how I approached things – I didn't think I was the leading type. Being part of UniPrep really made me get out of my comfort zone."

Aiga and culture

"There is an enormous collective communal mentality that underpins our culture, our family," says Noah.

"It's about always about ensuring that the work that is laid out before us doesn't go to waste, but instead is put to use to ensure the very best for those who come after – those



Noah Mataia, UniPrep 2020 Co-Project Lead at Auckland University of Technology's South Campus.

who we are directly related to, and also those within our various communities.

"I come from an academic family – But there was no pressure from my family to follow exactly in their footsteps – they were very clear that I had to choose the path that felt right for me and encouraged me to be the best I could be."

"Business is universal, and the skills you learn are easily transferable to a number of careers and roles," says Noah.

A bright future

"I'm looking forward to change and the challenges that come along with this new role in Deloitte's financial crime team," says Noah.

"I'm proud to be a Pacific person in this role – and hopefully inspiring other Pacific students in Aotearoa and in the Pacific region, to see a degree in business as a vehicle to greater success."