

University of Waikato Ecumenical Chaplain Report to the Chaplaincy Committee AGM March 2021

Overall, 2020 was a very different year from anything I have previously experienced. With the various lockdowns, there haven't been as many students on campus. The absence of international students has also had a flow-on effect for the student Christian groups on campus who minister to them. The loss of income to the University has meant some restructuring and tightening of belts and I have noticed an increase in my one-on-one work with staff, both those staying and those leaving. We have been blessed with strong leadership from my line manager, Jill Dibble, the Associate Director Student Health. The Student Health team had only just returned to the chapel site after a major refit of their offices when the pandemic hit, and even after the lockdowns have eased, several staff spend a portion of their time working from home. I personally have found it more productive to be on-site whenever possible; though with travel discouraged, this has meant a curtailment of my visits to the Tauranga campus. I expect to resume my fortnightly visits shortly. The Student Health team has grown significantly with the recruitment of a second Mental Health nurse, and a further Nurse Practitioner with significant experience in mental health. We also have a new relationship with Te Kohao Health. Shortly we will have two student interns from the GradDip programme for Clinical Psychology. This means that I have less work with distressed students who might otherwise have been referred to me because of overload in the previous system. The sense of cohesion in the team is particularly strong, and we are enjoying celebrating our own cultural diversity. One of our counsellors has recently completed the immersion course in Te Reo Māori, and that, together with the introduction of karakia at our staff meetings, has encouraged several of us to enrol in Te Reo papers this year.

Background considerations (from the Chaplain's Job Description):

POSITION PURPOSE

To provide a service of pastoral counselling, public worship and informal Christian teaching on the campus for staff, students and others. To communicate the work of chaplaincy to local, regional and national churches, thus ensuring the continuation of the Chaplaincy on campus. To work in a Chaplaincy team with the Roman Catholic Chaplain and to make regular reports to, and work closely with, the Chaplaincy Committee.

KEY TASKS

- Lead worship in the chapel as appropriate
- Act as a liaison with Christian groups on campus
- Liaise with and coordinate the input from local, regional and national church bodies.

- Ensure the proper use of the Chapel and ‘drop-in’ centre in accordance with established policies
- Conduct informal study groups and the presentation of a Christian perspective on issues as and when they arise on and off campus
- Liaise with chaplaincy teams in other tertiary institutions
- Participate in the maintenance of a safe and healthy environment. Contribute to the hazard management programme.

Lead Worship

With appropriate adjustments in line with Government and Church guidelines, the weekly informal Eucharist met whenever possible. Father JP (Juan Pedro Maldonado) and I also shared in a service for Ash Wednesday. I only had one funeral to take this year but that was a large one for a former staff member and took place right in the middle of the Christmas break. I have also been to bless the house of a staff member, and provided two services of cleansing after sudden deaths.

Liaise with Christian Groups

TSCF (Tertiary Students Christian Fellowship), WaiCath, Student Life, and ISM (International Student Ministries) all continue as regular users of the chapel, though at a reduced level due to COVID. Unfortunately, Arise Church once again had to be banned from using the chapel after repeatedly breaching social distancing rules and other inconsiderate behaviour.

Liaise with Churches

I have been a regular leader of the Anglican Diocesan weekday prayer meetings on Zoom. I was invited to preach and talk about chaplaincy at St Andrew’s Presbyterian and also gave a presentation on chaplaincy at the Methodist Synod.

I plan to finish my term as chair of ANZTCA (Aotearoa NZ Tertiary Chaplains’ Association) at the end of 2021, which will also mean I will no longer represent them at ITCC (Inter-church Tertiary Chaplaincy Council) and the Chaplaincy Leadership Forum. This past year, the ITCC have been working on their accreditation document which has now been circulated to boards for their approval. The Chaplaincy Leadership Forum (which brings together the leaders of Military, Police, Hospital, Tertiary and Sport Chaplaincy and other interested parties) is also going to be doing some work on Codes of Practice across chaplaincies. I have also given notice that I shall step down from the board of EFM (Education for Ministry) at their 2022 AGM. Meanwhile I continue to serve on ARCCANZ (the Anglican Roman Catholic Commission of Aotearoa New Zealand), and TPEG (the Anglican Tikanga Pākehā Ecumenical Group). In May 2020, I was elected as chair of WIFCO (the Waikato Interfaith Council).

Chapel Usage

A large part of my role is managing the chapel as a facility. All the Christian groups mentioned earlier in this report use the chapel regularly for meetings, as do four different faith groups on weekends. Thinking Matters (a Christian apologetics ministry) also use the chapel roughly monthly for their presentations under the banner of “Mining for Truth”. In

addition, we have two meditation groups on Mondays, and NZCCM (the New Zealand Community for Christian Meditation) held their conference here in January 2021. The local Interfaith Choir have their rehearsals here once a month.

Several students drop in to play the piano, and the School of Music use the chapel for music lessons and choir practice when the Academy is overbooked. Dr Anna Sutton gives a presentation on the Enneagram once a month which I find particularly illuminating.

Conduct Informal Study Groups

Once the pandemic permitted, the Thursday studies continued with a series of videos by Fr Richard Rohr OFM, Sister Ilia Delio and Rob Bell from the Conspire 2014 Conference on “A Benevolent Universe.” I expect to be running a couple of series later this year on Religious Diversity and Cultural Intelligence as part of my membership of the new Cultural Capability Working Group within the Student Services Division. I will also be leading the Religious Diversity workshops co-hosted by Tauranga City Council and the Tauranga Interfaith Council in partnership with the University.

Liaise with Chaplaincy Teams

This has been another difficult for ANZTCA. Three of our more experienced chaplains (the lead chaplains respectively Auckland U, AUT and Canterbury) have moved on, and our new regional rep for the South Island has been significantly unwell. The difficulties with COVID have also caused delays in our plans to set up a Chaplaincy focus group within ANZSSA (the Australia and New Zealand Student Services Association) and to collaborate with one of the Australian chaplains on his research into Reporting Practices amongst tertiary chaplains. On the plus side, I met with the new Maclaurin Chaplain, the Rev Dr Tim Pratt (no relation to our former colleague Doug Pratt). With a background in management and much experience in hospital chaplain, we will be a welcome addition to our association. He’s also very supportive of the new Muslim Chaplain at Auckland. Canterbury have also now appointed a Muslim Chaplain, and with Otago having a team of four Muslim volunteers, I shall be convening a group to consider setting up a Muslim Chaplains’ Forum within ANZTCA. ANZTCA will also need to review its constitution and code of ethics to reflect the new diversity. In March 2020, I joined with three of our Auckland chaplains to offer a day of training in tertiary chaplaincy issues for Buddhists who may consider becoming volunteer chaplains around the country. I also presented at our regional chaplaincy Training Hui in Auckland, and hosted a team from the Auckland Catholic Tertiary Chaplaincy when they came to visit Waikato.

Safe and Healthy Environment

The Parata Gardiner report into public claims of racism at the University of Waikato was released in September 2020. It found that specific claims were not supported, but the need for transformational change was clearly articulated. As mentioned above, Student Health had already been working on broadening its diversity and strengthening our bicultural platform. This is one of the reasons why I decided to continue studying Te Reo Māori, and also to accept membership of the aforementioned Cultural Capability Working Group. I am

also participating in the Boundaries Courses run by our local Anglican Diocese as part of their commitment to Ministry Standards. I have enrolled in a Mental Health First Aid workshop later this year run by colleagues in Student Health. I continue to see both a spiritual director and a professional supervisor regularly.

Other Pastoral

As well as innumerable one-off pastoral conversations, I participated in a Zoom meeting to promote avenues of support available to our staff associated with our China operations whose work was impacted by lockdowns. I have assisted a number of students whose plans have had to change, including one who had to return at short notice to Nigeria to support his family. I have connected with several students as a result of social events in the Halls of Residence and was invited to the Muslim students' Eid Dinner.

Other Events and Activities

Once again I ran a chaplaincy team for CWS' Operation Refugee and we were one of their most successful fundraisers in a difficult year. I hosted a group of Brethren youth looking at opportunities for mission around NZ. An unfortunate amount of time has been spent trying to sort out issues around the University invoicing the Committee for its share of my stipend. I hope to have this resolved soon. With the issuing of a University credit card, I no longer need to get individual expenses reimbursed through the committee, and this should simplify the administrative load on our incoming treasurer/secretary.

On a personal note, 2020 was a tough year even without COVID. In February we buried my father-in-law, and in November my mother-in-law. This meant for an emotional Christmas, which was exacerbated by the funeral I had to take on 30 December, and then the funeral of a significant parishioner on 5 January. Unfortunately, it wasn't much of a break for us. And then Christine was knocked off her bicycle not long after returning to work, and subsequently developed a stress-related skin complaint. We are hoping to take a couple of weeks' break soon, but that is all dependent on how the lockdowns go.

In conclusion

My thanks, once again, to Peter Kamp and Jill Dibble for their support and encouragement, and to Sharon Ross Ensor for her pastoral care. A big thank you to the contributing churches for their financial and prayer support. Thank you also to Joan Joyce who first suggested that I apply for the Chaplain's position at Wintec many years ago. Joan has been a steadfast supporter of my ministry in both places, and I wish her peace and joy as she steps down as our treasurer and secretary. Farewell also to Peter Kamp. May his retirement bring him new blessings. We farewelled Associate Professor Annika Hinze last year as she took up her new role as Head of School, Computing and Mathematical Sciences, and welcomed TJ Cloete from the International Student Services Office who replaces Annika as the VC's representative on our committee. Finally, congratulations to Dr Nicola Day who was recently promoted to Associate Professor in the School of Education.

Andrew McKean – 4 March 2021