Nehara's Story

A University Partner Success Story

UP Ineternational College Journey

Q1. Why did you choose the Foundation programme leading to Victoria University of Wellington?

Having a direct pathway to the University of my choice was my main reason for choosing the Foundation programme along with gaining tools to better equip me for university study in a different country. This includes referencing, academic writing styles and learning how to use different academic software.

Q2. How did the Foundation programme help prepare you for your Bachelor's study?

It helped prepare me both academically and personally in many ways. I learned referencing techniques that aren't commonly taught in high school and how to write academic essays at a university level. I gained an understanding of how the education system in New Zealand works, how to collaborate with people from different backgrounds, and how to successfully complete group projects online. Through the various courses I took, I also improved existing skills like public speaking and video editing. I learned how to critically engage with literature and analyse both academic and contemporary media in greater depth. Most importantly, I learned how to connect with people from different walks of life and formed friendships that I still cherish to this day.

Q3. Were there any specific subjects, skills, or experiences at UPIC that proved especially helpful during your university years?

The STEM subjects I took helped refresh what I had learned in high school while allowing me to explore those topics more deeply and do in-depth research. The English course was especially helpful in showing me what was expected at a university level when it came to writing, vocabulary, essay structures and formats.

Student Profile

NAME
Nehara Leisambi Pandey

NATIONALITY
India

PROGRAMME COMPLETED
Victoria University of Wellington Foundation Studies Programme (Accelerated)
- April 2021

UNIVERSITY PROGRAMME
Bachelor of Science (Marine Biology and Environmental Studies), Victoria University of Wellington
- Feb 2022 – Nov 2024

"My journey through UPIC and VUW shaped not just my skills, but my purpose."

It introduced me to several important New Zealand authors and taught me invaluable skills that made written assignments at university much easier. I also learned research techniques that made the transition to university far smoother. The media studies classes taught me how to critically analyse media and identify biases, which has been incredibly useful at university. They also helped me improve my communication and public speaking skills. Overall, the programme boosted my confidence heading into university and equipped me with skills that had a huge positive impact on both my study experience and my grades.

Studying at Victoria University Wellington

Q4. What made you decide to major in Marine Biology and Environmental Studies?

Growing up near the coast, I have always been passionate about the ocean. As I grew up, I became more interested in the conservation aspect and started volunteering at organisations involved in marine conservation. I was heavily into SCUBA diving, swimming, kayaking and windsurfing as well so it was no surprise that I chose to study Marine Biology and Environmental Studies.

Q5. What were some of the highlights or challenges you experienced during your time at VUW?

The highlights were all the incredible connections I made with students and faculty who are so passionate about their chosen fields. I had the opportunity to join clubs that were not only related to my interests but also helped me develop skills that I could use in jobs. I also got the opportunity to travel to other parts of NZ and across wellington for field work both on land and in the ocean. The major challenge for me was having some health issues I had during my course, but the university faculty were very understanding and helpful.

Q6. Heard you worked part-time as a tutor for the sustainability course — what was that like?

This role included teaching smaller groups of undergraduate students topics that are not covered in the lectures but are required to be learned for the course along with grading assignments and tests. I really enjoyed this job as it allowed me to explore interesting topics with my students and encourage them to share their opinions and think critically about interesting topics such as Sustainability development goals, intersectionality and bias in research.

Career & Practical Skills

Q7. How has your degree helped you in your career so far?

My degree helped expose me to many potential jobs that I could do and that I was not limited to just research. The way the degree is structured allowed for me to take courses that covered many aspects of my chosen field such as field work, policy, research writing methods, science communication, lab work and many others. This helped me discover what types of jobs I would like and my strengths and weaknesses. I also formed connections with many incredible people through my courses as well as clubs and events hosted by the university.

Q8. Could you tell us what you are doing now?

I currently work at Te Araroa Trust as a communications and community engagement coordinator. My role includes supporting the marketing and communications team to deliver content aligned with strategic engagement goals. Managing key relationships and partnerships to support invasive species control, predator trapping, and biodiversity initiatives. Creating content promoting environmental sustainability principles.

Q9. In what ways do your current work and your study background align with your passions or goals?

My goal was always to work in the field of conservation. My degree allowed me to better understand conservation management strategies, understanding the conservation implications from research papers as well as the different avenues for making an impact in the field of conservation. My current job enables me to communicate messaging around biosecurity and to interact with and collaborate with conservation organisations.

Personal Reflection

Q10. Looking back, what part of your education journey are you most proud of?

I am proud of myself for completing my degree as well as all the interesting volunteer work and internship opportunities I received.

Q11. How do you hope to use your skills and education to make an impact in the future?

I aspire to work in conservation and create a positive impact.

Q12. What does success mean to you now, compared to when you first started?

To begin with, success meant achieving a set of goals for me, but now I define success as consistently showing up for myself and my aspirations while also taking the time to cultivate a balanced and healthy lifestyle.

Student Ambassador Experience at UPIC

Q13. You've been a Student Ambassador at UPIC for a long time. What has kept you engaged in this role?

I really enjoy sharing my stories from studying, working and living in New Zealand. Coming here to study was an incredible opportunity, and I want to encourage others to take the plunge.

Q14. How has being a UPIC ambassador shaped your communication, leadership, or career skills?

It has helped me develop my communication skills and engage with diverse groups of people. Additionally, it has enhanced my content creation capabilities.

Q15. What advice would you give to future international students thinking about studying through UPIC and VUW?

Go for it! It was an incredibly valuable experience and I really enjoyed studying at UP Education and VUW. Just make sure you ask for help when you need it. The professors are usually incredibly supportive. Another tip is to make use of all the resources the University has to offer, from the career advisors to the clubs.

"Success now means showing up for myself and making a positive impact through conservation — something my journey at UPIC and VUW helped me prepare for."

NEHARA IS SHAPING HER FUTURE.

To shape yours, enrol with UP Education, New Zealand.