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US Ambassador visits BEST Pacific Institute of Education

The inaugural visit by US Ambassador, David Huebner to the BEST Pacific Institute of Education campus in Manukau is further endorsement of the great work the organisation is doing in tertiary education for Pasifika communities.

Ambassador Huebner met with students from the business school and Youth Academy and the organisation's staff team. He spoke with several of the employment and career consultants at the campus who have made outstanding strides in placing 70.4% students in to jobs in 2011 at the completion of their studies.

BEST is the number one provider of tertiary education to Pacific people in New Zealand (Tertiary Education Commission) and operates over five campuses around Auckland.

A focus of Ambassador Huebner's mission in New Zealand is to connect with Pasifika communities. His visit to the Manukau campus was very much aligned with that goal.

"Diplomacy in the 21st century is as much about building connections between people as between governments. One of my priorities is to focus our public diplomacy efforts on links with New Zealand's Pasifika communities - and in particular Pasifika youth - because the youth of today are the problem-solvers, innovators, and leaders of tomorrow.

I enjoyed meeting with the staff at BEST Pacific Institute of Education, and particularly the students: they were engaged, upbeat, and ready to take what they are learning out into the workplace. With a strong academic and vocational foundation, I'm sure the young people can make a real contribution in their communities and be a credit to their families" says Ambassador Huebner.

Beatrice Faumuina ONZM , BEST Pasifika Leadership Academy and Foundation CEO, and four-time Olympian, says the relationship with the US Embassy developed at the Cloud prior to the opening of the Rugby World Cup.

"I thoroughly enjoyed meeting US Ambassador Huebner, his calmness and humility was welcoming and engaging for all BEST staff and students. To welcome and meet such an honoured guest has been truly a highlight for us to share."

Faumuinā says Marina Masame and Francina Gataua, two participants of the current BEST Leadership programme also met with US Ambassador Heubner. The inaugural programme was launched last year and is a unique leadership programme which blends post-graduate courses for business leadership and entrepreneurship interwoven within a Pasifika context.

BEST Director Anita Finnigan says the Ambassador's visit was a wonderful opportunity to highlight the achievements of BEST's Pasifika students and be part of an international focus on Pasifika achievement in education.

Faumuinā says she is looking forward to nurturing the relationship with the US Ambassador and is already planning future connections through the BEST Leadership Programme.

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For more information on the BEST Pacific Leadership Programme, contact

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