



**BUSINESS SCHOOL
CENTRE FOR
INNOVATION AND
ENTREPRENEURSHIP**

**2021
GCEC AWARD NOMINATION**

AWARD CATEGORY

**STUDENT ENGAGEMENT
& LEADERSHIP**

SUB-CATEGORY: **SCHOOLS OVER 5,000**

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1. Discuss the various programs or initiatives your Center supports to engage a broad spectrum of students (including underrepresented students who identify as Black, Latinx, Indigenous, women, LGBTQIA and individuals from low income backgrounds) to achieve the Center's goals.

The University of Auckland's Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) offers free extra-curricular entrepreneurship development opportunities to students of all faculties and disciplines. These include educational seminars, mentorship, start-up internships, co-curricular recognition awards, curricular programming in a variety of disciplines, technology workshops and equipment training, networking opportunities, intensive entrepreneurship bootcamps, an incubator - and CIE's flagship entrepreneurship development programme Velocity, which incorporates many aspects to entrepreneurship including an ideation competition and a robust business planning competition. CIE's offerings have been carefully designed to provide a range of opportunities to support students at whatever stage of the entrepreneurial journey they are at, from no idea through to exit.

CIE reduces barriers to participation, including for individuals from low income backgrounds, by making all of its offerings completely free to students of all subjects, subsidised by the Business School with the support of philanthropists. In 2020, CIE engaged with 4,011 individuals.

New Zealand's geography and history mean that there are not Black and LatinX communities the same way as there are in America. In New Zealand, underrepresented groups include indigenous Māori and Pacific peoples. CIE has undertaken a number of initiatives to encourage entrepreneurship to Māori and Pacific students and to make the physical presence of the Centre, its innovation hub and maker space Unleash Space, welcoming and inclusive. This includes consulting with indigenous Māori kaumatua (elders) in the build and naming of Kura Matahuna (Unleash Space - CIE's innovation hub and maker space), and cultural training for CIE staff. CIE contributes to the University's equity initiatives such as UniBound, a university preparation programme for Māori and Pacific school leavers.

Women around the world continue to face barriers to participation in entrepreneurship and business due to a range of factors including discrimination, discouragement from lack of role models and systemic disadvantages. The University of Auckland has made efforts to decrease barriers to participation. CIE has actively sought to increase participation of women in its innovation and entrepreneurship programmes through showcasing role models in communication campaigns, actively recruiting more women volunteers as mentors and speakers, encouraging women participants in CIE to take leadership positions and initiating social innovation programmes proven to appeal to women students. This has been achievable through increased resources and programming that came with CIE's expansion in 2015. Back in 2015, women represented 23% of participants in programmes delivered by CIE. Women now represent 48.5% of participants in programmes delivered by the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

2. Describe how you empower students to lead or own the efforts described above.

A key learning for CIE has been the importance of including students in leadership and decision making processes in order for the University's entrepreneurial ecosystem to thrive. Student committees have made entrepreneurship feel more accessible and less intimidating. Velocity, CIE's flagship student-led entrepreneurship programme, has a student committee that is started anew each year, with a recruitment and interview process undertaken at the end of each year to decide the following year's members. The committee consists of around 30 students in leadership positions, to design and implement the year's full programme of competitions, workshops and educational seminars. Velocity has a CEO, COO and groups of students responsible for portfolios of marketing, events and education. They are tasked with tangible responsibilities - asked to reach KPIs of overall student and staff participation in the hundreds.

A key benefit of having the programme led by students is the ability of the committee to design and market the programme to other students through using vernacular and marketing tactics and channels that appeal to their

contemporaries. The students have undertaken a number of tactics such as TikTok campaigns and “lecture bashing” (booking a slot with a lecturer to go on stage and promote the Velocity programme in large lecture theatres or online lectures) to entice other students to participate in Velocity’s competitions, workshops and seminars.

CIE has carefully recruited a diverse range of students as Creative Technologists - paid positions where students run equipment training and creative project workshops in Kura Matahuna / Unleash Space. This gives students paid work to help with their personal financial stability and valuable job training in learning how to teach, publicly speak, learn new technical skills and be responsible for projects and facilities. Three of the student Creative Technologists have gone on to be employed as full time staff members at CIE after graduation, taking leadership positions in helping to develop the Centre’s capability for students.

The success of Velocity’s student-led committee inspired CIE to ensure that when it built its physical site - innovation hub and maker space Unleash Space - in 2018, students were heavily consulted in its design and also given leadership positions. An Unleash Space student committee was created, with an Unleash Space student CEO appointed. The student committee were tasked with helping to make decisions around the physical design with the space, it’s name, design of programmes and events that would have broad appeal of students and on the launch. They were thrilled when New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern accepted their invitation to open Unleash Space. Throughout the whole experience of creating and implementing the Unleash Space student committee, CIE staff made sure to leave room for the participants to figure out their own leadership styles and to allow for colour and personality so that they have a real sense of ownership.

In creating the Unleash Space student committee, CIE staff wanted the committee to be representational of the diversity of the student population. CIE staff shoulder-tapped students we knew who were high-potential but may not have thought to apply for the Unleash Space leadership committee as they did not self-identify as leaders. The resulting Unleash Space leadership was incredibly diverse, comprising different genders, ethnicities and physical abilities, such as Charlotte - a student Unleash Space student team committee member with cerebral palsy, who contributed greatly in ensuring that CIE leadership were thoughtful in their approach to design of both the physical space and the programmes to ensure that they were inclusive.

3. Highlight one to two specific efforts that demonstrate student leadership in your Center. Efforts should communicate the types of initiatives your Center executed that would not have happened without student leadership.

In 2020, the first Covid-19 lockdown in New Zealand coincided with the start of the New Zealand academic new year. The Velocity student committee were stressed and uncertain as to how to proceed. CIE staff considered a range of options, including not running the launch event of the year - the Velocity Innovation Challenge - an annual ideation competition.

CEO of Velocity, law and arts student Gemma Bell, says “Like everyone, when COVID-19 hit, our Velocity student committee were initially overwhelmed. At one point we discussed whether it was appropriate to run the Innovation Challenge this year. Talking to others in our university community it became very obvious that people were wanting opportunities to make a positive impact in the world.”

The Velocity student committee forged ahead to run the Innovation Challenge, conducting their team meetings online via Zoom to create a strategy and keep in touch to implement marketing tactics. They channeled their creativity into making the competition as attractive as possible and made online events fun and dynamic by incorporating TikToks, costumes, music and fun. They also created new prizes for the Innovation Challenge to reward people who came up with ideas for entrepreneurial solutions to a chosen problem posed by Covid-19. In the end, the Velocity Innovation Challenge had 264 entries - an outstanding achievement.

Providing students with opportunities to lead is a rollercoaster. They both thrive and fail, and CIE staff has supported and coached the students to achieve the best outcomes for the programme. Student leadership is ultimately rewarding though as the opportunity to fail in a supportive environment with minimal consequences is terrific ‘training wheel’ practice for the real world. Over the 17 years that the Velocity student entrepreneurship programme has run, we have seen many of the Velocity committee members go on to hold leadership positions as founders or corporate managers, for example William Lockie a former Velocity CEO who at an early age has guided Woop to become New Zealand’s fastest growing food business. In 2020 in the University of Auckland’s annual 40 under 40 list of influential alumni, 22 were past CIE participants. Student leaders become community leaders.

4. What metrics do you use to measure success? How do you benchmark these efforts vs. other co-curricular activities on your campus?

CIE has a CRM, a dashboard to track and visualise student participation rates, and a number of other tools in place to help with qualitative and quantitative measurement of the success of CIEs activities, including pre and post programme surveys that measure change in entrepreneurial mindset, and student satisfaction rates (as NPS score). CIE’s major programmes have an average NPS score of 77 where the New Zealand education average is 20. The level of qualitative and quantitative measurement and benchmarking conducted by CIE is unique within the University of Auckland. There is no other programme where outcome measurement incorporates graduate destinations, change in mindset and participation numbers. CIE benchmarks against itself year-on-year to inspire the team to push boundaries, stretch and improve.

Impact of flagship Velocity programme

For a small island nation such as New Zealand, Velocity, CIE’s flagship extra-curricular entrepreneurship programme, has had a significant impact on New Zealand’s entrepreneurial ecosystem. Velocity participants have:

- Launched 164 ventures
 - Attracted more than \$301,700,000 in investment,
 - Created more than 900 jobs, and which
 - Sell products and services into 37 countries.
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5. Appendix: Provide up to two (2) other items of your choice that demonstrate student engagement & leadership. This could include testimonials from engaged students.

Arash Tayebi is the CEO of social enterprise Kara Technologies, that uses avatars to translate material into sign language. They recently were awarded a global award for Top 100 Meaningful Businesses. Arash says: “I was pretty shy to talk about this idea to change the way deaf people communicate. I thought I might be judged or called crazy. But at the University of Auckland there are people waiting for you to come and share your ideas. It’s a place where you can grow very fast and be ready to change the planet.” Arash was an engaged student who is now an engaged alumnus who gives inspiring talks to current students and who recently helped us deliver a Matariki (Māori new year) workshop where his avatar translated content into sign language.

Innovative thinking in the face of a pandemic.
Taken from 2020 University of Auckland virtual yearbook



DURING

Whakaaro auaha ki te mata o te mate urutā

Innovative thinking in the face of a pandemic

Covid-19 didn't prevent the University community from rising to the challenge of creating innovative solutions to the world's problems through [Velocity](#) – the University's globally renowned student-led entrepreneurship development programme.



Students pivoted, persevered, and managed to run their first ever virtual events including the 2020 launch, Innovation Challenge prize giving, and \$100k Challenge Qualifiers event in the form of interactive online webinars. The Innovation Challenge and \$100k Challenge saw 264 and 81 entries respectively, many of which were solutions to problems presented by coronavirus.

Some of these entries included:

RosterLab

Innovation Challenge Covid-19 commercial prize winner and \$100k Challenge Finalist

RosterLab uses state of the art artificial intelligence techniques to build exceptional rosters for hospital staff, much more quickly than is possible by hand. With a simple to use web application for roster creation and associated staff phone app, we can automate almost all of the rostering process. Our rosters will help stop the spread of Covid-19 and lead to better patient outcomes all over the world.

G-Ventox

Innovation Challenge Commercial prize winner and \$100k Challenge Finalist

The current Covid-19 infection pandemic has required mechanical ventilation of many patients over prolonged periods in order to maintain oxygenation. However, outcomes of ventilated patients have been variable and often unsatisfactory. We have a new experimental technology that will improve patient oxygenation and thereby improve patient outcomes.

CircleOut

Innovation Challenge Covid-19 social prize winner

CircleOut is a digital learning platform that lets young people learn from one another in a safe and supportive environment. We draw from indigenous knowledge systems and practices to unify technology, community, and education under the belief that life and learning are one and the same.

Read about the other winners and finalists on the [Velocity](#) site.



Reflections on graduating from the first inaugural Unleash Space CEO

Today is the day I have been visualising for the last four years when the going got tough (which was most days if I'm honest). Thanks to ol' mate Covid-19, graduation wasn't quite the one I expected, but celebrating homemade style with my parents and daughter sure was special. With a can-do attitude, some resources from around the house and a touch of creativity, I managed to create a truly epic and unique celebration.

[Read more](#)

Inspiring start for new Māori and Pacific students

From Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship newsroom



Dozens of Māori and Pacific students have had the opportunity to adjust to life at university through participation in summer programme UniBound. As part of their experience, many of the students participated in two days of workshops at Unleash Space, the University of Auckland's innovation hub and maker space. Workshops were delivered by the Business School's Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship (CIE) and gave participants the opportunity to create, make, problem-solve, develop presentation skills and learn to use state-of-the-art technology.

UniBound is an academic enrichment programme for Māori and Pacific school leavers interested in studying at the University of Auckland. The five-week programme provides students with the tools and skills to transition into university life through team building activities, workshops and study towards a credit-bearing course. UniBound Manager Therese Lautua says that UniBound is an important part of this cohort's transition to university life. "Many of our students have not travelled to the city on public transport on their own, let alone studied in an unfamiliar environment. We create a culturally aware and safe space for students to create new friendship networks, meet staff, receive course enrolment advice and learn about all the university's systems."

At Unleash Space students had the opportunity to make custom heat-pressed t-shirts and tote bags. Unleash Space Manager Sean Kelly says "By the end of the workshop all the students had some familiarity with Adobe Illustrator or TinkerCAD and had used our 3D printers, laser cutter, vinyl cutter and heat press. It was a great Day One energiser to get the students enthused about how they could unleash their creativity."

In another workshop participants learned the principles of design thinking and were asked to come up with solutions for one of the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals – ensuring young people have access to quality education.

Programme Manager Judith Marecek says “I was struck by the wonderful compassion the group had for others. All of them came up with some great ideas for improvements. For example one team came up with a peer-to-peer information sharing event, highlighting that having support programmes, like free WIFI or cheap laptop access, is not enough. The target audience needs to be aware of the programmes, and comfortable accessing them. It also shows that improvements don’t always have to be expensive, multi year projects. Ideas such as the above can be acted on very quickly and make a big difference.”

The UniBound workshops challenged participants’ preconceived ideas about university. Sean says “We had feedback that the students had not realised that teaching could be so non-traditional. One student for example commented at the end about how enjoyable the use of LEGO was as a learning activity. I hope they feel empowered and encouraged to revisit Unleash Space and participate in our Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship programmes.”

Leading New Zealand into top-ranked position for female founder graduates

From Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship newsroom



A recent study has found that New Zealand has the world's highest percentage of female graduates who found start-ups, at 13.4%. Of these 13.4%, almost half are from the University of Auckland.

The results were found by business banking app Tide. Their Pioneering Women study analysed data from Crunchbase for companies that had raised at least US\$1 million. The sums involved indicate that founders identified in the study are generating substantial enterprises. Of the 79,140 founders 6,940 had female founders.

In explaining why the University of Auckland has rated so highly, it is important to analyse data within the context of New Zealand being a relatively progressive country with a long history of active participation from women in society and business. Last year New Zealand ranked in the top 5 countries for women entrepreneurs in Mastercard's Index of Women Entrepreneurs.

The University of Auckland has also long played a pivotal role in entrepreneurship in New Zealand through success in areas such as its commercialisation company UniServices, founded in 1988. A recent survey found that more than a quarter of University of Auckland alumni have founded a business, and that the survival and growth rates of these far exceeds the New Zealand average.

Tide's CEO Oliver Prill says "From the data we can see that there are still more men than women starting their own businesses – however this trend is beginning to shift. The longstanding imbalance between men and women pioneers over previous generations brings with it a range of further issues for women looking to start up their own companies. One of these issues is a lack of female role models and mentors, making it difficult for women to pick up crucial knowledge

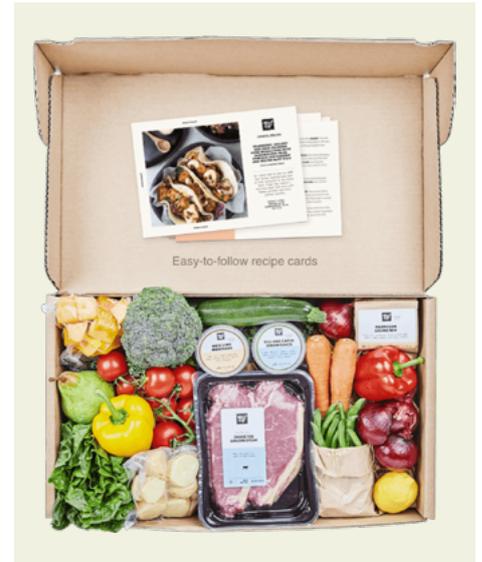
and guidance. Universities around the world seem to be attempting to address this by providing targeted communities for women, often through support, mentorship programmes and workshops”.

Oliver’s insights are substantiated by the equity working taking place at the University of Auckland. The Business School’s Women’s Mentoring programme is now in its ninth year with hundreds of students and business leaders having taken part in the programme. Back in 2015, women represented 23% of participants in programmes delivered by the Business School’s Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship. In designing the growth of the Centre’s activities Director Wendy Kerr actively sought to increase participation of women through role modelling with communication campaigns, actively recruiting more women volunteers as mentors and speakers and initiating social innovation programmes proven to appeal to women. Women now represent 52% of participants in programmes delivered by the Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship.

Wendy says “It’s great that New Zealand tops the charts but at 13.4% we have a long way to go. New Zealand women make up over 50% of the population yet female-owned businesses only make up a third of all New Zealand businesses. Women are New Zealand’s largest minority. We’ll continue to do our part to enable all our students, including women, to build the networks, confidence and knowledge necessary to unleash potential”.

Learning from leading New Zealand's fastest growing food business

From Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship newsroom



Business School alumnus William Lockie has turned his passion for food into a fruitful career as General Manager of Woop, New Zealand's fastest growing food business. Under his leadership, Woop has had massive revenue growth, been consistently named in Deloitte's Fast 50 and have evolved their operations to reduce, reuse and recycle.

The massive evolution that Woop has had in recent years matches William's own career evolution. He has worked with Woop's owner since his time at University, where he learnt skills and made networks that have helped his career considerably. William studied a Bachelor of Commerce at the University of Auckland and went on to complete a Graduate Diploma in Innovation and Entrepreneurship. He was first inspired to get involved with innovation and entrepreneurship when he discovered the University's Velocity programme (then, Spark.) He joined the student committee and became CEO in 2013. "The value I got out of leading the team was super powerful. It put me on this path to understanding that I really enjoy working with people. I saw the change that can come when you motivate, inspire, lead, develop, and grow an awesome team and the results that you can get by doing that," says William.

A highlight of the Velocity programme for William was the expansive network and connections he built both within the entrepreneurial ecosystem and the wider community. He says, "The programme really opens up your network to other students across the University as well as the business community. In the beginning, I was very much just another student thinking 'Oh gosh, we have to do this networking thing. What even is that?' But by the time you leave university, you realise that the network you've built is quite phenomenal. The doors it opens, the interesting people you get to meet, and connections you create are so incredibly valuable."

An example of how building strong relationships and putting your hand up can open doors to exciting opportunities

is William's own introduction to Woop. In his final year of study, he interned at Woop founder Thomas Dietz's previous venture, TOMeTTe. They stayed in touch afterwards while he participated in a graduate programme at Fonterra, the end of which happened to coincide with the beginning of Woop. "I saw that Thomas was looking for a marketing manager, so I said 'When you're growing your marketing team, let me know because I'd be really keen to join.' Within two weeks, I had left Fonterra and started with Woop, taking on the role of marketing manager despite having no idea what a marketing manager did," says William.

"Long story short, I got to my role purely by putting my hand up, putting myself out there, and constantly wanting and striving to do more. In a kind of selfish way because I really wanted the opportunities to learn and the excitement that came with it. But from a success perspective as well, I'm really motivated in growing a business. As you start seeing the results of you and your team's hard work, it just fuels you to want to do more. I've been able to grow and grow and grow alongside the business, and take on more responsibilities over time. When more things needed to be done, I stuck my hand up to do them."

William advises students to get involved with as many things as possible at University and be open to new experiences and opportunities. He says, "You only get what you put in. Pursue your interests. They will grow, and develop, and make you an even more interesting person. Grab every opportunity, because University goes by so quickly."

William is now preparing to start a new chapter of his life in London. He hopes to once again work in a marketing leadership role with like-minded people on a high growth business that he is passionate about. He says, "I'm very grateful for all the experiences that I got in New Zealand. I'm excited to see what it's like to live and work overseas and have an adventure before coming home."

Creating new technology to increase accessibility of sign languages

From Centre for Innovation and Entrepreneurship newsroom



Arash Tayebi came to New Zealand as an international student to complete his PhD in electrical engineering. He says the university sparked an entrepreneurial spirit he didn't know he had. It inspired him to start a venture borne out of personal experience. Arash has a disease called Meniere's disease that resulted in him losing hearing in his left ear. He wants to help the deaf community by addressing the pain point of there not being enough teachers available who know sign language.

Arash co-founded social enterprise Kara Technologies which uses artificial intelligence (AI) and digital humans to translate content into sign language. It uses AI and hyper-realistic avatars, with a particular emphasis on making educational material accessible for deaf children. His vision is to one day have Mickey Mouse interacting with kids in sign language on screen.

Arash assembled his founding team for Kara Technologies from other students of the University of Auckland. They participated in CIE's Velocity entrepreneurship programme, winning the social entrepreneurship category of the \$100k challenge. The Kara Technologies team were incredibly engaged with CIE, taking part in a multitude of opportunities to learn and network. They took part in CIE's six month VentureLab incubator programme and accessed many thousands of dollars of funding from the University's commercialisation company UniServices as well as continued support and mentorship. The team are now alumni and continue to work on Kara full time. They were recognised in the 2020 Meaningful Business 100, an award celebrating business leaders around the world combining profit and purpose to help achieve the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. The Kara team still remain engaged with CIE as alumni, coming back to give inspiring talks to students to say how CIE can help them realise their potential. The Kara team also collaborated with the CIE team in delivery of a recent series of Matariki (Māori new year) technology and culture workshops through providing a video of a reading of a Matariki story where their Kara avatar translated the story into New Zealand sign language.

Arash says: "I was pretty shy to talk about this idea to change the way deaf people communicate. I thought I might be judged or called crazy. But at the University of Auckland there are people waiting for you to come and share your ideas. It's a place where you can grow very fast and be ready to change the planet...Before Kara Technologies, I never had any experience in running a business but now I have the confidence and advisors around me to keep moving forward with our technology roadmap and expand our business."

Reflections on graduating, from the first inaugural CEO of Unleash Space, the University of Auckland's innovation and entrepreneurship hub

By Wynona Dekker

Today is the day I have been visualising for the last four years when the going got tough (which was most days if I'm honest). Thanks to ol' mate COVID, graduation wasn't quite the one I expected, but celebrating homemade-style with my parents and daughter sure was special. With a can-do attitude, some resources from around the house and a touch of creativity, I managed to create a truly epic and unique celebration.

Being a single mother on top of completing a Bachelor of Commerce in four years, whilst working the whole way through has had its fair share of trials. I was fortunate that leading a team through the build and running of Unleash Space, then running my own business coaching start-ups never felt too much like 'work' but my goodness it was a challenge. I became the Queen of multitasking and living off 4-5 hours' sleep a night (not a badge of honour, just the reality). What I've come to realise is that knowing my purpose, my why, was key. That why, was my beautiful daughter.



Wynona with Prime Minister of New Zealand Jacinda Ardern

As a young mum, I rarely shared to my uni peers or colleagues what I was juggling, afraid that they would look down on my ability to do a damn great job. It took years fearing the associated stigmas before I opened up. I was so grateful everything I had to offer was so well-received and even became inspirational to others when I eventually began telling people my story (in hindsight I wish I had done so sooner but alas). The saying "you can't be what you can't see" often weighed on me as I eagerly searched for role models that I could truly relate to and be guided by. The closest example of what I had been looking for was watching Jacinda Ardern run office with a baby (vastly differing levels of responsibility, I know); after meeting J.A it kick-started me to reach out to pick the brains of many amazing women, whom I now consider mentors and friends. I hope that I can encourage young mothers to shoot for the stars; and hope they don't have to search as high and low as I did for an example of someone who went before them... if you know anyone tell her my inbox is open anytime.

I don't want to pretend by any means that this journey, my successes, the overcoming of gigantic obstacles was done alone or by any means easy. I've said before I stand on the shoulders of giants. I am privileged to have a dedicated support system in my parents, family and friends. I have been cheered on by mentors, lecturers, bosses, gym staff, baristas, cheesy motivational quotes, music, and most importantly my daughter (especially on the occasions she came to class with me).

This degree belongs to me, my daughter, my parents, and to anyone with the dream that education can open doors and empower generational change. I entered the tertiary world of education aged 21 in Feb 2016 starting out on a 6-month foundation course because my high school mathematical ability wasn't good enough for a BCom. In Feb 2020 I finished having completed all my papers including doing 14 papers in 11 months to finish my degree in record time and with doors opened that I could never have once imagined. I read a quote the other day saying "academia isn't just for the smart and the talented, it's for the curious and passionate individuals who aim to make a difference" and I hope that my journey showcases that.

Whilst I was supposed to be jetting off for a wonderful three month trip with my 5-year-old daughter next week after years of sheer grit and saving up, I feel so lucky to be 'stuck' in a safe country with her wrapped in my arms. After having to kiss her goodbye too many times to go study and work, lockdown together has been a blessing in disguise. Finally revelling in the foundations that were built for her and because of her.

Arohanui, Wynona

Velocity 2020 Launch Video: <https://youtu.be/cmOW4JtbUnM>



Unleash Space Student Team and Creative Technologists



Velocity



Velocity 2021 student committee