



Mikayla Zandstra – Graduated in May 2015

Alumni

Bachelor of Laws and Bachelor of Arts

1. Why did you choose your degree programme, and what made you enrol at the University of Otago?

From a young age I always knew I would study either law or medicine as to me both of these lead to prestigious careers. As I didn't do much science in my later years of high school, law was the obvious choice coupled with economics (as I loved this subject at school). There was never any question as to where I would go to study as the University of Otago provided the ultimate student experience – it's a couple of plane rides from home so you truly have to learn to be self-sufficient, amazing halls (for your first year) and a city that centres around the students, as well as a great reputation being the oldest university in New Zealand.

2. What did you enjoy most about your academic journey at the University of Otago?

I enjoyed the collegiality within law school, which saw the older students looking out for the younger ones and passing on their experiences.

The sense of accomplishment you feel, after completing exams every semester (making sleepless days/nights studying all worth it).

The ability to learn new things every day in an array of subjects.

3. During your study what were the key relationships that mattered most? What were the key sources of support you encountered?

Getting to know your lecturers and tutors is valuable, as when it came down to assessment or exam time you felt comfortable reaching out for help. The Pacific Island centre was also a valuable resource of support and provided extra tutorials and advice when needed.

4. What are you doing post-graduation?

I'm currently a commercial property solicitor in Auckland.

5. What was it like living and studying in Dunedin at the University of Otago?

AMAZING! Moving away from home gave me the opportunity to make new friends and truly experience flatting in some pretty cold flats. The friends I have made at Otago are now some of my best friends. Furthermore, the library was the hub of the university and provided a warm place to study as well as socialise.

Pacific Development

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6. What do you remember about your graduation day?

On graduation day I was filled with a great sense of accomplishment and it was a humbling experience – from the Pacific Island breakfast in the morning, walking down George Street with the whole town lining the streets to watch you and then walking across the stage earning my cap. It was a great way to end five long years of study!

7. What advice would you give to new students?

Enjoy lectures, take some papers 'just because they interest you' this will make your time more enjoyable, ask for help because someone will be able to help you, keep your head up and be proud no matter what grades you get, because some papers can be hard and even passing a paper is an awesome achievement! And definitely try living in a residential college in your first year – this is where you will make lifelong friendships and make some of the best memories of your life.

Take your place in the world!