Name: Blake Tatafu  
Degree: Bachelor of Community & Social Development  
Year of degree: 2nd (2012)  
Campus: Bankstown  
High School: St Dominic’s College, Kingswood  
Completed Year 12 in: 2010  
Scholarships held: Indigenous Achievement Scholarship and Commonwealth Education Costs Scholarship

Is the degree or course structure what you expected? 
My course has a different structure from most; I am a part of a block program where I am required to travel to Bankstown/Penrith and stay for a week to undertake intensive study. This allows me time to concentrate on other aspects of my life, such as work.

How is university different from school? 
University is very different. There is no pressure or disciplinary rules to follow. It’s such a free place. You have time to really gather yourself before you enter a lecture/tutorial. University is full of open people with common interests. The major difference is how much of my degree relies on ME - there is no one to tell me to ‘get back in order’. University has given me my own sense of leadership in terms of motivating myself and becoming self-directed.

How did high school help you in preparing for university? 
St. Dominic’s College definitely gave us the notion that if we worked for what we wanted, we would never be disappointed. My school also provided great career advocacy services which gave me a better understanding of the protocols of applying and going to University.

What is the most interesting thing you’ve done at university so far? 
University in my first year has been interesting and full of surprises. I’ve had the opportunity to work with primary schools in a mentoring program and represent the University at the National Indigenous Tertiary Student Games. In December 2011, I established a new UWS Society - the UWS Indigenous Student Collective. It was definitely interesting to learn the protocol and functioning of other areas of the University. 2012 will see the launch of the collective. All these extra-curricular activities have invigorated my interest in furthering my degree and retaining my position at UWS.

What are some of your achievements since you started university? 
I have had the opportunity to mentor primary school and high school students as well as working on programs with the UWS Schools Engagement unit. Also, establishing a new student society has been a massive achievement. We have 60+ members and have not officially launched yet. This is very exciting.

Have your career aspirations changed since you began studying? 
If anything I have contextualised which area I want to focus on now - Psychology. Thankfully I can still achieve the outcome of becoming a Psychologist with my degree.

What advice would you give to students at your high school about pursuing university study? 
I would say go for it! It’s perhaps the best experience you will have and definitely broadens your horizons. Meeting amazing, interesting and creative people that you can learn from really makes your university life. I’ve made friends I believe I will be mates with for the rest of my life – and university isn’t even over yet! Get out there, get yourself known and enjoy the experience!

Why did you choose to study at UWS? 
I’ve known about UWS and what it has to offer since year 9 when my mother graduated as a mature-aged student. I definitely do not regret my decision to study here rather than at other universities.

Any other comments or observations about university study? 
Definitely utilise the services that UWS provides and be active in your ‘Student Life’. You never know who you may meet and how they could one day help you in your career.

More School Graduate Stories at: http://www.uws.edu.au/community/in_the_community/for_schools/school_graduate_stories
Course Information

Bachelor of Community and Social Development

Where is it held (campus)? Bankstown

How long is it? 3 years full time

Career opportunities? Employment with government agencies such as NSW Community Services, NSW Health; non-government Indigenous and non-Indigenous community welfare and community development agencies; and land councils and other governance organisations

Subjects include: Psychology - Human behavior, Introduction to Research Methods, Brain and Behaviour, Human Learning, Perception, Cognitive Processes, Motivation and Emotion, Personality, Abnormal Psychology, Health Psychology

ATAR (2012) 70.00

Additional information: The Bachelor of Community and Social Development is offered on Bankstown campus in block mode, requiring students to attend four to six residential schools per year, each generally of one to two weeks duration. Where students are completing placement requirements, blocks may differ in length or scheduling.

Travel, accommodation and meals to attend residential are funded for approved away-from-base students. Students may also be eligible for ITAS Tutorial Assistance.

This course is open to Australian Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students only. Application for the course is via the UWS Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education Alternative Entry Program (BAEP). The BAEP includes testing of English and Mathematics literacy and an interview. Contact the Badanami Centre for Indigenous Education on 1800 032 923 for further information

For more information: Visit the UWS website course information at http://future.uws.edu.au/