

# MEET THE MENTOR: DEAN



## OUR NEWEST RECRUIT

### (INTERVIEW)

Kia ora whanau, ko Dean Watson tōku ingoa, nō Whangarei ahau.

Bonjour, je m'appelle Dean Watson, je viens de Whangarei.

Hello, my name is Dean Watson, I come from Whangarei. I am in my third and final year at the University of Waikato, studying a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in International Languages and Cultures with Specialisation in French.

#### **Where did you go to high school? What was your high school experience like?**

I went to Tauraroa Area School from 2012-2016, where I was Deputy Head Boy in my final year. My experience was an amazing one, which has helped me to achieve my dreams and aspirations for the future, of becoming a primary school teacher. My time at Tauraroa Area School was so much fun because I had so many opportunities to excel with my learning, try new things, and really push myself to my potential. Being a small country school really gave me confidence to know that students and teachers didn't just know me as a number, but as an individual.

During my time I got to go on a school trip to France for two weeks, as well as partake in a student exchange by myself for five months living in France between 2016-2017. I was incredibly lucky to be offered these opportunities to go out and see the world, and I am incredibly grateful to my peers and former teachers for making this happen for me. These experiences have shaped me for who I am today.

#### **What was your journey like? What challenges did you face?**

The journey I had in high school wasn't an easy one, as when I started NCEA Level 1 I found out that I needed the support of a reader/writer to help me with my external exams.

For those who don't know what a reader/writer is, this is a person who sits in your exam and writes what you dictate to them. The reader/writer gives people the chance to have their own voice under exam conditions and to assist them if they have a certain difficulty when it comes to exams.

By having a reader/writer it has enabled me to express what I want in an external exam and has helped me to get to where I am today. I would like people to understand that having a reader/writer doesn't hinder you in any way. Without this, I honestly didn't think I would make it into university in the first place.



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#### **What was your journey in getting to university?**

I always had the dream and motivation to go to university, but I lacked confidence when it came to exams and therefore thought that I wouldn't be able to get to uni. However, I can tell you that I'm in my third year and a reader/writer has given me the chance to pursue my dream in life.

#### **What has your university experience been like?**

Since 2017 through until now I've loved every bit of my uni experience. Yes, I have had my ups and downs through this journey here, but like everyone, I found a way to overcome then and continue to strive throughout my everyday life as a student. University has opened my mind in many ways in relation to where I will be heading in the future as well as making some awesome connections whilst studying.

#### **Why have you joined Mentor Me Collective as a mentor and what are you most excited about?**

I found out about Mentor Me Collective and I was totally amazed and very supportive of all the ideas that are embodied within Mentor Me. I am grateful for this experience to be part of Mentor Me as a mentor and I hope that I can inspire others to achieve their goals and aspirations for future years to come. I am most excited about connecting with students across the country and not only telling them about my story, but also hearing theirs and to be given the opportunity to have a positive impact on their life for the future.

#### **What is your biggest lesson from high school?**

To never underestimate your potential, not only in academia, but also in life as well. To let people know that if you work hard in life, it will pay off in the future, you just have to be patient. And to always remember that you are not alone in your journey through high school and life, as there will always be people like myself, who are more than willing to support and guide you through this exciting time of your life.

#### **What's your top tip for current students?**

Never give up on striving for the things that you would like to achieve in your life.

I look forward to working with and beside you all in the near future and I'm super excited to be a part of this amazing and inspirational organisation, Mentor Me.

