The Hon. Siaosi ‘Ofakivahafolau Sovaleni, Minister of Education & Training - Kingdom of Tonga is an alumnus of The University of the South Pacific (USP); where he obtained a Gold Medal for a Postgraduate Diploma in Managers in Advanced Analytics Skills in 2008, and a Master of Business Administration in 2009.

Hon. Sovaleni also studied in New Zealand and England, where he received his Bachelor of Science (Honors) in Computer Science, a minor in Mathematics from Auckland, New Zealand and his Master of Science in Computation from Oxford, England.

Hon. Sovaleni has held several key government and non-government positions throughout his career. He is a member of the Pacific Internet Society (PICISOC); a former member of Pacific Computer Emergency Response Team (PACCERT) and also a member of Regional ICT for Education Working Group. He is also currently a Board member, as the Pacific representative, of the Commonwealth of Learning (CoL).

Prior to his current role in the current Tongan Government; Hon. Sovaleni was the Deputy Prime Minister, and the Minister for Meteorology, Environment, Information, Disaster Management, Energy, Climate Change and Communications (MEIDEC). He is also the former Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Public Enterprises (MPE). He also led the state-owned enterprises (SOE) reform programme that focused on board governance, improved compliance and improved financial performance. Hon. Sovaleni is a member of the electoral Constituency People’s Representative for Tongatapu No. 3.

Hon. Sovaleni has also previously served as Deputy Team Leader, of the Tonga - Asian Development Bank (ADB) Strategic Program for Climate Resilience (SPCR). He was Manager of the Pacific ICT Outreach Program (PICTO) at the Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC) and served more than 10 years as a senior official at the Ministry of Finance of the Kingdom of Tonga.

On February 19, 2020, the new entrance at USP’s Laucala Campus, called “University Avenue” was opened by Hon. Sovaleni. This new entrance is for the improvement and maintenance of USP’s estates and infrastructure, which works towards providing enhanced accessibility and to improve the social environment of USP’s campuses. The new USP entrance fundamentally reshapes the orientation of the University towards the Pacific Ocean; the ocean which symbolises our common home.
CBSE DEPUTY GOVERNOR IS AN ALUMNUS

Mr Raynold Micah Moveni, The University of the South Pacific (USP) alumnus has been appointed for a six (6) year term as the Deputy Governor of the Central Bank of Solomon Islands (CBSI). This appointment was made by the Solomon Islands Government through the Minister of Finance and Treasury and is effective since January 30, 2020. He is the sixth Solomon Islander to hold the position as Deputy Governor to CBSI.

Mr Moveni is married to Neroly Toata-Moveni and they have three children. He is from Megoju Village, Dovele on Vella la Vella Island, in the Western Province of Solomon Islands.

He holds a postgraduate qualification in Economics and Econometrics from the University of Sydney, Australia in 2012, and his undergraduate level includes qualifications in Digital Money at the Fletcher School of Law and Diplomacy, Tufts University, the United States in 2015, Civil Law from USP in 2007 and Economics and Accounting, from USP, in 1996.

Prior to his appointment as Deputy Governor, Mr Moveni was the Chief Manager for the Financial Systems Regulations Department (FSRD) at CBSI, for 11 years.

He has been with the Central Bank for more than 20 years, holding various positions within the economics and financial supervision and regulations office. He initially joined the economics department in 1999 as an analyst, rotating around different units within the department and for a brief period was acting as the Assistant Manager for the department, before switching to the financial regulation and supervision department. In 2006, he worked as an Advisor to the Executive Director at the International Monetary Fund (IMF) in Washington DC, the United States for two years, and returned to lead the financial markets and supervision department up until his latest appointment.

ALUMNUS IS PERMANENT SECRETARY

David Kolitagane, Fiji’s Permanent Secretary for Agriculture is an alumnus of The University of the South Pacific (USP) where he received a Bachelor of Arts degree, majoring in Economics from 1999.

During the Ministry’s Strategic Development Plan Workshop in July 2019, in Nadi, Mr Kolitagane spoke about the gap in the Ministry’s service delivery and shared plans on how to improve it by addressing stakeholder complaints in a timely manner. He also spoke about enhancing their business functions and work practices which will contribute towards improving their overall services.

Prior to this position, Mr Kolitagane was the acting Permanent Secretary for Rural and Maritime Development.

Mr Kolitagane also has extensive experience holding multiple portfolios and board positions including that in the Amalgamated Telecom Holdings Ltd. It was due to his proven performance, that the Public Service Commission (PSC) believes that Mr Kolitagane is the ideal candidate to take this portfolio to its next level and help fulfil the plans in this area.

For previous newsletters, check out www.alumni.usp.ac.fj
What memories do you have of your University student life and what inspired you during your studies at USP?

As a working student, university student life was limited to class time or group discussions. Nevertheless, it always worked out as I was always looking forward to attending class sessions as meeting classmates (who were mostly working students) also served as social networking so it helped me to unwind from work and learn new things.

Being able to learn new things from the literature and ideas shared in-class discussion was a major reason to look forward to classes. Diverse ideas from different people can become helpful in one’s workplace.

Why did you choose USP and your field of study?

I was promoted to a management position, and at that time my educational background was limited to engineering, I took the onus on myself to ensure I gained management qualification to supplement my work. While considering my educational options, USP’s MBA Programme with its affiliation to the Association of MBAs (AMBA) and being the top ten (10) Universities in the Pacific was enough to convince me to choose USP.

How did USP prepare you in your career?

The calibre of lecturers was the best part as they seemed to know what to deliver and provided real-life examples. The examples that the lecturers used made learning about work-life easier and understandable and relatable.

Describe your present job and what you enjoy about it.

Since the Managing Director resides in Auckland. In my job capacity as the General Manager, I oversee the day to day running of the company along with executing company decisions and directions after discussions with the director.

I am also committed to learning new things and ensuring that I personally oversee the running of the company as if it were mine and do not see myself as an employee. It is through this mindset that I am able to make decisions. It is because of this personal attachment I believe I have certain leverage in making decisions that I feel are for the betterment of the company.

What literature or subscriptions would you recommend for graduates (books/blogs/magazines)?

Who Moved My Cheese by Spencer Johnson is a book I recommend for anybody as it is about being able to identify changes and be able to face it.

I would also strongly recommend the Google Scholar webpage to be set as the default webpage of your browser as it contains a vast variety of interesting scholarly articles for both studies and leisure.

Where do you see yourself in five (5) years (career and or personal goals)?

To be in a senior managerial position in one of the multinational companies and work towards getting a doctorate degree.

Please share three tips that you think would be important for current students and recent graduates that will help them start out on their career paths.

1. Don’t expect to be given a higher position and salary at the beginning of your career. It’s always good to start from a junior position and then show your superiors what your capabilities are and get them to offer you promotions.

2. Don’t think of any company as small or big if they are giving you an opportunity to work. There are companies that keep a low profile but are big players in their area of business.

3. Work with ethics and honesty and let your conscience ensure that you do good. This will help a lot in life.
Lemalu Ray Ah Liki
Graduation: Bachelor of Agriculture in 1979 from USP
Country: Samoa
Occupation: Managing Director of Samoa Commercial Bank, Samoa

Dr Lonise Tanielu
Graduation: Bachelor of Arts in Education and Geography in 1978 from USP and received her PhD from the University of Auckland in 2004
Country: Samoa
Occupation: Manager Mataaga Aoga Amata Education & Care Services, Grey Lynn, The University of Auckland, New Zealand.

Kenneth Fakamuria
Graduation: Bachelor of Science Graduate and Certificate in Education in 1981 from USP
Country: Vanuatu
Occupation: Casual Lecturer at Holmes Institute, Australia and a Lecturer at the Charles Sturt University, Australia.

Natan Brechtefeld
Graduation: Professional Diploma in Legislative Drafting in 1999 from USP
Country: Kiribati
Occupation: Attorney General, Kiribati

Fepuleai Roma
Graduation: Bachelor of Law (LLB) in 1998 from USP
Country: Samoa
Occupation: Supreme Court Justice, Samoa

Mere Taito
Graduation: Bachelor of Arts majoring in History with Language in 1994 from USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation: Taught academic language skills at USP before joining as a Senior Tutor at the University of Waikato, New Zealand

Viresh Chandra
Country: Fiji
Occupation: Head of Information Technology at BSP Life, Fiji

Mereia Carling
Graduation: Postgrad Diploma in Development Studies in 2007 Masters in Development Studies in 2010 from USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation: Senior Advisor Inclusive Development - Child and Youth Wellbeing at New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade

Sanjani Swaroop
Graduation: Bachelor of Commerce in 2012 from USP
Country: Fiji
Occupation: Learning and Development Manager at Vinod Patel Group

Jesse S. Mihkel
Graduation: Bachelor of Laws (LLB) in 2018 Professional Diploma in Legal Practice (PDLP) in 2019 from USP
Country: The Federated States of Micronesia
Occupation: Assistant Attorney-General at the Department of Justice of the FSM National Government
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