

**WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION OF THE CHIEF GUEST BY
PROFESSOR RAJESH CHANDRA, VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT, THE
UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC FOR USP OPEN DAY – FRIDAY 28 JULY 2017**

1. Greetings and Welcome

The Chief Guest, the Attorney-General and Minister for Economy, Civil Service, Public Enterprises and Communications, Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum
USP Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, Ambassador Winston Thompson
Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corps
Members of the Fijian Government
Members of USP Council, and USP Committees
USP Senior Management Team colleagues
Principals, Teachers and visiting Students
Valued Sponsors and Friends of USP
USP Staff, Students, and Alumni
Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen

2. Ni Sa Bula Vinaka, Namaste, and a very warm welcome to all of you to the Laucala Campus of The University of the South Pacific for USP Open Day 2017.

3. I am extremely honoured to extend a very special welcome to our Chief Guest, Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum. It is always a great pleasure to have you amongst us Hon. Minister.

I would also like to extend my warm welcome and appreciation to all the visiting students, their principals and teachers and invited guests.

This event is being live streamed through the web and I welcome all guests and prospective students at the Open Day event hosted at our campuses in Lautoka, Labasa and the region.

Benefits of Studying at USP

4. The Open Day theme for this year is “*USP – Shaping your Future*”. This theme truly reflects the role that USP plays in equipping our students with knowledge, competencies, skills and attributes for life-long success and leadership.

5. We believe that USP programmes are of the highest quality, offer best value, and give the best chance for success at work, in life, as leaders and lifelong learners.

6. What distinguishes USP from other providers of higher education is its quality validated by international accreditations and recognition of its programmes. This means that programmes offered by USP are just as good as those offered by universities in Australia, New Zealand, and elsewhere, but our programmes cost much less and are more relevant to the Pacific.

7. The University now has a total of 22 programmes that have international accreditation and four international recognitions, details of which are published in a supplement lift-out in today's Fiji Sun newspaper.
8. If you decide to enroll at USP, there will be many more programmes that will have international accreditations by the time you graduate as the University continues to strive for accreditations for all of its programmes and courses.
9. Apart from our three Faculties, USP offers skills based qualifications through its Pacific Technical and Further Education (Pacific TAFE) which has grown rapidly in the last four years. Pacific TAFE offers 33 qualifications and is expected to grow based on regional demand. USP is responding to the call by Fiji and our other member countries for more skills training and pathway programmes.
10. Our graduates have a high employability rate. Last year, 72% of our graduates were in full time employment four months after their graduation. We are only 2 % behind in terms of full time employment of graduates from Australian Universities.
11. USP works closely with all industry and professional bodies, and many of our programmes have industrial and professional placements as part of the curriculum increasing the employability of our graduates.
12. Fiji has been the biggest contributor to the University since its inception and I would like to thank you Hon. Minister for allocating us a budget of \$30.7million in the National Budget for financial year 2017 – 2018. I also wish to reiterate our gratitude to Fiji for being such a consistently supportive and generous host of the main campus and headquarters of this unique regional university.
13. In order to increase access to even more students to tertiary education from semester one this year, USP has successfully rolled out the Lecture Capture system at the Laucala, Alafua and Emalus Campuses.
14. This year, we have also started distributing Tablet devices to all full time first year undergraduate degree students and we will continue this programme next year.
15. Apart from having the finest sporting and fitness facilities, Campus Life at USP ensures that university life is memorable, fun and exciting through various activities.
16. We recently opened the new 11th Halls of Residence here at the Laucala Campus enabling the University to provide more on campus accommodation with another 420 beds construction to commence soon.
17. USP gives students extraordinary opportunities for cross-cultural experiences because we have students from over 33 countries and staff from 38 countries.

Student achievements and Innovation at USP

18. Studying at USP provides students with an excellent platform for research and innovation. Students from our School of Engineering and Physics have secured two patents which is a very proud achievement for the University.

19. Students Mohammad Alim and Shivneel Kumar and USP staff Dr Utkal Mehta received a patent for inventing the Eye-Cane by Intellectual Property Australia. The Eye Cane is an intelligent mobility device, which was made from scratch by these students to help blind persons to effectively improve their quality of life and ultimately enable them to become self-dependent.

20. Another student, Shaneel Prakash together with Dr Rabiul Islam and Dr Kabir Mamun of the School of Engineering and Physics (SEP), received a patent for their invention of a 'Portable Wave-Solar Energy Harvesting Device' by Intellectual Property (IP) Australia.

21. Similarly, the Braille Eye Slate was developed by engineering students, Nikhil Singh and Vinaal Prakash under the supervision of Dr Utkal Mehta. Braille Eye-Slate is a low cost solution to teach Braille language to visually impaired children.

22. Students, Ladies and Gentlemen, these are just a few examples of the quality of students that we have studying here at USP. I want to stress to all our prospective students present here today, all you need is your passion and hard work and USP will help you achieve those dreams and visions that you might have for your own success and the betterment of mankind.

USP Open Day 2017

23. The Open Day is really about experiencing what USP has to offer. I therefore encourage you to make the most of this opportunity and explore every aspect of university life on offer for you.

24. This is an exciting time to be at USP. We are preparing to celebrate our 50th anniversary next year in 2018 and this means that there will be more events, excitement and celebrations of our achievements than ever before. You can tell your children and grandchildren that you were at USP and celebrated its historic 50th anniversary.

25. I hope you have a wonderful experience at USP Open Day 2017, and I look forward to welcoming you in 2018 as new students.

Brief Introduction of Chief Guest

It is now my profound pleasure and honour to introduce our Chief Guest, who is of course very well-known in both Fiji and the region:

- Hon. Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum is the Fijian Attorney-General and the Minister for Economy, Public Enterprises, Civil Service and Communications.
- Prior to his appointment as a Cabinet Minister following the democratic election in September 2014, Hon. Sayed-Khaiyum was the Fijian Attorney-General and the Minister for Justice, Anti-Corruption, Public Enterprises, Communications,

Civil Aviation, and Tourism, Industry and Trade and the Minister responsible for Elections under the Bainimarama Government.

- Hon. Sayed-Khaiyum has initiated a comprehensive programme to modernise Fiji's laws in such areas as domestic violence, corporate governance and criminal code. He oversaw the work to finalise a new Fijian Constitution that provides the legal foundation for a common and equal citizenry while protecting indigenous land ownership and rights.
- Hon. Sayed-Khaiyum attended Marist Brothers High School.
- He completed his Masters of Law at the University of Hong Kong. As part of his Masters programme, he completed a thesis titled, "Cultural Autonomy-It's Implications for the Nation-State."
- He also holds a Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice from the University of Wollongong in Australia.
- He obtained his Bachelor of Laws (LLB) degree at the University of New South Wales (Sydney), Australia. As part of his LLB degree, he completed a thesis on "Constitution Making in 'Divided Societies' – Fiji a case study."
- Hon. Sayed-Khaiyum attained his Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree from the Australian National University in Canberra, Australia, majoring in political science and development studies.

I now have the honour to request the Hon. Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum to deliver his keynote address and officially open the 2017 USP Open Day.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavaad, Thank You.