

USP Beat

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#ChooseToChallenge

USP CELEBRATES INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

"International Women's Day should not be celebrated for only a day, but every day since we all have some woman in our lives who has given us life, education, inspiration, strength and a desire to do better," says Dr Rajni Chand, CFL Director and chief guest during the USP International Women's Day celebration on 8 March.

With the theme, 'Choose to Challenge', the day was celebrated with great enthusiasm at USP Oceania Centre, Laucala Campus.

"Looking into history, women have made many bold decisions that have changed the world, said Dr Chand. "They have chosen to protect the environment, challenge how society operates and taken important decisions in their own lives," she said.

Dr Chand made reference to the Chipko Andolan, a pioneering

ecofeminism movement in India. In 1974 women had protested against rampant deforestation, that had led to a lack of firewood, fodder and water for drinking and irrigation. In 1987, the Chipko movement was awarded the Right Livelihood Award "for its dedication to the conservation, restoration and ecologically-sound use of India's natural resources."

Also present at the celebrations were Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Dr Giulio Paunga and Mr Jone Nemani, Executive Director People and Workforce Strategy

Speaking to invited guests, Dr Paunga said "we all are here, through the theme, 'Choose to Challenge' and to challenge the bias and stereotypes that exist in our society - to call out discrimination and take action for equality."

The Acting Vice-Chancellor

reflected on opportunities and struggles women face in pursuit of social and economic progress.

Dr Paunga also spoke about the good progress that had been made across the region to reduce gender inequality. He gave a special mention to women in the Pacific who had weaved change to inspire a better environment.

The Association of The University of the South Pacific Staff (AUSPS) and USP Staff Union (USPSU) also celebrated women and their achievements with the theme 'Women In Leadership: Achieving an Equal Future in the Wake of COVID-19' at the Postgraduate Research Library.

The AUSPS and USPSU acknowledged the significant contribution and achievements of women at USP.

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THE WOMEN BEHIND THE SUCCESS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

The University of the South Pacific as the premier provider of tertiary education in the Pacific Region and an international centre of excellence for teaching, research, consulting and training is proud of its 53 years of success and acknowledges the support and dedication of all the women who have contributed towards this great achievement.

USP today boasts a staff complement of about 1,800 of which fifty percent are women.

In the last 6 years, USP has also seen a steady increase in its female student numbers ranging above 55%, with 59% registrations in 2020. Except for 8 undergraduate programmes, female student ratio ranged between 50% to 99%

in 2020; the most popular being Early Childhood and Care and Special and Inclusive Education.

Taking on the challenge of the IWD 2021 campaign theme #ChooseToChallenge, USP aims to increase its female student ratio in its Engineering programmes to more than 50%. It currently sits between 7% to 24% in the various engineering programmes.

In 2020, 48% females registered for the Doctorate programme. Of the 33 Masters Programmes offered, 21 programmes had more than 50% registrations from women. These ranged from 53% - 78%, the highest for MSc in Marine Science.

To date 80,050 persons that have

graduated from USP, of which 53% have been women. The first 13 women to graduate and lead others onto this path of success were Marjorie Crocombe (Cook Islands), Modesta Patauvera (Solomon Islands) Susan Bennett (United Kingdom), Veronica Bliss (Australia), Mosikaka Kavapalu (Tonga) and Elizabeth Pene, Andriet Jackson, Kushma Dayal, Aruna Prasad, Mere Voro, Sarita Prasad, Judith Alexander and Padma Narsey from Fiji.

USP chooses to challenge and call out gender bias and inequality. We choose to seek out and celebrate women's achievements because collectively we can all help create an inclusive world. **#ChooseToChallenge**

WE ARE PROUD OF OUR:

850

FEMALE STAFF

10,401

FEMALE STUDENTS

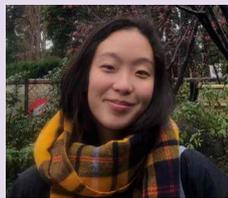
42,245

FEMALE ALUMNI

IN OUR 14 CAMPUSES SPREAD ACROSS OUR 12 MEMBER COUNTRIES



Our Students, Our Pride



Name: Caitlin Harm Nam
School: SAFE/SoLaSS
Prog: BCom in Economics/LLB/



Name: Shayal Kumar
School: SBM
Prog: BCom in Management & Public Admin and Tourism



Name: Jessie Fong
School: STEMP
Prog: Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical/Electronics)



Name: Losalina Mafile'o
School: SAGEONS
Prog: BSc – Bio and Chemistry



Name: Talitha-Kumi Geparo
School: SoLaSS
Prog: Professional Diploma in Legal Practice



Name: Fauzmeen Nisha
School: SPACE
Prog: BA GCED – History and Literature & Language



Name: Folaumala Tuinanumea
School: Pacific TAFE
Prog: Diploma in Early Childhood Education & Care



Name: Adi D Talemimalyea
School: PaCE-SD
Prog: Masters in Climate Change

“ As a woman with a disability, the choice is in our hands, the choice whether to remain stagnant in life or to get back up and persevere towards our aspirations.

Fauzmeen Nisha

”

Our Staff, Our Strength



Name: Ms Selina Nariva
Section: Disability Resource Center



Name: Dr Rajni Chand
Section: Director, Centre for Flexible Learning



Name: Ms Salsabil Nusair
School: STEMP
Position: Asst. Lecturer, Computing Info Sys & Maths



Name: Dr Akanisi Kedrayate
Section: SPACE
Position: Local Director, Confucius Institute



Name: Dr Sandra Tarte
School: SoLaSS
Position: Acting Head of School



Name: Ms Sarina Tamakin
Position: Campus Director, Nauru Campus



Name: Ms Susan Sela
School: Pacific TAFE
Position: Director, Pacific TAFE



Name: Prof Elisabeth Holland
School: PaCE-SD
Position: Director, PaCe-SD

“ Our Pacific women must rise and step out of the box of expectation and reach for the stars of the unexpected.

Jane Glynn Kanas

”

Our Alumni, Our Legacy



Name: Losalini Bauve
Prog: PGDip in Commerce, BCom



Name: Christina K Ariki
Qualification: BA in Tourism and Hospitality Management



Name: Malia B Fa'asolo
Qualification: MBA, BSc



Name: Asilika M Lomani
Qualification: PGDip in Governance, Dip Leadership Governance and Human Rights



Name: Ana Tuiketeki
Qualification: Bachelor of Laws



Name: Komal Kavita
Qualification: PGDip, BCom



Name: Kabweea Itintaake
Qualification: Bachelor of Laws



Name: Komal Narayan
Qualification: Postgraduate Diploma in Development Studies

“ Women are agents of change. We must acknowledge each other's worth and share experiences and gather the courage to cross hurdles in all spheres of life.

Asilika Masikolikoli Lomani

”

USP'S BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING (CIVIL) PROGRAMME RECEIVES WSCUC APPROVAL

The Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) programme at The University of the South Pacific has received final approval by the WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC).

The WSCUC is an institutional accrediting agency serving a diverse membership of public and private higher education institutes throughout California, Hawaii and the Pacific as well as a selected number of institutions outside the US. WSCUC is recognised by the U.S. Department of Education (USDE) and by the Council for Higher Education Accreditation (CHEA) as a reliable authority concerning the quality of education provided by member institutions of higher education offering the associate degree, baccalaureate degree and post-baccalaureate degrees

Receiving this approval by WSCUC signifies that the Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) programme is keeping with the WSCUC Standards of Accreditation.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Dr Giulio Paunga thanked the Head of School of Information, Technology, Engineering, Mathematica and Physics (STEMP), Professor Maurizio Cirrincione, Dr Kabir Mamun and Dr. Sumesh Narayan, as well as STEMP staff for the work put in by them to get the programme WSCUC approved.

"The approval process was a two-year review to ensure that our engineering degree programme meets defined standards, said Professor Cirrincione. "We collated data and met local stakeholders from industry and public institutions regularly before applying to WSCUC for approval."

WSCUC through its work of peer reviewing encourages continuous institutional improvement to ensure its

members and the public that accredited institutions are fulfilling their missions in service to their students and the public good in compliance with US and international standards.

"An approved engineering degree offers students and employers an important mark of assurance that the programme meets the high standards set by the engineering profession, says Dr Sumesh Narayan, Senior Lecturer at STEMP.

The Bachelor of Engineering (Civil) is a 4-year programme. Currently about 500 students are enrolled in the programme of Civil Engineering at USP. "The first batch will be graduating in 2022 which will give them the possibility to receive professional membership from the Fiji Institute of Engineers (FIE) or other such professional bodies overseas," says Dr Kabir Mamun, another Senior Lecturer at STEMP.

The USP engineering programme is well placed in the region as STEMP has also produced high quality research papers in international journals and STEMP can claim to be equal

to other Universities in some areas of engineering.

STEMP has also produced some very high level staff who are now teaching or conducting research in other universities or research institutions either abroad or within the Region, contributing to capacity building. Moreover, there are numerous engineering alumni serving important roles in several industries nationally and globally.

The USP 4-year Civil Engineering degree programme specialises in structural engineering, water resource engineering, geotechnical engineering, road and transport engineering.

In 2022 STEMP will apply, through FIE and facilitated by the Engineering New Zealand, to have the Civil Engineering programme accredited under the Washington Accord. This will give students the possibility to have a degree equivalent to that awarded in New Zealand or Australia. Currently STEMP offers programmes of Electrical and Electronics Engineering as well as Mechanical Engineering already accredited under the Washington Accord



Professor Maurizio Cirrincione (third from left) with staff and students of STEMP

29 USP LAW GRADUATES ADMITTED TO THE BAR

Twenty-nine USP law graduates were admitted to the Fiji Bar in an admission ceremony held at the Grand Pacific Hotel, Suva on Friday 12 March, 2021.

The ceremony was presided over by the Honourable Acting-Chief Justice, Justice Kamal Kumar.

All 29 newly admitted lawyers obtained their LLB (Bachelor of Laws) and PDLP (Professional Diploma in Legal Practice) from The University of the South Pacific's School of Law and Social Sciences (SoLass).

USP Law lecturers Mr Nainendra Nand, Mr Josaia Waqaivolavola, Ms Anuleshni Neelta, Ms Barbara Malimali moved most of the admissions. Lawyers, Mr Pita Bulamainavalu and Ms Mele Rakai moved the admissions of their family members.

The ceremony was well attended by families and friends of the new lawyers who witnessed their loved ones take two solemn oaths, one for allegiance to the profession and the other to uphold the Constitution of the Republic of the Fiji Islands.

Speaking to the new lawyers, Justice Kamal Kumar reminded them of their oaths and the important role they play in the legal system.

"As Lawyers you will be entrusted to solve problems faced by members of our communities in terms of their properties, home, finances, business dealings and family matters. You will be called

upon to defend and protect rights guaranteed to individuals under our Constitution and International Law. The judicial system has become an important part of your life. It is your duty as lawyers to get people treated fairly and grant them justice," he said.

"You will be called upon to make decisions which will affect and change people's life. You will be called upon to act in the best interest of your client. Your client will rely on your legal expertise or advice and of course pay you."

"However, you must not forget the very basic fact that you, after being admitted to the Bar are Officers of the Court. You are therefore duty bound to adhere to the rules of the Court and Code of Conduct stipulated in the Legal Practitioners Act 2009 and towards the Court and fellow practitioners.

Ms Amele Adi Kuila Waqairawai was amongst the 29 graduates admitted to the Bar. She said it was a challenging five-year journey for her and she went through major life changing events leading to this day. Ms Waqairawai dedicated her success to her late father, Mr Tevita Waqairawai, who she recently lost.

The PDLP Programme is undertaken by law students after they have successfully graduated from 4-year Law degree Programme.



COMMONWEALTH FUTURES CLIMATE RESEARCH COHORT



The University of the South Pacific is proud to announce that its PhD student Mr Rufino Varea is one of the only two Fijian researchers that have been selected to be part of the Commonwealth Futures Climate Research Cohort, where 26 rising-star researchers will bring local knowledge to a global stage in the lead-up to the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26).

Rufino is a passionate PhD student with a deep sense of care for the ocean. He is dedicated to learning and understanding more about the dynamics and threats posed to ocean life by pollutants. By establishing a biomonitoring approach to assess pollution effects in seafood, finfish and shellfish in Fiji, Rufino hopes that his research will enable Fijians to strive towards a clean and blue economy.

Rufino's line of work has taken him to some of the most interesting places in Fiji, working closely with locals to build capacity and awareness regarding marine pollution. The nature and deep connection of marine pollution to livelihood security and climate change have opened opportunities for Rufino.

He has a great interest in advancing how science can better inform policy and action on a local and national level. Rufino recognises that as persistent as many pollutants are in the environment, humans too must push on and work together stronger to build a better, cleaner, and safer future.

In 2018, the ACU supported Rufino's scientific preparation in Australia, as a research fellow under the Blue Charter Fellowships programme.

USP HOSTS ITS 4th ENTREPRENEURIAL FAIR

The University of the South Pacific's 4th Entrepreneurial Fair with the theme "Change Your World: Become an Entrepreneur", was held at the Laucala Campus from March 8-12.

It brought together an amazing group of influencers and successful entrepreneurs; business community, corporate organisations as well as representatives from non-profit organisations (NGOs) and government to share their success stories and give advice and insight into what it takes to launch, fund, sustain and grow a business.

The USP Entrepreneurial Fair offered opportunities for networking, business coaching and entrepreneurial skills development sessions, motivational speeches from successful entrepreneurs, funding options and various small or medium business development topics.

USP Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Dr Giulio Paunga said the University was proud to host the event which seeks to foster youth entrepreneurship and bring together brilliant individuals who have made outstanding contributions in business and in society.

"Entrepreneurship allows youths to be innovative and provides them the necessary skills that will help them become successful. USP offers many programmes and courses that provides its students such skills and knowledge. These skills will help them become successful employers, leaders and eventually contributors to their nations' economies USP is glad to provide our youths with lifelong skills that they can carry into the future," he said.

Dr Paunga added that the USP



(From left) USP's Group Manager, Campus Life, Mr Glenn Pope, Acting Chief Executive Officer of the Fiji Development Bank, Mr Saiyad Hussain, USP's Acting Vice-Chancellor Education, Professor Jito Vanualailai and USP's Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Dr Giulio Paunga after the launch of the 4th Entrepreneurial Fair

Entrepreneurial Fair has the capacity to grow to become an even bigger event for the University that would provide more prospects to support aspiring entrepreneurs.

"The event complements USP's effort to provide for the needs of the Pacific region by providing education and trainings opportunities at all levels that will promote economic advancements for communities," he said.

Also speaking during the launch of the event, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jito Vanualailai said entrepreneurial training and the establishments of small micro enterprises has always been a major focus of the University and is captured in the USP Strategic Plan.

"I know that the Fiji government also supports our Entrepreneurship and Small Business Development programmes and USP is happy that it is conducting its training in line with the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism's Young Entrepreneurship Scheme where young people are able to access funding to start their small business initiatives," he said.

Manager for the USP Career and Entrepreneurial Centre, Mr Semi Bilitaki said USP provides the ideal environment for young people in the Pacific to become entrepreneurs.

"Through the years we have seen a growing interest for our

entrepreneurial workshops during the Fair," Mr Bilitaki added.

Group Manager Campus Life, Mr Glenn Pope said the yearly week-long USP Entrepreneurial Fair has been successful since its conception and launch four years ago because it offers the public, including USP students, an opportunity to upskill in the area of entrepreneurship and encourage establishment of small, medium and large businesses.

"The USP Entrepreneurial Fair was held in close partnership with the Fiji Government and its relevant departments and The Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES)," said Mr Pope.

"Becoming an Entrepreneur should be seen as another career option and I hope to see a lot of public engagement, with people taking the opportunity to engage with the Fair, especially in these time of rising unemployment with the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic," said Mr Pope.

The Entrepreneurial Fair featured speakers including Dr Mere Samisoni, founder of Hot Bread Kitchen; Mr Wah Sing Yee, Owner of Marco Polo Investment; Mr John Sanday from Kava Korporosen; Mr Michael Towler, Managing Director of Performance Flotation Developments (Fiji) Pte Limited; Mr Watisoni Nata from the Young Entrepreneurial Council; Mr Jon Apted, Partner, Munro Leys and Ms Api Kurusiga, Director Lapita Fiji.



USP FACILITATES PACIFIC ISLAND EARTH OBSERVATION CONFERENCE

The Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council successfully concluded its “Pacific Island Earth Observation Conference” on 23 February that saw the participation of GIS experts from the Pacific region connecting via Zoom.

The 2-day virtual Conference was coordinated through the University of the South Pacific’s regional network and was hosted from the USP Japan ICT Centre at Laucala Campus.

USP’s Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Dr Giulio Paunga officially opened the Conference and in his opening remarks said the conference was something the Pacific should be proud of. It is the only conference on Earth Observation that has had so many participants from Pacific Island Countries, as well as from around the globe.

“Nonetheless there has never been a more opportune time such as this period of uncertainty from the COVID-19 pandemic for you to reinvigorate the strength of GIS and Remote Sensing. I understand GIS and Remote Sensing has been used across the world for the tracking of COVID-19 infection

rates and contact tracing. Given that vaccines are to be made available soon, the role of GIS and Remote Sensing technology and expertise will be key in the logistical roll-out, including all over the Pacific,” he said.

Dr Paunga added that remote sensing technology expertise and contribution is critical in the Pacific region, especially towards natural resource management, disaster assessments, climate change adaptation and mitigation, agricultural planning and development and infrastructural planning, to name a few.

“That is why USP is very keen to partner with the GIS and Remote Sensing Council to create and enhance GIS applications in the Pacific Island countries to ensure that our USP Member Countries continue to have highly qualified graduates in this very critical industry of Earth Observation,” he added.

USP staff and students also participated in the virtual sessions which included presentations from the International Society for Photogrammetry and Remote Sensing (ISPRS), the US National Aeronautics and

Space Administration (NASA) and presentations by specialists such as Dr Laura Lorenzoni and Dr David Green.

Dr Laura Lorenzoni is a Program Scientist for the Ocean Biology and Biogeochemistry Program (OBB) in the NASA Headquarters Science Mission Directorate. The OBB program focuses on describing, understanding, and predicting biological and biogeochemical conditions, interactions and changes in the upper ocean, as determined by observation of aquatic optical properties using remote sensing and in situ data.

Dr David Green is the program manager for NASA’s Earth Science Applied Sciences Disasters Program. He and his team promote the use of Earth observations derived from space-based instrumentation to improve prediction of, preparation for, response to and recovery from natural and technological disasters.

The University has been supporting the GIS and Remote Sensing Council for over 10 years, including providing the use of its facilities for its annual conferences.



TUVALU CAMPUS COMMISSIONS OUTDOOR CLASSROOM

The USP Tuvalu Campus community on Friday, 4 March was delighted to have the Tuvalu Minister for Public Works, Trade, Environment, Lands and Disaster, Honourable Ampelosa Tehulu commission its newly built outdoor classroom. The classroom is named Dr. Lagi Faleakoga, in acknowledgement of the outgoing Campus Director, Dr Rosiana Lagi's contribution to education in Tuvalu. Dr Lagi is leaving Tuvalu Campus on promotion as the new Deputy Head of School for the School of Pacific Arts, Communication and Education (SPACE) at USP's Laucala Campus.

The Dr. Lagi Faleakoga (classroom) has been built to accommodate the increasing number of students at the Campus. Currently the Campus has round 170 full-time students, enrolled in pre-degree, degree and postgraduate degree programs.

The building of this outdoor classroom is timely and has brought smiles to the faces of the teaching staff and students, said Dr. Lagi. We began to face challenges last year for teaching space when our student numbers

increased at the Campus because of travel restrictions due to the COVID-19 pandemic,

Dr Lagi thanked USP Acting Vice-Chancellor and President, Dr Giulio Paunga and the Executive Director Finance, Mr Kolinio Boila, for approving funding for this classroom. The classroom was built in 2 weeks by the Tuvalu Public Works Department at a cost of around FJ\$45,000.

Tuvalu Members of Parliament, Ambassador of the Republic of China (Taiwan), HE Marc Su Australian High Commissioner to Tuvalu, HE Karyn Murray and senior Government officials were amongst guests invited to witness the commissioning of the classroom.

Student Learning Support (SLS) Specialist, Mr. Isikeli Naqaya, thanked the Government of Tuvalu, Development Partners, stakeholders, USP Tuvalu Campus Advisory Committee, Tuvalu PWD and parents for their continued support to the USP Tuvalu Campus. He added that The Dr. Lagi Faleakoga was an achievement and evidence of the Tuvalu Government's continuous support for USP and especially towards education.



SOLOMON ISLANDS CAMPUS EXTENSION WORKS TO HAVE A POSITIVE IMPACT ON STUDENT LEARNING

The Solomon Island campus has just completed an extension project worth over SBD\$217,000.00.

The project is significant to the development of the Campus as it will provide additional learning space, as well as improved infrastructure and facilities at the campus. The additional learning space will mainly serve as a REACT room and study space for students.

The Solomon Islands Campus is one of the most populated regional campuses, with approximately 3,000 to 4,000 students per semester.

The online platform, now more frequently used to counter the effects of COVID-19 on student learning, have in fact created a greater need for space as REACT rooms to meet the increasing need for virtual teaching and learning at the Campus.

In addition, the Solomon Islands Government scholarships offered for 2021 have also witnessed a redirection. The scholarships will now be offered as in-country awards this year.

With the announcement of 1000 scholarship by the government, the Solomon Islands Campus has already seen a large increase in enrolment this semester.

The extension project is expected have a positive impact on student learning and consequently on the overall pass rate at the Campus.



USAID FUNDED PROJECT MANAGEMENT COHORT TO BENEFIT PACIFIC WOMEN

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) and The University of the South Pacific (USP) launched an all-female Project Management Practice cohort for 30 members of the Women in Maritime Association (WIMA) and presented completion certificates to 23 women who completed a USAID Project Management Cohort in Suva on International Women's Day (8 March).

Ms. Susan Sela, Director USP Pacific TAFE, represented USP at the launch of the cohort. USAID was represented by the Charge d' Affaires of the US Embassy in Suva, Mr Tony Greubel.

Delivering her remarks, Ms Sela acknowledged all women for their determination and perseverance.

"I would like to acknowledge all women in this room on this internationally celebrated day for women," she said. "Happy International Women's day – Choose to Challenge is such an

appropriate theme when one considers that you have chosen to challenge yourselves by taking up this programme of study and you have come out successfully completing this challenge. At the same time, we remember those women who are deprived of opportunities to realise their full potential."

Ms Sela expressed her gratitude to USAID on behalf of USP Pacific TAFE in providing people a path to self-reliance and resilience especially during Post COVID times.

She also emphasised that the upcoming cohort for WIMA which will begin on 22 March in Suva will showcase both the University and US Climate Ready's commitment to women empowerment.

"Both the University and USAID recognises the critical role women play in communities," she said.

Giving an overview, the Director

highlighted that project management cohorts have received overwhelming response from regional countries and the programme continues to grow in strength.

"Project Management has been one of Pacific TAFE's most popular programmes across the Pacific region," she said. "Since the programme's inception, Pacific TAFE has been able, through funding by USAID, to deliver Certificate IV in Project Management qualifications in Fiji, Vanuatu, Kiribati, Tonga, Samoa, Republic of the Marshall Islands and Solomon Islands."

"Through bilateral agreements with USAID we have also delivered this programme to two countries outside of the USP region, in Papua New Guinea and the Federated States of Micronesia," said Ms Sela.

So far Pacific TAFE has successfully delivered 3 cohorts in PNG, with the most recent one completed a month ago in Lae.



Group photo: Project Management participants with the United States Charge d' Affaires, Tony Greubel (centre) and Fiji's Permanent Secretary for Women, Jennifer Poole (sitting fourth from left) after the official launch of the project management cohort



USP OPENS ITS OUTREACH COMMONS IN NADI

Students will not need to worry about accessibility or connectivity as all this has been taken care of by The University of the South Pacific as it officially opened its third Outreach Commons at the Pacific TAFE Centre in Namaka, Nadi on 19 March.

This is an extension of a project that began last year to benefit USP students. The first two sites to open were the Davuilevu and the Walu Bay Commons. This was to address the needs of students living in the Suva-Nasinu-Nausori and Suva-Lami-Navua corridors.

The opening of the three outreach commons is a culmination of USP's effort to enhance online learning for its students, especially after realising that it would need to alter its teaching and student learning practices post-COVID-19 pandemic.

The USP Outreach Commons will ensure that learning and teaching continue without significant interruption to the students' progress.

While officially opening the Outreach Commons, Dr Giulio Paunga, Acting Vice-Chancellor

and President said that in 2020 the COVID-19 pandemic necessitated changes in how USP conducted its academic activities to ensure learning and teaching continues without significant interruption to the progress of students.

"Now, students from Nadi and neighbouring areas will also not have to travel far. USP services can now be accessed through USPNet right here," he said.

Dr Paunga added that despite the economic downturn we all have faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic, it is most satisfying to note that education remains a priority for most of us.

He said that USP is extremely pleased that registration numbers have exceeded last year's numbers by 21.3% (excluding Pacific TAFE) and all 6 Schools have seen an increase in student numbers between 7.5% to 34.3%.

"Our student admissions, as of 15th March, stands at 15,865. We have welcomed 9,607 new students and over 6,258 students who have resumed after 3 years

or have moved to a higher programme level," added Dr Paunga.

"Due to border restrictions, our regional campuses have also seen an increase in student numbers, and we have moved swiftly to accommodate the demand. Our Tuvalu and Solomon Islands campuses have been extended, and there is now improved infrastructure and facilities at the campuses. I am sure the students welcome this additional learning space," he said.

Lice Waqairadovu and Kini Jamata, two students undertaking preliminary in English programme thanked USP for the Outreach Commons.

Lice and Kini said previously the demand for laptops was so great that they would have to wait or travel all the way to Lautoka to complete their assignments.

USP's Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Professor Jito Vanualailai said USP is looking into having the Outreach Commons open for 24 hours.



Dr Giulio Paunga, Acting Vice-Chancellor and President (VCP)(first from right) with staff of Pacific TAFE and guests

USP COOK ISLANDS CAMPUS SUCCESSFULLY DELIVERS COOK ISLANDS MĀORI VERNACULAR COURSE

The USP Cook Islands Campus has been working hard to help deliver the skills teachers need to preserve, teach, promote and encourage the usage of Cook Islands Māori language, or Te Reo Māori Kuki Airani.

Through a leading-edge linguistics programme offered at USP, teachers in the Cook Islands can study towards either a Certificate or Diploma in Vernacular Languages: Cook Islands Māori.

This course enables teachers to enhance their knowledge and transfer these skill sets into their practice of teaching Māori.

“As the coronavirus began hurling challenges into the delivery of our summer school course in December 2020, Dr Ake Nicholas and I began deliberating about how we could facilitate the CM331 Kimi Kiteanga Kuki Airani Research Methods (Cook Islands Research Methods) course in the midst of a pandemic,” said Dr Debi Futter-Puati, Campus Director of the USP Cook Islands Campus.

“Through extensive discussions and planning we came up with an alternative method for the instruction of the summer school course which was to be offered for the first time.”

“As we went about the redesigning the course, we decided to think outside of the traditional approach of one lecturer and instead invited multiple Cook Islands academics to join us and participate as guest lecturers.”

“Ultimately, through their generosity, this led to us being able to draw on the expertise of a prestigious lineup of Cook Islands academics to support the delivery of the course as an intensive face to face class from 4 to 22 January,” said Dr Futta-Puati.

Over three weeks, the students had the occasion to listen to thirteen Cook Islands researchers share their ideas about taking a uniquely Cook Islands approach to their research.

Each presenter shared their specific research, while also focusing on how they took Indigenous Cook Islands approaches within their practice. These lectures ensured the students were ably equipped to design their action research project to investigate the status of Cook Islands Māori language in their own settings. The teachers are now completing their action research projects in their schools. Findings will be presented at a research symposium later in the year.

One lecturer, Dr Christina Newport, a post-doctoral research fellow at Auckland University, described the course as “vitaly important”. Dr Newport added, “If we are able to take this particular course and put in front of them (Cook Islanders) who are researchers, it is not only going to add to the type of research they undertake, but also the way in which they carry this out, therefore, privileging our own local language and our own perspectives to come up with solutions that work for here [Cook Islands]”. Dr Futter-Puati believes this may be the first time that a USP course has involved such a

group of academics to deliver a course. She said USP were very privileged and thankful to the academics for the gift of their time in delivering this course.

The academics that participated in the programme were: Dr Ake Nicholas - Linguistics (Massey University), Eliza Puna PhD candidate - Mental Health (University of Auckland), Dr Evangelene Daniela - Wong - Moana Mana Youth at risk (Te Marae Ora), Dr Christina Newport - Vaka Moana Climate Change (University of Auckland), Professor Tania Ka'ai - Indigenous Research Methodologies (Auckland University of Technology), Dr Teina Rongo - Marine Science, Makiuti Tongia - Cook Islands research methods, Professor Bobbie Hunter - use of cultural context for mathematics (Massey University), Dr Neti Herman - youth health (University of Auckland), Associate Professor Jodie Hunter - Pasifika mathematics (Massey University), Associate Professor Yvonne Underhill-Sem - gender and migration (University of Auckland), Dr Debi Futter-Puati - Tivaevae and sexuality (USP) and Dr Ali Glasgow - revitalising reo Kuki Airani in ECE (Victoria University of Wellington)

This course will continue to be offered at the Cook Islands Campus in the future.



SCHOOL OF LAW AND SOCIAL SCIENCES (SoLaSS)



Acting Head of School: Professor Sandra Tarte

BCom MCom MPhil PhD J&K

Career with The University of the South Pacific, Suva – Fiji

Professor Tarte has served as a member of USP Senate since 2014. In that capacity she was a Senate representative on the Anniversary Steering Committee from 2016-2018 and a member of the editorial board for the commemorative book: A University for the Pacific- 50 Years of USP. Sandra has also served as a Faculty representative on the University Teaching Quality Committee.

She has been a Lecturer and Senior Lecturer at USP since 1995 and held various roles including Head of the School of

Social Sciences and Head of the School of Government, Development and International Affairs. She graduated with a PhD in East Asian Studies from the Australian National University in 1996. Her PhD thesis, Japan's Aid Diplomacy and the Pacific Islands, was co-published by ANU's National Center for Development Studies and USP's Institute of Pacific Studies in 1998.

Sandra specialises in the international politics of the Pacific islands region. Her publications include *The New Pacific Diplomacy* (2015), co-edited with Greg Fry. She has written widely on regional cooperation in the Pacific, with a focus on fisheries management and conservation, and regional security issues. She has also consulted for the South Pacific Forum Fisheries Agency, the Parties to the Nauru Agreement, the South Pacific Regional Environment Program, the International Development Centre, Tokyo, and Greenpeace Pacific. Her most recent publication, on Fiji's relations with China, can be found here: <https://press.anu.edu.au/publications/series/pacific/china-alternative>

SCHOOL OF ACCOUNTING, FINANCE & ECONOMICS (SAFE)



Acting Head of School: Dr Nacanieli Rika

PGDip BA MBA MComm SPac, PhD (Accounting) ANU. He is also a member of CPA Australia.

International Awards

In 2020, Dr Rika was awarded the prestigious John Perrin Prize for the Best Paper published in the A-ranked Financial Accountability and Management Journal (FAM). The paper titled 'Reputational Risk and Environmental Performance Auditing; A Study in the Australian Public Sector' was co-authored with Professor Kerry Jacobs of the University of New South Wales (UNSW). In 2017, Dr. Rika was privileged to receive a titular fellowship from the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) that enabled him to undertake an Adjunct Senior Fellowship at the UNSW in 2018.

Career with The University of the South Pacific, Suva – Fiji

Dr Rika has over 20 years of experience in the field of tertiary education, spanning teaching, research, consultancy and technical training. He has served as Associate Dean in the USP Faculty of Business & Economics [FBE], responsible for Planning & Quality and later Learning & Teaching. He also has been the Acting Head of School, USP School of Accounting and Finance (SOAF). From 2010 to 2012, Dr Rika was an Associate Lecturer in the Research School of Accounting & Business Information Systems at the ANU.

Presently Dr Rika is a member of the FNPB Board Audit and Risk Committee. He is also a member of the Fiji Institute of Accountants (FIA) Accounting and Auditing Standards Committee. In this capacity, he has twice represented FIA at the World Standard Setters Meeting hosted by the International Accounting Standards Board (IASB) in London. Dr Rika regularly delivers technical workshops on International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). Dr Rika has published and presented numerous articles in leading international journals and conferences.

MARK THE DATE!

APRIL 2021

17 - 25 April:

Mid-Semester Break

21 - 23 & 25 April:

Market Day, Laucala Campus

22 - 23 April:

Laucala Campus Graduation

24 April - 9 May:

Trimester 1 Break

30 April:

Samoa Campus Graduation

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Next issue

APRIL 2021



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