

Educating All. Bridging the Gap. Empowering Lives!



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An e-newsletter from the Disability Resource Centre which updates you on disability awareness and advocacy initiatives at the USP.

Disability Awareness & Advocacy by Students

In Semester 2 2016, three students, Melita Delaibau, Andrew Rageci and Leslie Tikotikoca participated in various forums. Melita Delaibau took part in the 2016 VC's Forum as one of the student presenters. The theme was 'Using ICT-enabled innovative pedagogies to enhance student learning' and as a student with disability, Melita was well versed with the assistive technologies that students use at the DRC. Both Andrew and Leslie took part in forums where they gave speeches. These experiences showcase the enabling environment USP offers.



L-R: Mrs. Cook, Melita Delaibau and Inise Tawakatini

Student Placements

Seru Savanai (deaf) and Kolinio Cagi (wheelchair-user) are enrolled in the PacificTAFE Diploma in IT program. The two students took up placement at the USP IT Services in the helpdesk and network areas.

In an interview with 'Be Inclusive', Kolinio shared his enthusiasm about his work placement stating 'This is a big achievement for me to be attached at the USP IT; the staff are very helpful and inclusive and the built environment is just perfect for wheelchair accessibility. IT is a field of interest for me and hope to gain the necessary skills and experience for employment'.



L-R: Seru Volavola, Melita Delaibau, Jese Waqabitu, Inise Tawakatini Front: Kolinio Cagi



Fire Drill

The Fire Evacuation Drill was an important exercise for staff and students to be aware of the respective safe points around campus. As the siren sounded, the respective fire warden evacuated all staffs, visitors and students from the DRC, Career and Counselling departments to the assembly area located at the car park – Opposite the Westpac Bank (Red 3). The drill ended with a roll call at the assembly area as per evacuation protocol.



DRC, Counselling and Careers Staff with Students and Buddies

USP Open Day 2016

The DRC participated at the USP Open Day 2016 and provided information to high school students on reasonable accommodations afforded to students with disabilities. The DRC cohort of students, student volunteer buddies and interns were also involved. The students also performed a song and DRC is grateful to the USPSA Organizing Committee for this opportunity to raise awareness and advocate.



Coordination Meetings

The first few weeks of each semester are always extremely hectic for DRC staff. This is because coordination meetings are organised for students with disabilities. At these coordination meetings, DRC staff accompany students with disabilities to meet with course coordinators, lecturers, tutors, Student Learning Support (SLS) specialists, residential officers, counsellors, the Moodle team and other key staff who will play an important role in ensuring that the student's USP experience will not only be value-adding but

also culminate successfully with graduation and employment. Reasonable accommodations, other information and support are discussed at these important meetings. This is why students who wish to access support services must disclose their disability (ies) early in the first 4 weeks of semester, so that coordination meetings can be arranged. The second coordination meetings was setup to evaluate the progress of the students.



JENESYS Selection

The JENESYS program this year selected one female student with disabilities who will be travelling to Japan for two weeks as part of the JENESYS cultural exchange student tours. As part of her reasonable accommodations, Halamehi Tuilomania (Deaf Student) will be accompanied with an interpreter, Ms Ana Babitu. Ana is both a DRC volunteer buddy and sign language interpreter.

In an interview with 'Be Inclusive', Halamehi shared her excitement and enthusiasm about the upcoming trip stating 'This is my first time travelling to Japan and so I am really thankful for this opportunity. I am also grateful to the JENESYS coordinators who worked with DRC regarding my reasonable accommodations, enabling Ana to accompany me on this tour'

The Disability Resource Centre would like to take this opportunity to thank the Government

of Japan, senior management of USP and JENESYS 2016 Steering Committee for supporting disability inclusiveness in all facets of University life.



L-R: Halamehi Tuilomania and Ana Babitu

Graduation

The Disability Resource Centre is delighted to report that 2 students with disabilities graduated at the 26th of August Graduation Ceremony that was held at the Vodafone Arena. Their achievements have come after much struggle, sacrifice, determination and support from their families, friends, staff and volunteer buddies at the Disability Resource Centre plus their lecturers and other USP staff.

Graduates:

Premika Darshani - Bachelor of Commerce.

Sione Misi – Bachelor of Science.



Premika Darshani

Basic Sign Classes

The Disability Resource Centre, in collaboration with Fiji Association for the Deaf (FAD), runs a free walk-in sign language classes for USP staff at the DRC student space. This program ran for 15 days during semester 2 2016. All USP staff are most welcome to sign up for any number of sessions they wish to attend.



DRC Student Volunteer Buddies

THANK YOU STUDENT VOLUNTEER BUDDIES

As we come towards the end of another semester and another year, 'Be Inclusive' would again like to pay tribute to the DRC student volunteer buddies, both past and present, who tirelessly gave their time, energy, finances and most importantly, their heart, to work with DRC staff in supporting students with disabilities.

We salute the following students for their empathy and passion:

The Disability Resource Centre would like to thank the following people for your heart, empathy, hard work, patience and sense of humor which are certainly making a difference. You all have added value each

day to the DRC motto of 'Educating All. Bridging the Gap. Empowering Lives!' and we greatly appreciate you all! Vinaka vakalevu the former DRC Manager, Mrs Raijieli Bulatale, Atunaisa Koroi, Ana Babitu, Jese Waqabitu, Talica Volavola, Jacob Lanyon, Inise Tawaketini, Manyukta Khirti and Elizabeth O'Brien.



The Disability Resource Centre would like to thank you all for your continued support towards disability inclusiveness at USP.

Have a blessed *Christmas* and a *Prosperous* and *Inclusive* 2017!