The University of the South Pacific (USP) held its 2020 Orientation Week at the Australia-Pacific Lecture Theatre from 27-31 January. The turnout was impressive for all the four days and on the last day, entertainment and activities were held at the student car park where new students got the opportunity to mingle and make new friends.

In his welcome address, Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor and President of USP thanked and welcomed all the students who attended the 2020 Orientation sessions for The Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE), Faculty of Arts, Law & Education (FALE), Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) and the Pacific Technical and Further Education (Pacific TAFE).

He stated that they were fortunate to have such a beautiful and magnificent campus to study at, adding that “USP is on the move”.

“This is your opportunity to make lifelong friends. The friends I have today are the ones I made during my first day at university,” he shared.

According to Professor Ahluwalia, USP has amazing facilities and staff that blend together to ensure that students are successful in their studies.

He reminded them that soft skills are equally important and will develop when they meet a lot of people and engage with everyone at USP.

“We do not want anyone failing their units because we are here to help you. The one fantastic thing about USP is how fascinating our staff are – whether they are professional or support staff, they are committed to ensure that you succeed in your studies,” he reassured.

“Our goal is to make sure all of you succeed. Together we are embarking on the most exciting journey of your lives. Over the course of your studies, there is little doubt that you will meet and make lifelong friends and become part of a very large and vibrant USP family. Remember that there will be many of you who will become very important Alumni and be in higher places within our governments throughout the region.”

Prof Ahluwalia said that there is a lot of freedom when you come to the University but with that freedom comes a lot of responsibility as well.

He commented that University life is not simply about attaining an education, but is about a fundamental opportunity to think critically and embrace new ideas and values which make USP a very special place.

Continued on Page 2
“This University is fundamentally about Pacific values and it is these values that I am sure will guide you over the next few years,” he noted.

“We are all part of a very large family and we want to make sure that by the time you leave here you become agents of development to change your community. It is about giving back to the people who have supported you to get you here. It is about being ethical, transparent and accountable,” he added.

Professor Ahluwalia said that the first week of University life can be quite overwhelming and to make such an experience less daunting, USP is offering a range of counselling services and social events.

Professor Jito Vanualailai, USP Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Education, said the main role of his office is to ensure that when students graduate, they part with life-long learning skills.

He assured the students that they were joining a vibrant, devoted and talented group of academics with a profile and presence second to none.

“The University is all about creating new knowledge. We assure you that we will pass on the knowledge to you,” said Professor Vanualailai.

Dr Anjeela Jokhan, Dean of FSTE welcomed all students to the Faculty and talked about the Faculty’s vision, mission, disciplines and programmes that are on offer by different schools in the Faculty.

She acknowledged the staff for making the orientation a successful one and noted that a good number of students have enrolled in FSTE.

Dr Jokhan reminded the students that their parents, guardians and relatives have sacrificed enough to earn them a place at the premier University.

Dr Akanisi Kedrayate, Dean of FALE said she was excited to see so many students at the auditorium, adding that USP is about providing opportunities for everyone in the Pacific who want to further their education.

“It is important that in learning you enjoy it. Do not be anxious or worried or start thinking about what will happen when it has not happened because it will definitely affect your thinking”.

Dr Kedrayate urged them not to sit back and be complacent and that if they are keen on doing something, they must get up and do it.

Dr Kedrayate also announced that this year, FALE’s postgraduate enrolment numbers exceeded their undergraduate enrolment numbers saying it was a positive indication that “students who have gone through our system are returning to continue their studies on a higher level”.

Professor Arvind Patel, Acting Dean of FBE encouraged them to learn as much as they could while at USP and advised that one of the skills they had to master in order to be successful is to properly manage their time.

“I want you to pay attention to time as your asset, think outside the box in terms of your life goals and make sure that you are always ethical and professional in your work,” informed Professor Patel.

Professor Patel said that students needed to learn how to maximise their time for studies if they wanted to reach their goals.

“Education nowadays is very expensive and your parents and sponsors have invested a lot to enroll you, so please do not waste your time,” he urged them.

Mr Hasmukh Lal, Chief Executive Officer of Pacific TAFE also welcomed the students saying that attending USP is a great way to expand their knowledge, meet new people with diverse backgrounds, culture and interests and enjoy new experiences.

“University is more than just an educational institution. Your university experience will give you the knowledge, skills, confidence and experience to help you make your world better,” he said.

He added that whether they are school leavers or mature students, University opens up a host of new opportunities for growth and lets you take control of your future.

“A university qualification makes you more attractive in the eyes of prospective employers and increases your earning potential. It shows that you have the ability and self-motivation to learn at a higher level, and the dedication to see your course through to the end.”

Mr Lal shared three important messages for the students – to believe in themselves and stay focused; to manage their time and ensure a balance in their work-life-study; and to learn to embrace diversity.

USP’s FSTE includes School of Biological and Chemical Sciences, School of Computing, Information and Mathematical Sciences, School of Engineering and Physics, School of Geography, Earth Science and Environment, School of Marine Studies and two Institutes namely the Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) and the Institute of Marine Resources (IMR).

FALE comprises the School of Education, School of Law, School of Language, Arts and Media, School of Social Sciences, Institute of Education, Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies and the Confucius Institute.

FBE, the largest faculty at USP, comprises eight (8) schools, namely the School of Accounting and Finance, Graduate School of Business, School of Land Management & Development, School of Economics, School of Government, Development & International Affairs, School of Management & Public Administration, School of Tourism & Hospitality Management and the School of Agriculture & Food Technology based at the Alafua Campus in Samoa.
Participants of The University of the South Pacific’s (USP) Solomon Islands Teachers in Training programme are currently using literacy and numeracy resources in an effort to improve lesson learning and delivery.

The Australian Government had recently handed over to USP two sets of literacy and numeracy kits, comprising a range of resources for students in Year 1-4 in Fiji. This initiative was a product of the Australian Government, in partnership with the Government of Fiji, in supporting Fiji’s Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts (MEHA) to produce better literacy and numeracy outcomes for children across schools in Fiji.

Professor Govinda Lingam, Head of USP’s School of Education, suggested that these resource kits also be used in the teacher training programmes in the Region.

As part of the Solomon Islands Teachers in Training (TIT) programme, the SOEd is currently conducting summer flexi courses in Numeracy and Science for untrained teachers in Gizo in the Western Province.

“We have brought along these numeracy learning resource kits to train teachers who will be able to improve their lesson planning and delivery back in their respective schools,” said Dr Krishna Raghuvaiya, Senior Lecturer in Mathematics Education.

“The numeracy kit has a range of learning and teaching tools and teachers can use the knowledge acquired from using the learning tools to better contextualise and teach Mathematics in the 21st Century classrooms,” Dr Krishna said.

On the same note, Mr. Lalesh Sharma, Education Lecturer added that, “we have also used this numeracy kit in delivering some of the science lessons and this was a good example to the Teachers in Training group on how to integrate science lessons with numeracy lessons”.

“The SOEd has embarked on producing a new generation of teachers through quality teacher training programmes in Solomon Islands,” said Professor Lingam.

“Apart from supplying quality teachers, the availability of an abundance of relevant educational resource materials for learning and teaching in schools is another key contributing factor towards maximising children’s learning outcomes,” Professor Lingam added.

One of participants of the teacher training programme, Nathaniel Nausi from Chubikopi, Marovo Primary School acknowledged the Western Province Education Authority and the SOEd in providing teacher training to the untrained teachers in the Western province.

He also thanked the Australian Government for providing such learning materials which has enabled them to understand that numeracy and science can be taught via an integrated approach.

He said they have now created an understanding that teaching numeracy and science should be contextualised to their everyday living, and not as a subject only.

Another participant, Timothy Dickson from Kukundu Adventist College (KAC) added that the impact of such resources in terms of capacity building of teachers will definitely improve the learning outcomes of the students.

Freedom Tozaka, the Principal Education Officer of Western Province, was pleased with the progress of the training in Gizo. He also acknowledged USP Lecturers, Solomon Islands MEHRD and DFAT for facilitating the second phase of the programme successfully.
A total of 184 students at The University of the South Pacific’s (USP) Tuvalu Campus were conferred with their certificates, diplomas and degrees on 20 December 2019. The event, which was attended by Her Excellency Madam Mrs. Teniku Talesi, the Acting Governor General; Honorable Mr Kausea Natano, Prime Minister of Tuvalu; Cabinet Ministers and Members of Parliament, members of the Diplomatic Corps, Island Community Leaders and graduates’ families and friends, was the sixth graduation for USP for 2019.

Mr Winston Thompson, the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of the University Council, conferred the certificates, diplomas and degrees and expressed appreciation to the people and government of Tuvalu for their support for USP.

Of the 184 graduates, 58 per cent were female and 42 per cent were males from Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Tuvalu.

Among the graduates was the first MBA cohort, first Certificate in Teaching (Primary) cohort and the first School Based Certificate in Office Management Cohort.

It was a historical event in that the highest number of students graduated and also graduated from the first cohorts of programmes taught in Tuvalu. Also, for the first time, the event was livestreamed on television and Facebook, since the first Tuvalu local TV station was launched just 2 days before the graduation. The graduation ceremony was the first of its kind to be aired live by the station.

Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor & President congratulated the students saying they had achieved a significant accomplishment.

“Regardless of your chosen field of study, graduation signifies the culmination of several years of hard work on your part. Today is a celebration of your efforts, and also offers a time for us to thank the academic and professional staff who have been absolutely committed to helping you to achieve your learning goals,” he noted.

He commended families and friends, employers, colleagues and mentors who played an important role in the success of each graduand, saying they can all be justly proud of their efforts.

Professor Ahluwalia advised that the University has endeavored to instill in them, a body of knowledge and a set of qualities that will prepare them for their future life.

“However, the true value of your education lies in how you use this knowledge for the greater good of your communities, your countries and the Pacific region,” he stated.

The Pacific he said, is plagued with great insecurities as a result of climate change that challenges our livelihoods and for some of us, our sovereignty.

“Equally, the Pacific already has demonstrated to the world its innovative nature and capacity for resilience. Today I challenge you all to take the best of our insights, experiences and knowledge, and turn them into actions in order to improve people’s lives and prospects,” he said.

Mr Noa Petueli Tapumanaia, graduate speaker thanked the Government of Tuvalu and their sponsors for their financial support, family members, colleagues and their friends for their encouragement and support.

He also challenged his fellow graduates to practice what they have acquired from USP and contribute to making a difference in their families, community and the world together. He also urged them to become a beacon in building Tuvalu to be a better place for their children and future generations.

Fatele traditional dancing and Alofa gifting, where the people of Tuvalu presented gifts to the Pro Chancelor’s party, followed the graduation.

Dr. Rosiana Lagi, USP Tuvalu Campus Director said it was a proud moment for her and the families and friends of the 184 graduates to witness the graduates walk up to receive their certificates - the fruit of their hard work.

“In addition, there were parents graduating with their children, siblings and couples graduating together, and even having a 64-year-old graduate with an MBA was extraordinary. We are ending the year with a high note with our staff and Interns graduating and family members graduating together as well. This proves that it really does take a fenua to educate a child,” Dr Lagi said.

Dr Lagi commended the Government of Tuvalu and USP’s development partners, especially Australian DFAT, New Zealand MFAT, ROC Taiwan and the Tuvalu National Provident Fund for their financial support for the students and the USP Tuvalu Campus.
An ongoing research in Samoa by The University of the South Pacific (USP), Auckland University of Technology (AUT) and the Samoa Culture Centre (SCC) is examining indigenous notions and measurements of sustainable development for Samoa.

The response from one of the 30 participants during the research conducted on 3-14 December 2019, was that Samoa had lost their front line primary health care system, with regards to the measles outbreak that shook the country since last September. A State of Emergency was declared from 15 November-29 December in efforts to contain the virus and improve vaccination rates which were on a record low of 31 per cent at the time. The total shut down on December 4 and 5 witnessed an increase immunisation rates toward 95 per cent, a testament to what genuine partnerships can achieve across sectors, agencies and countries.

According to Dr Tolu Muliaina of USP, the 6-member research team conducted a faafaletui with high chiefs, youths, church representatives, Government officials, representatives of government departments and community leaders to identify possible solutions to promote public health and to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 3: Good health and wellbeing in and for Samoa.

This he said, is a Pacific-led research by Pacific researchers who use culturally appropriate methodologies such as Talanoa, Kakala and Faafaletui “which resonate with our people and they occupy a special place in the qualitative research methods literature”.

“Grounded in phenomenology, faafaletui is a critical weaving and interweaving of ideas and it promotes respectful social relations between participants and researchers. It is a suitable research paradigm as it enables participants to express lived experiences and “no one dares to interrupt another speaker as everyone will have a turn to speak” thus “knowledge flows from its holders to receivers” who continue to tui (probe) further as “different patterns emerged”, Dr Muliaina explained.

He added that it is a “a pure democracy concept” for it co-constructs knowledge for local people, a feature that has been missing in research methodologies.

“Faafaletui as a paradigm is an emancipatory process and outcome. It contributes to emerging research methodologies that ensures academic integrity, robustness and rigour,” he said.

Participants attributed the measles outbreak to the breakdown of a community partnership model between the government and local communities, a model, in their view, that has worked in the past. They highlighted the reinforcement of community nursing which was once conducted by Asiasi Komiti or Komiti Tumama (Health Inspection Committees) in villages and/or districts. Then, community nurses are those who live in villages or districts and regularly visit families, keep a register of new-borns and expectant mothers, the number of family members and deliver a holistic primary health care services.

And, “this community nurse would report back to the Ministry of Health after every month, gives them a documentation of the number of infants who have been vaccinated and those who will need to be done in the following month to prepare for the visits, and the pregnant mothers”. Furthermore, participants said, “the nurse follows up each family according to their matai clans, attend to the sores, warts, vaccinations, inspect our whole surroundings, the toilets, our garden plantations, check pregnant mothers, give advice on what to plant so food will be abundant when the baby arrives”. Participants also noted that since the formulation of new primary health guidelines, this community partnership was dismissed. Instead, the Ministry of Women, Community and Social Development brought in their own sui tamaitai (female representative) and sui alii (male representative), who are not trained nurses to perform these roles.

He acknowledged research participants for their gift of knowledge; the Director of the Samoa Culture Centre (SCC), Maulolo Leaula Tavita Amosa, who assisted with the logistics and facilitated our faafaletui; Asiava Atonio Tuipe’a, our Community and Cultural Advisor; colleagues in the Faculty of Health and Environmental Sciences, AUT for the Researchers Investment Fund that made this research possible, our Team Leader, Dr Juliet Boon-Nanai, Equity Pasifika Leader; Dr Sione Vaka, Senior Lecturer in the School of Nursing who was also part of the Pasifika Medical Team from New Zealand and voluntarily offered his service to the vaccination operation on the two-day shutdown and Dr Vaovo Ponpon, Lecturer in the School of Interprofessional Studies.
USP STUDENT SCOOPS PRESTIGIOUS CHEMICAL AWARD

A student of The University of the South Pacific (USP) scooped the prestigious Best of the Best prize medal for a conference paper presentation at the 18th Asian Chemical Congress in Taipei, Taiwan in December 2019. Shavneet Mani’s paper was titled, “Assessment of fine particulate matter in heavy traffic areas in Fiji”.

He explained that fine particulate matter or PM2.5 are particles that have an aerodynamic diameter equal or less than 2.5 µm (about 28 times smaller than the average diameter of a human hair).

“PM2.5 is one of the largest environmental risk factors and has been associated with serious health conditions including respiratory diseases, asthma, cardiovascular diseases, cancer etc. Vehicular traffic is one of the largest sources of PM2.5 in urban environments globally.

“As such, we monitored PM2.5 and black carbon concentrations in heavy traffic areas in Suva and Lautoka cities. Lautoka was found to have high concentrations of PM2.5,” he said.

He noted that the data obtained through this study is essential in highlighting air pollution issues in Fiji and the Pacific and will be instrumental in policy formation with respect to air pollution and emissions as well as sustainable development.

Shavneet scooped the award out of all 150+ applications that were selected to present posters. The 70 best poster presentations were selected to compete in the Best of the Best (BBP) competition. Out of the 70, the best 40 were selected and were awarded with the best prize. These 40 were asked to do an oral presentation following which the best 10 were selected and awarded the BBP prize and medal.

Shavneet shared that receiving the award was not only a delightful moment as it came as a surprise.

USP MY KANA GARDEN APP LAUNCHED

The My Kana Garden App developed by The University of the South Pacific (USP) was launched by Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete, Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services at the Holiday Inn in Suva on 27 January 2020.

While launching the app, Hon Waqainabete said Fiji faces a number of challenges in public health and a critical one is food and nutrition security.

“Core to addressing this definitively is an integrated solution which entails working together with our partner organisation including Government ministries, civil society, private sector, faith-based organisations and international and regional agencies,” he said.

He noted that the beauty of My Kana app is that is is based on our region’s database, the Pacific Islands Food Composition Tables and our very own Fiji Shop Survey.

Professor Jito Vanualailai acknowledged the team for their innovation and all the stakeholders for their support saying he was proud of their achievement, and was happy he played some role as the former Director of Research in supporting the research. He added that the University supports such research that benefits the Pacific Island Countries.

The My Kana app was first launched in 2017 as a food and nutrition app as part of USP’s Strategic Research Theme grant, a collaborative outcome between the University and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services.

In December 2018, the My Kana team put in a bid to compete at the Pacific Agrihack Lab event, organised by The Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation ACP-EU (CTA) in Tonga, as part of the Innov4AgPacific project.

They proposed an extension to the app, the addition of a home gardening component where people will have access to basic home gardening instructions at their fingertips.

The project team includes USP staff Dr. Yee Chief, Instructional Designer; Rajneel Totaram, Learning Systems Developer; Mojito Jione, Learning Experience Designer and the late Fulori Sarai, Assistant Lecturer, School of Education; and NFNC staff Ateca Kama, Manager NFNC; Alvina Deo, Senior Nutritionist; Asaeli Naika, Nutritionist; Jowalesi Taukei, Food & Nutrition Project Officer, NFNC and Alvin Kumar, Food Security Officer, NFNC.
Professor Jito Vanualailai has been appointed as the acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education for 6 months, or until a substantive appointment to the position is made. The appointment has been effective from 26th January 2020.

Professor Jito brings considerable experience in University administration, having served in many roles including Head of School, Associate Dean of Research and Graduate Affairs and most recently, as Director Research. Professor Vanualailai brings experience in both the Learning and Teaching and Research and Innovation areas.

Prof. Jito Vanualailai obtained his PhD in Applied Mathematics (Systems and Control Theory) from Kobe University, Japan, in 1994, after which he joined the School of Computing, Information & Mathematical Sciences where he was a Professor of Applied Mathematics.

His research interests include Stability of Nonlinear Systems, Artificial Neural Networks, Volterra Integro-differential Systems, Planning Algorithms, and Swarm Intelligence.

We welcome Professor Vanualailai to this new role and extend our support.

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**STAFF PROFILE**

**Name:** Ella K Bennion  
**Occupation:** Student Liaison Internship Coordinator  
**Faculty:** The Best -FBE  
**Year Joined:** 2009  
**Home Country:** Fiji

**Interesting part about your job?**  
Experiencing firsthand the personal & professional developments in our students. Travel with them on fieldtrips to exciting destinations. The STHM Annual Careers Fair and Graduation Ball.

**Describe your role in three words**  
Mentor, Advisor & Motivator

**What is your personal motto?**  
Be Grateful, Be Kind & Stay Humble

**Favourite thing about USP?**  
The colleagues who have become friends & the students who keep me busy. In addition, I love my job.

**Best thing about your campus.**  
One of the most beautiful campuses. Thanks to the staff & contractors who do a great job.

**What motivates you?**  
Knowing that each person I meet has a story that sometimes determines their level of motivation in achieving their own goals. And if I can facilitate that for them, I am more than happy. In doing so, I am motivated to be the best that I can be for me.

**What are three career lessons you have learnt while at USP?**  
Working at USP has taught me so much and I wouldn’t do her justice by mentioning only 3 lessons: USP has taught me: to work in a diverse community; maintain my professionalism and integrity at all times; be open-minded since my interactions are with people; and appreciate each colleague’s contribution to work, among others.

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**STUDENT PROFILE**

**Name:** Sam Mow  
**Programme:** Double major in Law and Business  
**Faculty:** FALE and FBE  
**Year Joined:** 2016  
**Home Country:** Fiji

**Why did you choose USP?**  
I chose USP because I felt their law programme was better than other Fiji based law schools.

**What are your career goals?**  
I hope to work in a field that has actual impact and fights against Climate Change.

**Preferred mode of study?**  
I like blended the most.

**Which course have you enjoyed the most? Why?**  
I really enjoyed Pacific Studies, it opened my eyes about Pacific History, and gave me a stronger sense of belonging. The course overall had more substance and depth than other text book courses I’ve registered for. My tutor, Ms. Tima, definitely had a large influence for the way I feel about this course.

**Describe how you feel about studying on your campus?**  
Laucala campus can get very full, but the amenities aren’t bad. The thing I enjoy the most about Laucala is the greenery. It feels very refreshing to be around so much green when walking from class to class.

**Where do you see yourself 5-10 years from now?**  
Hopefully working in an area that combats Climate Change.

**How is USP preparing you for the future?**  
I feel that a lot of the courses that we have are very textbook based, and don’t really prepare us for work or the future. However, some of the academic staff help fill the gaps and provide insight from their personal experiences that opens our eyes, and ready ourselves for “the work life”.

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The University of the South Pacific (USP) has undertaken the Brand Enhancement and Website Revamp project. This was initiated by the Strategic Partnerships, Advancement and Communications (SPAC) office, based on the decision of VC&P and SMT. The SPAC Office is now working with Neon Logic (Brisbane based firm) to enhance the University’s brand and guidelines and develop a modern website. The project has started and has completed its (Project Planning) stage and now it is at the (Discover) phase where Neon Logic is currently involved in USP Brand Audit and Website Review. Neon Logic has met the SMT and ran workshops with a broad spectrum of people from within the University from the 29-30 January. The workshop was basically about Neon Logic asking questions to the participants to know more about the university in terms of its strength, weakness and business needs.

After the Discover Phase, the project will move to (Think) stage. At this stage, Neon will look at and analyse the information and insights that have come from the workshops/research to begin formulating solutions.

The USP Brand Enhancement and Website Revamp project is expected to be completed by mid 2020.