ALUMNUS IS BANK MANAGER

The University of the South Pacific (USP) alumnus Karras Lui is the Manager of the Department of Economics at the Central Bank of Samoa (CBS). He completed his Bachelor of Arts in Economics (1998), and is currently pursuing his Master of Commerce in Economics at USP.

Mr Lui shares his earlier memories as a student with us, “One of the endearing memories I have of my USP days will be camaraderie with fellow students not only from Samoa but other Pacific Islands that exist to this day. I tend to run into USP alumni in various forums and meetings and reminisce of the USP life”.

His inspiration during his time as a student were his parents. Especially during those times when things were not going too well, and their encouragement helped him get through. He also acknowledges his lecturers and mentors, Dr. David Forsyth, Dr. Wadan Narsey and Dr. Roman Greenberg, and said that they helped shape his perspective during those times.

Mr Lui received an AusAID scholarship to study Economics at USP. He added that “Economics is an interesting area of study; it is a social science (general theories) with some mix of science (mathematical formulae) in it. It deals with both micro and macroeconomic issues, which is ideal if you want to be a policymaker”. Economics is a challenging and rewarding field of study, and has great prospects in the job market.

With a degree in Economics, he intentionally applied to the Central Bank of Samoa to work in its Research and Statistics Division. And from that role he progressed to where he is now, “I used what I learnt at USP on growth, development and monetary economics and managed to make a career out of it”.

As the manager of the Economics Department of the CBS, Mr Lui and his team’s primary job is to keep track of the changes and developments in both the global and domestic economy. This involves collecting data on the different macroeconomic indicators such as inflation, Gross Domestic Product (GDP), exports, tourism earnings and remittances to see where the economy is heading. “From there we can advise the CBS Governor and executives of what policy direction the CBS needs to take to achieve its policy objectives”, Mr Lui added.

For students and fresh graduates who are looking to expand their knowledge and learn about economics and policy, Mr Lui recommends reading and learning from both paid subscriptions like The Economist magazine as well as free reading material that the International Monetary Fund (IMF) publishes like its Working Paper series and the IMF Blog. These publications are well researched and they publish a lot of contemporary papers on current macroeconomic issues facing the world including issues faced in the Pacific region. “The National Bureau of Economic Research (NBER) Working Paper series is another great source of economic research for graduates to access and read,” he added.

While continuing with his studies at USP, he shared his future plans with us; “With a Master’s Degree in Economics, the hope is to continue my career at the CBS and offer a more effective service to the CBS. With new technology and financial innovation in the Pacific and now with the COVID-19 pandemic, central banking and monetary policy need to evolve and adapt as well and that is where I hope to assist the CBS”.

Karras Lui

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We asked Mr Lui to provide some tips and words of wisdom to share with students and those who are starting out in their careers, he shared the following with us:

- I think the number one tip is commitment. Sometimes, not all that you have learned will relate to your work and duties. Some people will get bored and discouraged but it is important to learn and adapt and keep at it.

- Also, be thorough in your work, go the extra mile and show your supervisor you are committed.

- Another tip is to have an open mind, be flexible in your approach and that you may have your own opinion but willing to listen and consider others as well.

While in Samoa, Mr Lui and other alumni keep in touch and meet every so often. They also participated in USP hosted alumni events in Samoa and attended major events during USP’s 50th year anniversary in 2018.

We thank Mr Lui for his time and wish him all the best for his studies and look forward to hearing more about his future achievements.

If you have a story to share with us, please email us: alumni@usp.ac.fj

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**GRANTS RECEIVED BY USP JOURNALISM ALUMNI**

"I am passionate about conservation and this grant is an opportunity to explore an issue that impacts a number of communities in the country," he says.

"I appreciate the opportunity to work with EJN, which is a renowned media development organisation in the world. I am fortunate to have access to the expertise available within EJN in the field of environmental journalism."

USP Journalism had also secured a $20,000 grant from EJN last year to boost environmental reporting in the region.

The EJN/USP Journalism project titled, ‘Adapting to and mitigating effects of climate change and island sea-level rise’, involves journalism students conducting climate change reporting in the Cook Islands and the Solomon Islands.

The USP journalism programme has won a number of national and regional awards for environmental reporting, including the 2010 Vision Pasifika Climate Change Media Awards by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

Due to COVID-19 restrictions, EJN said some grantees were not able to conduct field reporting as planned and are focusing on online research and phone interviews instead.

This story was also featured on Wansolwara, to read more stories like this, please visit their website www.wansolwaranews.com

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Briefly reflect on your student life at USP. What memories do you have?

I cherished every moment of my student life at Laucala Campus. It was a great experience and I made a lot of friends. Laucala Campus was so big that I had difficulties in locating my classes. What I really like about USP Laucala Campus are the services it provides to students. During my first year, I had difficulties coping with a few courses but I applied for mentoring and USP assigned a mentor who assisted me throughout the year.

Why did you choose your field of study?

I was supposed to do Information System and Official Statistics, however it was my personal interest to do a Management major. So I chose to do Management and Public Administration instead of Information System. Now I find this combination very relevant to my field of work as the Asset Manager for the Department of Education.

Why did you choose to do your studies at USP?

I was the recipient of the AUSAID (ARDS Scholarship) which offers students the opportunity to study in one of the Universities in the region. The programme that I applied for was offered at USP in Fiji so I ended up at Laucala campus.

What were some of your achievements as a student?

I consider myself an average student and completing my studies with a Bachelor's degree was my greatest achievement.

What work did you do immediately after graduating from USP?

Prior to my scholarship to study in Fiji, I worked for the Department of Education as the Asset Manager, a position which I still hold today. I applied for leave to study at USP and after I completed my studies, I resumed my position.

Describe your present job and what you enjoy about it.

I am currently employed by the Government of Nauru as Asset Manager within the Department of Education. I am responsible for keeping records of all Assets for the Department and also doing procurement.

How do you think USP helped you in your career?

USP provided a positive learning environment, exposure to different cultures and values, experienced lecturers and tutors and helpful student learning services staff.

Describe challenges you faced to reach where you are today and how you overcame those challenges?

I never completed high school and was unemployed for some years. Back then Nauru was facing hardships and jobs were limited. It seemed my life had hit a dead end, however with the help of my relatives, I managed to find a job and from that point, I realised that education opens many doors. I decided to go back and study. It was tough for me but I persevered thinking that if I quit, nothing good would ever come my way.

Who/what inspires you?

The person who inspires me the most is my wife. She endured with me during all those years of being away from home and families. She helped me throughout my studies and made sure things were organised.

Where do you see yourself in 10 years (career and/or personal goals)?

I do not have a clear outlook on my future especially ten (10) years from now. I believe in taking one step at a time and focusing on short term goals which will contribute to better things in the future.

Please share three tips that you think are important for recent graduates that will help them when starting out on their career paths.

1. Keep improving and upgrading yourself.
2. Perseverance is the key.
3. Time management.

How do you think you could contribute/give back to USP?

I will encourage students to study at USP and also be a mentor, providing assistance in any way that I can for students who are planning to do the same programme I did.

Richard-Hyde Menke  ₪ Nauru
Bachelor of Commerce Information Systems and Management (2017)
Asset Manager within the Department of Education, Government of Nauru

USP provided a positive learning environment, exposure to different cultures and values, experienced lecturers and tutors and helpful student learning services staff.
### Where are they now?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Graduation Information</th>
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| 1970 | Dr Karoline Afamasaga-Fuata'i  
Graduation:  
- Bachelor of Science and Graduate Certificate in Education (1973) from USP  
- Masters and PhD in Mathematics Education, majoring in Computer Science and minor in Curriculum Instruction from Cornell University in the United States  
Country: Samoa  
Occupation: Chief Executive Officer of the Ministry of Education, Samoa |
| 1980 | Jimione Buwawa  
Graduation:  
- Bachelor of Arts (1986) from USP  
Country: Fiji  
Occupation: Chairman at Board of Governors, Nasinu Secondary School, Fiji |
| 1990 | Faamausili Taiva Ah Young  
Graduation:  
- Bachelor of Arts (1984) from USP  
Country: Samoa  
Occupation: Managing Director at Ah Young Enterprises (AYE) Belfield, New South Wales, Australia |
|      | Augustine Mamamo  
Graduation:  
- Foundation Science (1998) from USP  
- Bachelor of Arts (2003) from USP  
Country: Solomon Islands  
Occupation: ICT Adviser at Development Strategists International – Asian Development Bank (ADB) |
| 2000 | Liz Ponga  
Graduation:  
- Diploma in Management Studies (1996) from USP  
- Master of Business Administration (2009) from USP  
- Postgraduate Diploma in International Affairs (2011) from USP  
Country: Cook Islands  
Occupation: Policy Manager at Cook Island Networking Entertainment & Multimedia Associates (C.I.N.E.M.A.), Cook Islands |
|      | Marie Veronika Fredricka Bibi  
Graduation:  
- Foundation of Social Science (2008) from USP  
Country: Fiji  
Occupation: Compliance Officer at Kontiki Finance, in Fiji |
| 2010 | Jennifer Tema Lakoa  
Graduation:  
- Bachelor of Arts (2004) from USP  
- Bachelor of Social Work (2006) from USP  
Country: Solomon Islands  
Occupation: Manager Investment at the Solomon Islands National Provident Fund |
|      | James Dolarii  
Graduation:  
- Bachelor of Arts (2012) from USP  
- Master of Business Administration (2019) from USP  
Country: Solomon Islands  
Occupation: Communications Officer at Tina River Hydropower Development Project |
|      | Isabell Rasch  
Graduation:  
- Bachelor of Agriculture (2016) from USP  
Country: Samoa  
Occupation: Global Environment Facility (GEF6) Regional Invasive Species Coordinator |
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Be INFORMED
Be PREPARED
Be SMART
Be SAFE

For the latest health advice, go to: www.who.int/COVID-19

Protect yourself and others from getting sick
Wash your hands
- after coughing or sneezing
- when caring for the sick
- before, during and after you prepare food
- before eating
- after toilet use
- when hands are visibly dirty
- after handling animals or animal waste

Protect others from getting sick
When coughing and sneezing, cover mouth and nose with flexed elbow or tissue
Throw tissue into closed bin immediately after use
Clean hands with alcohol-based hand rub or soap and water after coughing or sneezing and when caring for the sick

Avoid close contact when you are experiencing cough and fever
Avoid spitting in public
If you have fever, cough and difficulty breathing seek medical care early and share previous travel history with your health care provider.