

## **Higher Education and the Indigenous Language and Culture: Samoanisation of the National University of Samoa**

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*Eric Clem Groves<sup>1</sup> and Matiu Matavai Tautunu<sup>2</sup>*

### **Abstract**

Established in 1984, the National University of Samoa has undergone multiple phases of change to adapt to the needs and demands of the Samoan community. As the only national university in Samoa, one of the main functions bestowed upon the University is the preservation and sustainment of the Samoan language and culture through its teaching and research functions. Higher education being a non-Samoan concept, meant that the University had to undergo unique customisations and alterations in order to feature the Samoan language and culture in its general operations. This responsibility and expectation placed on the University saw the rise of three champions, who have led the Samoanisation of higher education in Samoa, despite the challenges of their respective times. In achieving the University's intent for cultural adaptation, the late Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa set the precedent in the University's formative years, followed by Dr. Asofou So'o and Dr. Malama Meleisea, who are both proud advocates for the integration of the Samoan language and culture in higher education. This paper covers the historical context of the Samoanisation of higher education in Samoa while also forecasting its prospective future.

**Keywords:** Culture; Higher Education; Indigenous; Language; Samoanisation

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<sup>1</sup> Manager Planning, Governance, Policy and Planning Division, National University of Samoa, Apia Samoa, email: e.groves@nus.edu.ws

<sup>2</sup> Senior Lecturer, Samoan Language and Culture Department, Centre for Samoan Studies, National University of Samoa, Apia Samoa, email: m.tautunu@nus.edu.ws

## **Introduction: Literature on the Nationalisation of Higher Education through the Indigenous Language and Culture**

The end of the Second World War marked the mass decolonisation of countries worldwide. This saw the rise of new independent nations who were now in the process of building their economies and education systems. This required more access to post-secondary education and training opportunities than that which had already been established by the former colonial powers (So'o, 2006). For many nations such as Samoa, this resulted in the development and establishment of national universities and institutions of higher education. From the decolonisation process, most newly independent nations inherited the education systems and models of their former colonial powers. These education models and systems were traditionally western and have devalued or suppressed the indigenous knowledge and philosophy. Although there were early efforts by missionaries to teach and develop materials in the indigenous language and culture, they often played second tier to the introduced colonial language and system (Thaman, 2003). Gunson (1978) illustrates that the missionaries often based their teachings on the 'values and standards which European, partially British middle-class, opinion had impressed on the social life at the time'. This was the case for Samoa where introduced western education and influences attempted to 'undermine and disrupt traditional practices' (Auva'a, 2003). This brought Samoa and many new independent nations to the realisation that there was a need to strengthen their indigenous language and culture in the education systems, particularly higher education. This can also be seen as the 'nationalisation of higher education', a term coined in the early 1800s (Holst von, 1893). Many nations have since nationalised their education systems in an attempt to revive and preserve their indigenous language and culture. This mainly requires the State to play an influential role in the funding and administration of higher education institutions. This fits the description of the National University of Samoa (NUS), as although the University is proclaimed in its act to be independent (NUS Act, 2006), it is heavily subsidised by the government, so it is likely influenced significantly by the State's agenda.

However, the push for nationalisation of higher education has brought about its own challenges, particularly how it contradicts the growing drive and increasing focus of universities for internationalisation. Auva'a (2003) in his thesis on continuity and change in Samoan education highlights how the Samoan Government struggled with balancing nationalisation and internationalisation in what he described as 'two opposing school of thoughts' between traditional and 'westernisation of contemporary education'. This resulted in a political divide between educators and

the public due to the policies not being able to balance the objectives between nationalisation and internationalisation. A study by Ayoubi and Massoud (2011) suggests that although the two concepts of nationalisation and internationalisation can be harmonised, there is a common substantial imbalance between the two as their primary objectives are in conflict. This is mainly because nationalisation pushes for preservation of the indigenous philosophy, language and culture, whereas internationalisation pushes for multiculturalism and diversity. In addition, internationalisation more often than not, works effectively when the institution is privatised and independent from the State. However, this presents a greater risk for the loss of indigenous language and culture, as most of the newly independent States' economies are only developing, therefore privatisation of the institution will likely be financially sourced from outside of the country. In a contrary scenario, nationalisation can backfire if the agenda of the State does not align with that of the indigenous language and culture (Chao, 2012; Nicholls, 2008). This is more often than not, an issue for developed countries who have yet to acquire independence while also facing a disproportionate population disparity, whereby the indigenous people are in the minority.

One of the first and most difficult tasks facing higher education institutions is teaching and developing academic material in the indigenous language. The early stages of the implementation, teaching and development of academic materials in the indigenous language are often the most difficult. This is because at times, institutions can receive internal and external resistance from its staff and immediate stakeholders who are comfortable and have been brought through an education system that has been taught dominantly in English since it was established by the former colonial powers. Moreover, newly independent nations are often quite young in terms of their indigenous vocabulary and curricula (Shizha, 2012). This means that most intricate terminologies and philosophies have yet to be translated into the indigenous language. This is particularly true for scientific, medical and technical terms. Shizha (2012) in a study of Zimbabwe suggests that the key to addressing this challenge is to channel the teaching of all courses, particularly technical and scientific, in the indigenous language through a bottom-up approach by starting at the primary level. This way, as the learners pass through secondary and higher education levels, the indigenous or translated terminologies will be well embedded in them. This argument is disputed by Thaman (2003), who in her paper on decolonising Pacific Studies suggests that higher education should be the focus.

Scientific technical terms and philosophies can be argued to be foreign, therefore not to be translated. This argument is insubstantial and has been rebuked by increasing

literature with findings of overwhelming evidence in support of indigenous language in scientific and technical disciplines (Ramos & Empinotti, 2017). Academia is an international space, in which terminologies, philosophies and theories are borrowed from all corners of the globe, therefore giving it a wider scope of ownership. Case studies of teaching science in Africa, Spanish and Portuguese speaking countries have suggested preference for teaching in the indigenous language over the colonial introduced language (Ademowo, 2015; Africanews, 2017; Ramos & Empinotti, 2017). Ramos and Empinotti (2017) indicated that to overcome the challenges of translation, a formal network of specialised institutions must be formed and consistently active. For smaller nations such as Samoa, this can easily be achieved, as Samoa has a limited number of institutions, therefore enabling easier collation whilst also being resource-friendly. The approach of teaching in the indigenous language will naturally draw in the indigenous culture component, as the culture is more easily preserved through its language (Siekmann et al, 2017). This creates a culturally responsive education system, a mechanism that can only be achieved at great pace, if taught in the indigenous language. Based on the collected literature, the below model attempts to demonstrate the bottom-up approach to integrating indigenous language, culture and nationalisation in higher education:

Figure 1. Samoanisation Tree Model

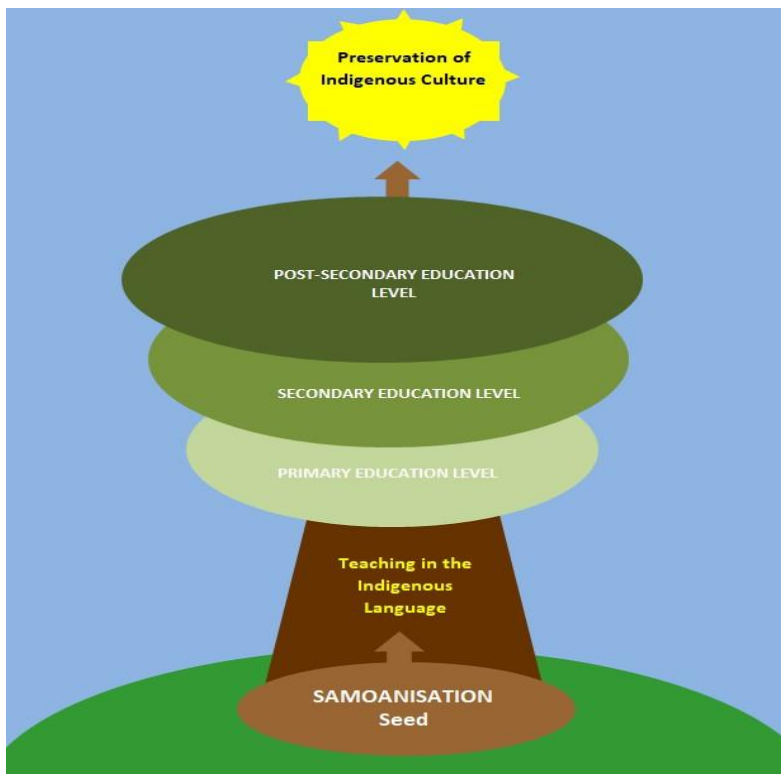


Figure 1 adopts Shizha's (2012) hypothesis which proposes that the teaching in the indigenous language and culture be engraved first in the primary level which ultimately influences secondary and post-secondary levels. This formula puts the education system in the best possible position to preserve the indigenous language and culture. This is best achieved at secondary and tertiary levels where the production of creative pieces, research literature and policies are more prevalent. The term nationalisation in the context of Samoa and the NUS is rearticulated as 'Samoanisation' which is symbolised as a seed in Figure 1.

## **Methodology**

This research utilises a mixed quantitative and qualitative approach and is dominated by secondary sources that are complemented by interview of informants. In addition, this study has undertaken an exploratory review of the secondary literature sourced mainly from open access journals. The majority of the secondary sources for this research have been obtained from the National University of Samoa archival records; this mainly being the minutes of the NUS Council from 1984 to 2017. Ethical clearance and authorisation to conduct research and include human participants was sought and granted in 2017 by the University's Research Ethics Committee. Authorisation to access records and literature held at the Ministry of Education Sports and Culture was not granted in 2017. This has limited the research literature to sources from within the NUS and open access journals. Research data collected from the interview informants were compared with the information provided from official NUS records to help distinguish opinion from fact. This approach was also used to assure that the interpretation of data by the authors is both neutral and accurate.

## **Early Development of the Samoan Language and Culture Programme at the National University of Samoa**

The NUS was established on February the 14th 1984 by an Act of Parliament. The NUS Act 1984 identifies the three core functions of the University. The first was 'to retrieve, analyse, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoa, the Samoan language and Samoan culture'; secondly 'to maintain, advance and disseminate other knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research'; and lastly, 'to provide facilities for university education and training responsive to the needs of the people of Samoa' (NUS, 1984). The three core functions guided the University's development throughout the first 13 years of its existence. In 1985 the University started developing courses and a programme in the Samoan language and culture after its Council received directives from the Samoan Government (Council Minutes,

1985). The University was instructed to incorporate Samoan language and technical education courses into the University Preparatory Year (UPY) programme. In response, the NUS Council and management formed a working group which was tasked with researching the future prospects of the NUS UPY programme and identifying suitable candidates to develop, teach and lead the Samoan language programme.

One of the first moves made by the working group was approaching the Iunivesite o Samoa (translates to 'University of Samoa') which was Samoa's first university, established by the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa (CCCS) in August 1978. The working group sought assistance from the Iunivesite o Samoa as the institution had already developed a programme in Samoan language and culture and taught a handful of students under the leadership of its Vice Chancellor Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa (Tuiai, 2012). Although talks between the NUS and the Iunivesite o Samoa were pending, a long string of administrative troubles at CCCS disrupted progress for a potential collaboration with NUS to teach Samoan language and culture. This propitious alliance was further halted when the Vice Chancellor of the Iunivesite o Samoa resigned due to the struggles of the institution. The following year, 1986, marked the end of the eight-year stint of the CCCS Iunivesite o Samoa as the first university in Samoa (Tuiai, 2012 p. 158). The NUS was now the only national university in the country. The closure of the CCCS Iunivesite o Samoa increased the pressure upon the Government and the NUS to avoid the same fate as the first university of Samoa.

Although the closure of the Iunivesite o Samoa placed pressure on the NUS, it also brought about an opportunity as Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa's (now on referred to as Dr. Le Tagaloa) exit meant that her experience and expertise in Samoan heritage, language and culture were now on the market. The NUS was able to successfully secure her services and appointed her as the founding Professor of the University. Her appointment played an instrumental role in the early development of the Samoan language and culture programme and the general administration of the NUS. Under her guidance, the University reviewed and strengthened the Samoan language and culture courses taught at the UPY level. Dr. Le Tagaloa also administered the development and offering of the Samoan language and culture programme at undergraduate level as part of the Bachelor of Arts programme in the early 1990s. It is widely believed that Dr. Le Tagaloa inspired the first and probably the most influential Samoanisation refinement in academia; the featuring of the Matai chiefly title before the academic and professorial titles (Temese, personal communication 2018 & So'o, personal communication 2021). Dr. Le Tagaloa's concept was

originally meant only for Ph.D. holders but her introduced practice quickly gained popularity and the momentum led to other doctoral titled professions. The impact of this minor change extended beyond higher education. Dr. Le Tagaloa is the reason why academics and health professionals, to name a few professions, formally identify firstly with their chiefly titles. The below figure 2 is a fictional illustration:

Figure 2. Academic Title vs. Chiefly Title

<b>Customary Reference of Academic Title in Names</b>	<b>Samoanised Reference of Academic Title in Names</b>
Dr. Mataia Efeso Hunt	<b>Mataia</b> Dr. Efeso Hunt
Professor Mataia Efeso Hunt	<b>Mataia</b> Professor Efeso Hunt

The argument for the small but significant shift was that the academic title is widely seen as a personal achievement that solely represents the individual, whereas the chiefly title represents culture, family, and the wider village (So’o, personal communication 2021; Temese, personal communication 2018), which, in the Samoan cultural context, holds more relevance. This is thought to be the first significant spark in the Samoanisation of higher education in Samoa.

### **Development of the Centre for Samoan Studies**

In 1986, the NUS Council for the first time discussed and announced its ambitions to establish a faculty or institute for Samoan studies. From early discussions, the core roles of research and seminars were incorporated into the functions of the proposed institute or faculty (Council Minutes, 1986). Although there were discussions of a Samoan studies institute, there were no real developments due to the resource constraints of the University. The idea was then shelved to allow the University to pursue other potential avenues to promote Samoanisation. In 1994, the NUS Council looked into the prospect of developing a Masters of Samoan Studies (MSS) after considering a concept led by Dr. Asofou So’o, a senior lecturer in history at the time. After several detailed dialogues and investigations, it became obvious that the NUS

did not have the academic resources to accommodate the development and delivery of the MSS. As a result, the NUS conducted an external review of the Samoan Language and Culture courses being offered as part of the Bachelor of Arts. From the review, the NUS received recommendations to establish a separate degree, the Bachelor of Samoan Studies. The Bachelor of Samoan Studies was developed soon after, marking a great milestone for the University and the Samoan people (Council Minutes, 1994).

In 1997, the NUS merged with the Western Samoa Teachers College which formed the Faculty of Education. The Western Samoa Teachers College also taught courses in the Samoan language and culture for prospective teachers. The merger was believed to further strengthen the delivery of the Samoan language and culture courses as the resources of the two institutions were to be combined (Council Minutes, 1997). The merger brought about the drafting of the NUS Act 1997, which placed further emphasis on the three core functions from the NUS Act 1984 (NUS, 1997). The year 1997 was also when the University physically relocated its main campus to its current home on the hill side of Vaivase Tai, which is believed to be the approximate location of the Le Papaigalagala legend. One of the most significant factors of the University's move was that the cultural legacy of the site fit perfectly with the essence of the University. The Le Papaigalagala name given to the main Campus of the University is based on a legend that derived from an old Samoan practice of burying babies up to their waist in the sand at the river which used to run through the valley below the campus. The mothers would then pull out the babies from the sand. The practice was believed to strengthen the legs of the babies so that they could begin walking early:

The story goes that there were two women with young babies travelling from Aana district and they were travelling from bay to bay. When they arrived at the river which used to run through the gully below campus, the babies sat down and drew lines on the sand on the banks of the river (vase laina – draw line), thus the name vaivasevase or as it is now known as Vaivase. The mothers then placed the babies on top of the rocks (the site of the NUS campus) and as the babies were crawling on the rocks they began to rise and stood on their feet. (NUS Calendar, 1998)

The analogy is that the rock represents the university. The babies represent the students who come in hypothetically crawling and will one-day stand on their own feet. The NUS main campus being the approximate location of the Le Papaigalagala legend is challenged by Va'a (2008) in his study titled 'The Legend of Le



Papaigalagala' which references various versions to the legend. Despite the various versions, the main campus adopting the Le Papaigalagala name was another significant step in the Samoanisation of the NUS. By the following year 1998, the University had sufficient resources to establish its long awaited specialised arm in Samoan studies. With the preparations pending, the University's Council attempted to secure the services of Dr. Malama Meleisea who was previously approached by the Council of 1992 for the Vice Chancellor's role (Council Minutes, 1992 & Council Minutes, 1998). The Institute of Samoan Studies (ISS) was established in 1999 with Dr. Saleimoa Va'ai appointed as the founding Director (PIDP 2000; So'o personal communication 2021). The establishment of the ISS was seen as the pinnacle of the Samoan language and culture in higher education.

In 2000, the Faculty of Arts programmes underwent an external review. As a result, it was recommended to move the Department of Samoan Studies from the Faculty of Arts to the ISS. The NUS Council members debated about whether the ISS should have a teaching arm. It was eventually agreed that the ISS was intended only to foster research on Samoa in all fields, and that a teaching arm of the ISS would likely disrupt its research developing duties. During this year and period, Dr. Saleimoa Va'ai resigned as the Director ISS to pursue a career as a politician. Dr. Asofou So'o then left his post as the Dean of the Faculty of Arts to become the Director ISS (Council Minutes, 2000; So'o, personal communication 2021). By the end of October 2000, the relocation of the Samoan Language and Culture department to the ISS was formally declined by Council (Council Minutes, 2000). It was not until 2005 that the Council approved the shift of the Samoan Language and Culture Department from the Faculty of Arts to the ISS after accepting Dr. Asofou So'o's formal justification. So'o (2018) argued that the teaching arm was incorporated into the ISS to utilise the expertise of the highly qualified ISS staff at the time. He added that although the intentions of establishing the ISS to foster research were positive, the University did not possess the capacity for mass research at the time. In 2006, the NUS underwent a merger with the Samoa Polytechnic under the current NUS Act 2006, which specified six new functions of the University: (a) 'The provision of education and training, including academic, technical and vocational training and continuing education at appropriate levels responsive to the needs of the people of Samoa'; (b) 'The establishment of a centre of excellence in the study of the Samoan language and culture and all matters pertaining to Samoa; (c) The acquisition and transmission of knowledge by teaching, consultancy, community learning and research; (d) 'The encouragement of intellectual independence'; (e) 'The promotion of the economic and social development of Samoa'; and lastly (f) 'The realisation of the goals and guiding principles of the University as set out in its Corporate Plan'

(NUS, 2006).

The second function pertaining to the Samoan culture and language has since been the driving principle for Samoanisation at NUS. In 2006, the ISS was also rebranded to its current name, 'The Centre for Samoan Studies'. The ceremonial rebranding was augmented with the completion and introduction of the Postgraduate Diploma and Masters of Samoan Studies programmes led by the Centre's Director Dr. Asofou So'o that same year. The Masters of Samoan Studies was originally intended to be the Master of Arts during its early development but was redesigned into a multidisciplinary degree in Samoan studies after the Faculty of Arts opted to develop its master's degree separately from the Centre for Samoan Studies (Council Minutes 2006; So'o, personal communication 2021). The Master of Arts did not materialise until 15 years later in 2021. The introduction of the postgraduate Samoan Studies programme was a tremendous occasion for Samoan culture and the University. This was a significant feat for the University as it was the first Masters programme and the only one of its kind. The MSS is a multidisciplinary programme which encourages all PhD holders of the University to make contributions from their respective disciplines pertaining to Samoa. For instance, as a political scientist Dr. Asofou So'o was able to bridge his expertise into the Samoan custom through research, which ultimately informed his MSS teaching (So'o, 2008). A good example would be his popular book 'Democracy and Custom in Samoa: An Uneasy Alliance' published in 2008. To strengthen the MSS programme and research on Samoa, the University launched the Measina A Samoa Conference and Samoa Conference. Both events target multidisciplinary research on Samoa and produce presentations and proceedings in English and Samoan. In 2014, the NUS established the Journal of Samoan Studies housed at the Centre for Samoan Studies under its new Director Dr. Malama Meleisea, who succeeded Dr. Fonoti Fuatai who took over in 2009 from Dr. Asofou So'o who was promoted to be Vice Chancellor and President. The Journal of Samoan Studies is a multidisciplinary journal and is the first local Samoan peer-reviewed journal to publish papers in the Samoan language. In the same year, the NUS introduced the Doctorate in Samoan Studies programme, a significant step in promoting, conserving and establishing academic authority in the Samoan language and culture (Council Minutes, 2014).

### **The Insertion of the Samoanisation Term in the University Policy and Planning**

The term 'Samoanisation' at NUS was officially coined in the NUS Campus Master Plan 2020/21-2024/25, which encourages the University's development to be rooted

in the Samoan culture, language, and values (NUS, 2020a). The Samoanisation concept is a result of the Campus Master Plan's alignment to the University's Corporate Plan 2017/18-2020/21 and Corporate Plan 2021/22-2024/25. The NUS Corporate Plan 2017/18-2020/21 identifies to 'Preserve and maintain the Samoan language and culture and promote teaching and research on all matters pertaining to Samoa' as the first of five mandates for the University. This is further reflected in the strategic priorities of the plan which lists 'Safeguarding Samoa's Cultural Heritage' as the first of five priorities. It is further elaborated by the Corporate Plan with the strategic clause 'Enhance the promotion and preservation of Samoa's cultural heritage' (NUS, 2017). The plan goes on to identify the following two activities:

- 1) Include teaching of courses in Samoan language and culture, Samoan history, heritage and archaeology, development studies and research in all programmes.
- 2) Optimise community access to and engagement with the University's and (Samoa's) archaeological findings, artefacts, collections, performing and expressive arts and spaces.

The two activities are complemented by the following seven key performance indicators (KPI) which have all been achieved by the University:

- a) A postgraduate programme in Samoan language, culture and history is developed;
- b) Expo/showcase of any of the creations on Samoa is included in the proceedings of the Measina A Samoa Conference;
- c) Availability of recorded demonstrations (audio, video clips etc.) of the culture and language promoting understanding and NUS reputation;
- d) Naming of University buildings and roads after cultural references;
- e) Results of completed research on various aspects of Samoa are presented in workshop and conferences, and published in the Journal of Samoan Studies and other publication outlets;
- f) Conservation and management plan for the University's cultural resources, collections and artifacts, is developed;
- g) Samoan Cultural Day in partnership with relevant stakeholders is established.

As a result of the above activities and KPIs, the University successfully introduced the Samoan Cultural Day Celebration in 2018, and also renamed all buildings on its main Le Papaigalagala Campus after native trees. The Centre for Samoan Studies in

2018 also launched its Utu database containing an electronic collection of articles and historical and archaeological publications on Samoa. During this period the Centre for Samoan Studies was under the leadership of Dr. Safua Akeli. The University has also continued to host and coordinate the Measina a Samoa Conference, Samoa Conference, as well as exhibitions and seminars; all of which focus on the Samoan language and culture. The same year, the University introduced a compulsory University wide course, 'HSA100 Introduction to Samoan History and Society' which is taught in both English and Samoan. The NUS Student Calendar (2020b) stipulates that the course provides a 'broad multidisciplinary understanding of the history of Samoa; its geography, population, economy, language, arts and cultural heritage'. The Centre of Samoan Studies has also been very active in research pertaining to the Samoan language, culture, and heritage, notably with its archaeological research on the big island of Savaii and its close involvement in developing the first Samoan-to-Samoan language dictionary in collaboration with the Ministry of Education, Sports and Culture.

In 2020, the University named all its internal streets after different Samoan references to sea tides. For instance, one of the streets on the main Le Papaigalagala campus was given the name of 'Tai-pe', meaning low tide. The development and implementation of NUS signage is conducted in alignment with the University's Signage Guideline (2019) and Campus Master Plan 2020/21-2024/25. Both policy and strategic documents encourage the translation of signs into Samoan. This has resulted in the translation of traffic signage on the NUS campuses, likely the first institution to apply this practice in Samoa. Traffic signs are regulated by the Land Transport Authority and have been traditionally standardised to New Zealand in terms of language, symbols and dimensions. The University has also engaged in the planting of indigenous trees on its campuses (So'o, personal communication 2021). In 2020 the University attempted to re-name its Mulinu'u Campus after a cultural reference but this was dismissed by the University management as it was deemed too culturally sensitive. Although the University has accomplished multiple milestones in the Samoanisation of its operations, it has not come without its challenges.

### **Challenges: NUS Fa'alupega, the NUS Chiefly Titles**

The fa'alupega is a ceremonial salutation composed of a list of chiefly titles (Akeli, 2013). The concept of the fa'alupega for the University was introduced by Dr. Le Tagaloa in the early to mid-1990s. However, her introduction only included 'Ao' and 'Fa'aAo' addressed to the Chancellor and Pro Chancellors (So'o, personal communication 2021). The term 'Ao' is generally defined as light or the head

(Allardice, 1985), symbolic of being the highest rank in the University hierarchy. The term 'Fa'aAo' being the dawn before light or deputy head is symbolic of the highest prestige that is only inferior to the 'Ao'. Dr. Le Tagaloa developed preliminary translations to the names of faculties and addresses of most of the posts of the University. It was not until 2006 that the full-fledged fa'alupega was drafted by Dr. Asofou So'o under the directive of NUS management and Council. The motive was to symbolically reflect the traditional village setting with the salutation of traditional titles and ranks (Council Minutes 2006 & So'o 2016). The fa'alupega is to some extent similar to a village constitution in which chiefs' reference appropriate titles in their orator speeches. In the same essence, the University management wanted the institution to practice this as a form of further preserving the language and culture by integrating the fa'alupega into the higher education system (Council Minutes 2006; So'o, 2016).

The full fa'alupega expanded from the foundation work laid down by Dr. Le Tagaloa from a top-to-bottom approach, continuing from the 'Ao' and 'Fa'aAo'. This started with the role of the Vice Chancellor and President, which received the salutation of 'Tapa-i-au' shortened and more commonly referred to as 'Tapa'au'. The ceremonial title conferred on the role of the Vice Chancellor and President has a unique double meaning. This is because the name serves two purposes and therefore has two forms; 'Tapa-i-au' and 'Tapa-iai-ana-au'. 'Tapa-i-au' is symbolic of a leader who relies on his or her team and supporters. 'Tapa iai ana au' is symbolic of a leader whose supporters and team relies on him or her (So'o, personal communication 2021). The dual meaning and forms of the Tapa'au salutation of the Vice Chancellor and President was to reflect the function of the role as one who serves his or her employees and vice-versa. The term Tapa'au outside of the University setting is more commonly 'Tapa'au i le lagi' translated as 'God in the heavens', which is regularly used in church sermons (Allardice, 1985). It is believed that the wider definition of Tapa'au referring to God may have caused discomfort in contrast to the actual meaning composed for the University setting. The more popular narration to the Tapa'au definition outside of the University is what caused a pessimistic perception of the fa'alupega concept for years to come. The rest of the framework of the fa'alupega is based on the traditional village, Fale Samoa (traditional Samoan house) seating and family structures (Van der Ryn, 2008). Below is the fa'alupega and the translations of University posts and sections (So'o, 2016):

Table 1. NUS Fa'alupega

NUS Fa'alupega	
<i>Samoan Salutation</i>	<i>English Translation</i>
Afio mai le <b>Ao</b> o le Iunivesite	Greetings Chancellor of the University
Afio mai le <b>Fa'aAo</b>	Greetings Pro Chancellor
Afio mai le <b>Tapa'au</b>	Greetings Vice Chancellor and President
Afifio <b>Sa'o</b> e lua ma o laFuaiala	Greetings to both Deputy Vice Chancellors their respective areas
Susu mai <b>Atamaioali'i</b> ma <b>Soatamaioali'i</b>	Welcome Professors and Associate Professors
Susu mai <b>Matuaosaofa'iga</b> ma lo 'outou Faleono	Welcome Deans and their respective faculties
Maliu mai <b>Tulamalae</b> ma lō 'outou Faleiva	Welcome Directors and their respective divisions
Susu mai <b>Usoali'i</b> ma o 'outou Fuaifale	Welcome Heads of Schools and your respective Schools
Alalata'i <b>To'oto'o</b> ma o 'outou Itupaepae	Welcome Heads of Departments and your respective Departments
Alalata'i <b>Tulatoa</b> ma o 'outou <b>Tulafale</b> ma <b>Pitovao</b>	Come forth Managers, Senior Officers and Officers
Mamalu mai le Iunivesite Aoao o Samoa	Dignitaries of the National University of Samoa

Table 2. Translations of University Sections

Translation of University Sections	
<b>Section</b>	<b>Samoan Translation</b>
Academic Quality Unit	Puna o Tomai Mauauga
Centre for Samoan Studies	Laumua o Su'esu'ega Tau Samoa
Chancellery	Fono Fauautua i le Tapa'au
Council	Fono Fa'atonu
Financial Services	Vaega mo 'Au'aunaga Tau Tupe
Human Resources	Vaega o 'Au'aunaga mo le 'Aufaigaluega
ICT	Vaega o Feso'ota'iga Fa'atekonolosi
Student Services	Vaega o 'Au'aunaga Fesoasoani mo Tagata A'oga
Executive Committee	Komiti Fa'atino o le Fono Fa'atonu
Faculty of Arts	Saofa'iga o Fa'atufugaga
Faculty of Business and Entrepreneurship	Saofa'iga o le Fa'apisinisi
Faculty of Education	Saofa'iga o le Fa'afaia'oga
Faculty of Health Science	Saofa'iga o Su'esu'ega o Fa'asoifumaloloina
Faculty of Science	Saofa'iga o le Fa'asaienisi
Faculty of Technical Education	Saofa'iga o Faivaalofilima
Governance, Policy and Planning	Puna o Pulega, Faigafa'avae ma Fuafuaga
Learning Resource Centre	Maota o Puna'oa
Oloamanu Centre	Laumua o A'oa'oga Fa'aaau
Property Maintenance	Vaega o Meatotino
School of Maritime Training	Fuaifale o A'oa'oga mo Folauga ma Faigafaiva
Senate	Senate
Vice Chancellor's Committee	Fono a le Tapa'au

The fa'alupega was completed and submitted to the Vice Chancellor at the time, Magele Mauliliu Magele who referred it to the appropriate decision-making bodies (So'o, personal communication 2021). The fa'alupega received overwhelming support from the NUS Council who strongly pushed for the adoption of the fa'alupega in the hope that it would be picked up by the other government ministries and public bodies (Council Minutes, 2006). The fa'alupega was in effect until it was brought into dispute in 2019 (Wilson, 2019). In 2019 the NUS Council decided to abolish the fa'alupega as it was suggested to be a 'source of confusion over the years':

We took this on-board because we understood there have been many complaints from the public, there were many issues that arose over the years and hence we want to make sure we cover these areas in a polite and diplomatic manner in moving forward. (Aeau Chris Hazelman, NUS Pro Chancellor 2019, cited in Wilson, 2019)

It seems as if the wider cultural meanings and hierarchy significance of titles in the fa'alupega outside of the University setting likely triggered confusion and disapproval. Although the fa'alupega was developed originally to be symbolic and ceremonial, it certainly sparked criticism and hesitation from individuals and groups who misinterpreted its aspiration. The 2006 Council's hope for the University to symbolically replicate the village setting and for the representational fa'alupega concept to be widely adopted outside of the University was not to be. Such as the challenges faced by the fa'alupega, other Samoan language and cultural aspects have also faced resistance and barriers. The translation of all University course descriptors in Samoan has been strongly resisted by a few very outspoken members of the University. It is argued that scientific and technical terms would be difficult to translate. In addition, staff members resisting the translation have argued that teaching is mainly done in English or bilingually. Several studies (Haji-Othman, 2017; Weeks et al, 2007) have found similar barriers but ultimately go on to support the indigenous language with overwhelming evidence that the pros well exceed the cons. Between 2017 and 2018, the University's management deliberated on the official teaching language of the University and it was ultimately decided to be bilingual (So'o, personal communication 2021). Samoanisation of higher education was always going to be a challenge. However, the best way to overcome challenges is to learn from them and to plan ahead.

## **Conclusion: Future Planning**

In terms of future planning, the University has developed its new Corporate Plan 2021/22-2024/25 and has identified ‘Samoan language and culture’ as its first strategic pillar. The first goal of the plan is to ‘strengthen and preserve Samoan language and culture through research, publication and training of the next generation of leaders’. Its core strategy places emphasis on the University to be the ‘centre of excellence in the study of the Samoan language and culture and all matters pertaining to Samoa’. The new plan lists three new activities:

- 1) Attract, support and retain a diverse and inclusive promotion and preservation of Samoa’s cultural heritage;
- 2) Contribute to the goals of the Samoa National Culture Framework 2018-2023; and
- 3) Optimise community access and engagement with the University’s and (Samoa’s) archaeological findings, artifacts, collections, performing and expressive arts and spaces.

Just like the previous corporate plan, the activities are complemented by its KPIs. The Corporate Plan 2021/22-2024/25 has a total of eleven KPIs pertaining to Samoan culture and language. Table 3 identifies the strategic pillar, activities and KPIs in order.

The KPIs focus on teaching, research and policy, particularly in terms of translating and making the materials available in Samoan. In (or With regard to) regard to teaching, the Samoan language and culture programmes have had a long history of low enrolment numbers and interest from the general public in comparison to the other more western disciplines in the humanities and sciences. The Corporate Plan 2021/22-2024/25 places emphasis on the promotion of the Samoan language and culture programmes, particularly at postgraduate level. Perhaps the development of a foundation level certificate may be a better approach in securing higher enrolment numbers by training language and cultural experts while they are younger.



Table 3. NUS Strategic Priority 1: Samoan Language and Culture

## 1. SAMOAN LANGUAGE AND CULTURE

Strategies	Activities/Initiatives	Key Performance Indicators	Responsible
1.1 A centre of excellence in the study of the Samoan language and culture and all matters pertaining to Samoa	1.1.1 Attract, support and retain a diverse and inclusive promotion and preservation of Samoa's cultural heritage.	1.1.1.1 For each financial year of this plan include the teaching of courses in Samoan language and culture, Samoan history, heritage and archaeology, in all relevant University foundation and undergraduate degree programmes.	CSS, FOE, FS, SS, Office of the VC
		1.1.1.2 All of the University's policies, procedures, guide, planning, quarterly and annual reporting be from FY 21/22 progressively available in the Samoan language.	Office of the VC, HR, FS, GPP, SS, CSS, AQU
		1.1.1.3 From FY 21/22 continue to ensure all non-regulated University signage be in the Samoan language with English language translation.	GPP, PM, HR (Campus Managers) & FS
	1.1.2 Contribute to the goals of the Samoa National Culture Framework 2018-2023	1.1.2.1 Where requested, conduct cultural mapping and planning, in collaboration with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment to raise the profile of culture in planning.	CSS, FOS, GPP & FOA
		1.1.2.2 In FY 21/22 develop and provide annual scholarships from FY22/23 specifically for students in the Bachelor of Samoan Studies and Master of Samoan Studies programmes to encourage, drive and sustain the next generation of Samoan language, cultural and heritage experts outside of the University.	Office of the VC, CSS, FOE, FS, Postgraduate Committee, Scholarship Committee & NUSSA
		1.1.2.3 From FY 21/22 develop a postgraduate programme in Archaeology and Cultural Heritage.	CSS & AQU
		1.1.2.4 From FY 21/22 increase staff enrolment in the Master of Samoan Studies (by thesis) and Doctorate in Samoan Studies programmes to further strengthen the University's position as an authority in indigenous Samoan disciplines.	Office of the VC, CSS, FOE, FS, Postgraduate Committee, PDL Committee, Scholarship Committee
	Optimise community access to and engagement with the University's and (Samoa's) archaeological findings, artefacts, collections, performing and expressive arts and spaces.	1.1.3.1 From FY 21/22 continue to successfully showcase the latest creations and studies on Samoa via the Measina-A-Samoa and Samoa bi-annual conferences and the proceedings.	Office of the VC, Faculties, Centres, UREC, SOMT
		1.1.3.2 During the life of this plan the results of completed research are recorded, analysed, presented and disseminated to stakeholders through publication. The annual reporting of seminars, workshop and conferences outcomes, being published in the Journal of Samoan Studies, Journal of the Arts Faculty of the National University of Samoa and other publications	Office of the VC, Faculties, Centres, UREC, & SOMT
		1.1.3.3 A conservation and management plan for the University's cultural resources, collections and artefacts, is developed in FY 21/22 and implemented in FY 22/23.	CSS, GPP, ICT, LRC.
		1.1.3.4 From FY 21/22 co-ordinate, facilitate, manage and promote an annual University Samoan Culture Week.	All

Source: NUS Corporate Plan 2021/22-2024/25

Samoanisation at NUS is in need of innovation in order to compete with western disciplines and keep up with the times. Creating a platform to develop younger language and culture experts will spring in new ideas and increase the pool of talent. A good mix of young and experienced minds in the field will take Samoanisation to its next chapter; a chapter of new uncharted waters. This can only be achieved with proper planning and by remembering the champions and building on from their efforts. In all the chapters and different phases of the University's development, there have been key figures and advocates pushing for the Samoanisation of higher education at NUS. Dr. Fanaafi Le Tagaloa was the driving force in the late 1980s and early 1990s. Dr. Asofou So'o took charge and led the way from the late 1990s and early 2000s. Dr. Malama Meleisea has been the key figure and advocate from 2013 to 2021. Waiting anxiously is the next chapter of Samoanisation at the NUS, which will need a new chief and advocate to lead and hold its torch.

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