



**SPEECH BY THE
VICE-CHANCELLOR & PRESIDENT, PROFESSOR RAJESH CHANDRA
AT THE MEDALS AND PRIZES CEREMONY HELD ON 13 APRIL 2012**

The Chancellor, His Excellency, Sir Frank Utu Ofagioro Kabui;
Her Highness, Lady Grace Delight Kabui;
Honourable Chief Justice, Anthony Gates;
Members of the Diplomatic Corps;
Deputy Chair of Council, Mr. Iqbal Jannif;
Chair, Finance and Investments Committee, Ms Fay Yee;
Council, Senate and FIC Members;
Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr. Esther Williams;
Senior Management and Staff;
Our Dedicated Sponsors;
Medal Recipients;
Families and Friends;
Ladies and Gentlemen.

It gives me immense pleasure in extending a very warm welcome to you all to the 2012 Medals and Prizes Ceremony and in particular to the “stars” of tonight’s ceremony, our medal and prize winners.

A special welcome to our sponsors who have supported the winners in their respective categories. Thank you all for accepting our invitation and being part of this very special event in the university’s calendar.

A University can only call itself a “quality university” if the students it produces are high achievers, critical thinkers and highly employable. Tonight, I can proudly proclaim that each and every student present here is a testimony that the University of the South Pacific is indeed a quality university and second to none in the region.

We are pleased that there are students at the University who are willing to strive for the best, rather than settle for average performances. Indeed, the students that we are honoring tonight have not accepted to be second best.

These students, along with many who have graduated before, are able to hold their own in any university in terms of further study. Many of our alumni have done extremely well and you should actually aspire to do better than those who went before you.

I cannot congratulate you enough and when I see your elated faces and those of your loved ones, it is quite obvious that the sleepless nights and spending time away from family and friends has indeed paid off.

I must take this opportunity to also congratulate your parents, guardians, spouses and families who have given you such a strong foundation to excel. This is a proud occasion for them as well.

We have increased our efforts to recruit more highly qualified senior academic staff to ensure that the University produces outstanding graduates, relevant research outputs and support member governments with high quality, innovative advice.

The winning of these gold medals and prizes also places a special responsibility on all of you to go on and make the same kind of outstanding contributions in your lives that you have made in your studies.

You will find that being bright is not the only ingredient of success in life. To have outstanding success in life, you will need to have high ethical standards; be able to work in teams; solve unexpected problems; work extremely hard and smartly; have the drive to excel; and be a life-long learner.

Being able to relate to people is especially important. Many very smart people do not do as well in life as those who might be moderately smart, but have excellent people skills. If you are bright, as you all are, and can develop outstanding people skills, then obviously you can achieve a great deal in life.

This year, we are presenting awards in 28 categories with 23 different award winners. At the Graduation Ceremony to be held this Friday, a total of 1447 students will be graduating. That, ladies and gentlemen is again a tremendous achievement for the university.

At USP we are continuing to grow our enrolment numbers. In 2011 our numbers grew by 10% and this year's numbers so far indicate that we will grow at least by 12-13% in 2012. These numbers are indicative of the fact that the university is offering quality, international standard education and offers the best location and support facilities in the Pacific to students for higher education.

Ladies and gentlemen, our sponsors have played an important role in supporting the university and students in their achievements. As sponsors you have stood by us and contribute to the achievements of the University – be it the Open day, Orientation week, social activities, graduation ceremony or medals and prizes ceremony. You have always come forward to exercise your corporate social responsibility by taking part in University activities. I wish to thank all our sponsors and in particular those who have supported today's medals and prizes.

Furthermore, I wish to reassure you that we value your sponsorship, and hope that you will continue to support your university for many more years to come.

Finally, I would like to encourage you all to strengthen your partnership with the University. We believe that this partnership will be mutually beneficial, and is integral in terms of providing quality human resources, research, and consultancies that would directly benefit our member countries.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to once again congratulate the recipients of medals and prizes today, and I wish to also thank the invited guests for attending today's function and honoring our students.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyavad, Thank you