

**SPEECH BY
THE VICE-CHANCELLOR AND PRESIDENT PROFESSOR RAJESH CHANDRA
AT THE GOLD MEDALS AWARDS CEREMONY,
USP LAUCALA CAMPUS.**

Acknowledgements and Greetings

- President of Republic of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Epeli Nailatikau
- USP Chancellor and Governor-General of Tuvalu, His Excellency Sir Iakoba Taea Italeli
- Lady Koling Italeli
- Members of the Diplomatic Corps
- Pro-Chancellor and Chair of USP Council, Mr. Ikbal Jannif
- Chair, Finance and Investments Committee, Ms Fay Yee
- Council, Senate, FIC and ARC Members
- Members of SMT
- Our Valued Sponsors
- Medal Recipients
- Families and Friends of Recipients
- Ladies and Gentlemen

I am very pleased to welcome you all to this event to honor our high achievers. I wish to thank you for taking out your time to celebrate this milestone in our students lives.

I wish to acknowledge the presence of the Governor General of Tuvalu, H.E Sir Iakoba Taea Italeli. Sir, this event has been truly honoured by your presence.

I would also like to acknowledge the presence of the President of Fiji, H.E Ratu Epeli Nailatikau tonight. Thank you, Sir for your presence and your strong support for the University. I also acknowledge and thank other dignitaries.

Tonight, we honour a group of young, promising and extremely talented future leaders who had taken on the challenge to excel and who have shown that there are truly talented students in the Pacific. That road is never a breeze ladies and gentlemen; it means countless sacrifices and a great deal of energy and effort in achieving what these young people have done. You are stars of tonight's function.

I also extend a very warm welcome to your families, friends and supporters who have no doubt been instrumental to your success and are here tonight to see you reap the benefits of your labor and their support and sacrifice.

I would like to extend a special welcome to one particular gold medalist, Mr. Stephane Bong who has flown in from Vanuatu to attend this ceremony. Stephane, your presence here means a lot to us as we know how difficult it must have been for you to leave your home while your country is rebuilding itself after the effects of the recent cyclone.

Our thoughts and prayers remain with your people and we are trying to do whatever we can as an institution to ease some of the suffering that the country is going through. I look forward to speaking with you and the others after the ceremony.

I see a lot of faculty and support staff here as well and I would like to congratulate you as this is no doubt your success as well. It is through your hard work and dedication that these students are sitting up here today and I hope to see you on Friday at the Graduation Ceremony with the same enthusiasm to see the rest of our students graduate.

Ladies and gentlemen, it would not be possible to organise this event without the continued support from our sponsors and I extend a very special welcome to them. The sponsors' names and donated funds make our medals and prizes all the more prestigious, and the external recognition of their accomplishments is gratifying for our students. Some of you have been sponsoring this event for a number of years, and we remain very grateful for your loyalty.

I also cordially welcome new sponsors to our circle of esteemed partners. This partnership has seen more collaboration between the private sector and the University with our students gaining practical knowledge and research opportunities with the best organisations in the region. We thank you for your trust and confidence in our institution and your faith in the potential of our students.

Achievement is Possible at USP

I believe that an institution is only as great as its people. The University has set a record of delivering excellence because our students are nothing short of dynamic. The University is an excellent institution that provides the right mixture of outstanding teaching, a learning culture that values diversity of opinion and worldview, and facilities that facilitate innovative learning.

Our Winning Students

The students you see on the stage before you have set a very high benchmark. It pleases me to see such young people striving for so much more than what is expected of them and I am delighted at the prospect of them going out into the world with this same attitude and vigor that the University has instilled in them.

To the winning students: I congratulate you and, while I hope that you savour the feelings of triumph, I also hope that you realise that you have the ability to be outstanding *throughout* your life, whether it be professional or personal.

There will be a total of **1,275** students graduating this Friday.

Tonight we are acknowledging **39 top achievers** in 33 categories.

Excellence at USP

Please allow me a few minutes to enlighten you on the steps the University is taking to ensure that we continue to do justice to our history of being a leader in tertiary education

in the region. Accreditation is what differentiates us from other providers in the region. This is why employers value us and why we are the first choice for students

- The **Association of MBAs (AMBA)** accredited the USP MBA programme for three years at the end of 2013. This is an excellent achievement and shows that USP's programmes meet international standards.
- The **University's Bachelor of Laws degree** has now been recognised as a qualification 'substantially equivalent' to an Australian law degree by the Law Admissions Consultative Committee (LACC) of the Law Council of Australia.
- **USP's Accounting and Finance degrees** were successfully re-accredited until 2018 by CPA Australia.
- The University received a very encouraging response to its initial application for accreditation from the **WASC Senior College and University Commission (WSCUC)**.
- The **School of Tourism & Hospitality Management** was awarded Associate membership of the International Centre of Excellence in Tourism and Hospitality Education (THE-ICE) in 2010.
- **Bachelor of Net-centric Computing (BNC) and Bachelor of Software Engineering (BSE)** have been provisionally accredited by the Australian Computer Society (ACS), which is a signatory to the Seoul Accord. A person who completes a professional level qualification is eligible to become a member of the ACS, and be granted the CT (Certified Technologist) post-nominal. They will be eligible to apply for recognition as a Certified Professional (CP) after 5 years of suitable professional ICT experience.
- We had a positive quality audit last year by the Academic Quality Agency of Universities New Zealand and a follow up visit is taking place now.
- We will have a visit from the Institute of Professional Engineers New Zealand (IPENZ) for the accreditation of our Engineering degrees.
- The University has formulated an overall programme to get most of its programmes accredited by the end of the SP in 2018.

These accreditations will further demonstrate that our programmes are comparable to those of universities in Australia, New Zealand and beyond.

While our Alumni hold some of the top positions in organisations around the world, the University has always tried to harness entrepreneurial thinking and skills in our graduates. I wish to highlight a very proud moment for the University when recently one of our young alumni, Ms. Sukhia Go won the Aspiring Entrepreneur of the Year Award at the Women in Business (WIB) Awards 2015 which was held on 7 March 2015.

Ms. Go has completed her degree in Management and Economics at USP and will be graduating with a Post Graduate Certificate in Human Resources Management at this

Friday's Graduation Ceremony. Ms. Go has ventured into a business which really goes to show our graduates have the knowledge, expertise and confidence to show their entrepreneur skills rather than joining the job market. This case speaks of the importance of entrepreneurship among our graduates. I like to encourage more graduates to develop their own businesses.

Ladies and gentlemen, I wish to once again congratulate the recipients on the Medals and Prizes, and have the pleasure of requesting the Master of Ceremonies to commence the awards.

Vinaka Vakalevu, Dhanyabad and Thank you.

(Wednesday 25 March, 2015 at OCACPS)