

**THE COUNCIL**

**C70/2/1**

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**VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL, MAY 2010**

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**Purpose**

To report to Council key developments and events that have occurred since Council's last meeting in October 2009

**Recommendation**

Council to receive and note the report as detailed in the attached Vice Chancellor's Report to Council, May 2010

# VICE-CHANCELLOR'S REPORT TO COUNCIL

MAY 2010

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This is my first report to Council for 2010. It outlines the main activities and events of the University since the last Council Meeting in October 2009.

I am pleased that the University's financial position continues to improve strongly. Even when one considers the gains made by devaluation, the operational surplus of F\$16.7 million for 2009 shows how far the University has come from its deficit and cash flow issues in 2007. The improved financial performance of the University has been accompanied by stronger financial controls and the initial development of a Risk Management Plan. However, Council should be aware that there were many unique occurrences that produced this result, and performance in 2010 is expected to be less impressive (see the Report on 2009 Financial Statements).

The signing of the Australia-USP Partnership Agreement on 4 March, which covers the period 2010-2012 and is aligned to the Strategic Plan, was a major milestone. The new Partnership not only provides financial certainty by covering the whole triennium, but it represents a substantial increase in funding and a significant deepening of our relationship.

Member governments continue to express their strong support for the University. The most recent public expression of this support was the statement delivered by the President of Nauru and University Chancellor when he spoke at a function in Suva recently. Member governments can now be more confident that their contributions will be used with prudence and foresight, and that the outputs and outcomes of that support will be tangible benefits for each member country.

Considerable progress has been made in negotiations with staff unions relating to critical issues such as remuneration and benefits. Frank discussions have improved staff-management relations, and all are optimistic that continued dialogue will remain positive and productive. The signing of an accord between the Management and AUSPS, covering the issue of salary adjustment, a framework for major changes to academic and comparable staff structure and nomenclature, benchmarks, and the introduction of a more robust performance-linked payments system, represents a significant step forward in staff/management relations as well in the continued reforms of University structures and processes.

Donors have observed the concerted efforts the University has made to implement its Strategic Plan 2010-2012, and appreciate that this guiding document has imbued staff with a sense of purpose. The full involvement of the donors in the formulation of the Strategic Plan, and our regular updates to them, enable positive exchange and the timely provision of support and suggestions.

The most important challenges for the University at this stage are to recruit high quality staff; provide more development opportunities to existing staff; increase the commitment of all staff to the Vision, Mission, Values and Initiatives contained in the Strategic Plan; undertake significant further academic reforms under the STAR project; and maintain the overall momentum of change and reform. This will require a major mindset change, and will not be easy or quick. Management is committed to working intensively on this.

If we can move forward with the above quickly and successfully, while at the same time remaining prudent with the allocation of resources, the University will be able to thrive, despite the fact that its member governments have significant financial challenges that preclude them from increasing their financial support to the University.

## 2. FINANCE

As previously reported, the University's financial position continues to improve. The 2009 results show an operating surplus of \$16.7 million, against a budget surplus of \$4.5 million, or \$12.2 million better than the budget. More details on this are provided in the audited Financial Statements.

It should be noted that the operational surplus includes devaluation gains, and it is not reasonable to expect operational results of this scale in the future, as the University incurs additional expenditure on human resources, capital projects including equipment, and improves the maintenance of its capital stock.

## 3. AID

I am very grateful to our many donor partners who have continued to contribute towards USP's work. The total indicative budget as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 stands at **F\$28.6m**, an increase of F\$6.1m from 31 December 2009. This comprises mainly project or programme funding confirmed by way of an agreement, contract or a memorandum of understanding up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010. The details of confirmed funding up to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 are set out in Table 1 of this report.

The Governments of Australia, Japan, New Zealand and the EU continue to be the largest donors in 2010.

**Table 1: Source and Amount of Development Cooperation in 2010 as at 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010**

Source	2010 Funding (FJ\$ '000)
Australia	14,340
Japan	2,913
New Zealand	6,228
European Commission	1,068
Foundations	1,668
Others (includes France, Taiwan, Canada and other private funding)	2,419
<b>Total</b>	<b>28.6</b>

### 3.1 AusAID Support to USP, 2010-2012

Relations with the Government of Australia have been significantly enhanced with the signing of the Australia-USP Partnership Framework 2010-2012 on 4 March 2010. This partnership, which is the first that Australia has signed with a Pacific Regional organization, is indicative of the level of confidence that the Commonwealth of Australia has in the work, priorities, and capacity of the University. The Partnership has already facilitated a closer and more consultative working relationship, and gives the University more flexibility and opportunity to discuss and identify with Australia the activities that it has the capacity to expand. Recent discussions on the topic of teacher education, for example, have involved ongoing dialogue between AusAID consultants and an internal working group, and may result in AusAID providing additional funds to support USP's expanded activities in this area.

In addition to facilitating greater collaboration between Australia and the University, the Partnership aligns with and provides significant support for the Strategic Plan 2010-2012.

As evidence of its renewed commitment to regional education, the Australian government has increased in its core budget contribution to AUD3m for 2010 (details in Table 2). Additional funds of AUD 1.4m are allocated toward the implementation of two of the Strategic Plan's Priority Areas, namely Student Support and Research, Graduate Affairs and Innovation. In addition, the amount of AUD 1.2m is allocated for the Vice-Chancellor Incentive Funding, which is an increase of AUD 400,000 from 2009. The first tranche amount of AUD 2.9 million was received by USP on 23 March 2010.

**Table 2: Funding Summary of AusAID Support to USP, 2009 - 2012 (in AUD\$)**

<b>1) Budget Provisions</b>	<b>2009 (AUD)</b>	<b>2010 (AUD)</b>	<b>2011 (AUD)</b>	<b>2012 (AUD)</b>	<b>Total A\$ [2009+Partnership - 2010-2012]</b>
A. Core Budget Contributions	2,750,000	3,000,000	3,500,000	4,000,000	13,250,000
B. Programme Funding	1,300,000				1,300,000
C. Strategic Plan Funding		1,400,000	750,000	1,000,000	3,150,000
D. Incentive Funding	800,000	1,200,000	1,500,000	2,000,000	5,500,000
<b>Total A, B, C and D:</b>	<b>4,850,000</b>	<b>5,600,000</b>	<b>5,750,000</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>23,200,000</b>
<b>2) Additional Funding</b>					
E. Future Climate Leaders' Program	415,000	1,186,000			1,601,000
F. Pacific Regional Land Program		671,056	144,971		816,027
<b>Total E and F</b>	<b>415,000</b>	<b>1,857,056</b>	<b>144,971</b>		<b>2,417,027</b>
<b>Grand Total (Total 1 &amp; 2)</b>	<b>5,265,000</b>	<b>7,457,056</b>	<b>5,894,971</b>	<b>7,000,000</b>	<b>25,617,027</b>

The Vice Chancellor conferred with the Senior Management Team on 6 April to finalize the list of the recipients of the Vice Chancellor's 2010 Incentive Funding. In an effort to improve both the quality of outputs, and to incorporate well-thought out monitoring and evaluation measures in all activities from their conception, the Development Office will provide advice and guidance to all awardees and be responsible for co-coordinating the monitoring, evaluation and reporting on these activities.

The Government of Australia has confirmed, by means of separate funding agreements, that it is supporting USP with AUD2m for the Future Climate Leaders' Program and the Pacific Regional Land Program. It is expected that a separate agreement, which will contract USP to manage Australian Regional Development Scholarships (ARDS) students at Laucala, Emalus, and Alafua campuses, will be signed in the next few months. This is an expansion of the previous arrangement, whereby USP managed the ARDS students at Laucala Campus only.

### **3.1.1 Progress on PICPA**

The establishment of the AusAID-funded Pacific Centre for Public Administration (PICPA) is progressing, with crucial milestones having been reached. Specifically, capital works have commenced to ensure that the Statham Campus (Suva) is suitable for the Centre, and a Director was selected by a tripartite Australia-USP-Australian Public Service Commission committee on 1 April 2010. It is expected that the Director will be on campus by 1 June 2010. In the interim, the VC's Office will ensure that all necessary construction/renovation work is completed, and other logistical matters are addressed promptly.

The total Australian funding for PICPA is AUD 24 million, and the initial payment of FJD 2,083,800 has been received. The Centre, which will address the issue of public sector service delivery in the Pacific, is expected to have a significant long term impact and will increase USP's profile as a valuable resource for its member country governments.

### **3.2 NZAID**

The proposed New Zealand- USP Partnership Framework is being finalised. Alongside this Partnership, the two parties will sign an agreement contracting the University to provide student services and a high level of support to New Zealand Regional Development Scholarships (NZRDS) students at Laucala Campus, much in the same way that USP is contracted by Australia.

The Government of New Zealand has indicated that it will increase its aid to the University substantially this year, with further increases in 2011 and 2012. The core budget contribution will increase to NZD4.125 million from the current NZD2.6m, which is an increase of about 59 percent. An additional NZD216,000 is projected for the Governance and Management Enhancement and Strengthening (GMES) project for 2010, as well as a contribution to PRIDE, which is a separate project.

A letter of variation (LOV) between New Zealand and USP was signed on 24<sup>th</sup> February 2010, supporting the Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (PacLII) with additional funds of AUD 300,000 to cover June 2010 to December 2010.

**Table 3 Funding Summary for NZ Aid to USP, 2009-2010 NZ\$**

<b>Budget Provisions</b>	<b>2009 (NZ\$)</b>	<b>2010 (NZ\$)</b>
Core Budget	2,600,000	4,125,000
Governance	975,895	216,913
PacLII	300,000	300,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,875,895</b>	<b>4,641,913</b>

### **3.3 Other Assistance**

#### **3.3.1 European Union**

An ACP-EU funded renewable energy project, worth 1.2 million Euros, was launched in early January in Hamburg, Germany. The main objective of this project, dubbed the “Small Developing Island Renewable Energy Knowledge and Technology Transfer Network”, or Project DIREKT for short, is to strengthen the internal science and technology of developing small island states of the ACP region, with a focus on renewable energy. It will also foster sustainable cooperation between the science and technology communities of ACP and EU institutions in the key area of Renewable Energy.

The four-member consortium of ACP-EU nations participating in the project includes the University of West Indies, the University of Mauritius and the University of the South Pacific, with the Hamburg University of Applied Sciences providing the project leadership.

A notable feature of the Project DIREKT will be the establishment of Research and Technology Transfer Centers within each of the partner countries. These centers will be venues for businesses, government bodies and academia to meet and exchange knowledge, information and know-how on the assessment, production and utilisation of renewable energy in the region. As a part of the project, USP will also be hosting at least one major international and several national and regional conferences on renewable energy.

#### **3.3.2 ADB/Government of India**

The Government of India has provided a US\$1 million grant to USP through the ADB. The tripartite agreement between ADB/Government of India/USP was signed in April 2009. While some portion of the funds will be used by the ADB to engage consultants and undertake feasibility studies, we have worked hard to ensure that we do benefit directly from this grant as much as possible.

A senior Delegation from the ADB and the Government of India visited USP from 28 February to 3 March to advance this project. I made a presentation to the mission team on USP’s vision and future development plans; how the outputs of the RETA fit into the 6 priority areas of USP’s

strategic plan; USP's master plan for main campus; and several areas that have been identified for possible funding through an ADB loan.

The Government of India pledged its support to the USP's development plan and agreed that the following areas will be supported through funding of the RETA:

- Improving connectivity through conversation to iDirect (USD 400,000);
- Curriculum alignment and conversation to e-learning (USD 300,000);
- Developing strategic partnerships and alliances (USD 100,000); and
- Feasibility studies for ensuring loan and program support (USD 200,000).

In addition to these, I explained that University is keen to borrow from ADB for parts of the infrastructure projects identified in the Master Plan, as well as expansion/relocation in other regional campuses. Projects identified for loan funding include (i) student hostel; (ii) graduate housing/international student accommodation; (iii) USP Campuses in Lautoka and Labasa; (iv) Solomon Islands campus expansion; (v) conference and cultural centre at Laucala; (vi) procurement of IT equipment to support DFL and other requirements in the main and regional campuses; and (vii) use of renewable and alternative energy as part of the "greening" programme for the campuses.

Follow up actions are now being taken to advance these proposals further.

### **3.3.3 New Japan-Pacific ICT Building Handed Over to USP**

The Japanese Ambassador, His Excellency Mr. Yutaka Yoshizawa, and the representatives of the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA), officially witnessed the handing over of keys to the new Japan-Pacific ICT building on Laucala Campus, from the Japanese Building Contractors to the University of the South Pacific on Monday 12 April 2010.

The Project will strengthen USP's ability to provide cutting-edge ICT services to the Pacific region through the introduction of new Computer and Information Science degree programs, enhancing the utilization of USPNet for the delivery of distance learning, and supporting maximum utilization of the new Japan-Pacific ICT Centre as a regional centre of excellence.

Construction of the new Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, a \$US 21.5 million (F\$43 million) Japanese Grant Aid Project, was completed last month on schedule.

The Japanese Ambassador also announced, *"Japan is now in the process of awarding another tender, to the tune of 857 million yen which is equivalent to FJD16.1 million, for Phase II works on the construction of a multi-purpose Lecture Theatre, and work on this should commence as early as June this year"*.

In her address, the Pro-Chancellor of USP, the Honorable Fiaame Naomi Mata'afa, who was in attendance along with the Vice-Chancellor, said that the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre is a shining example of the solid and strengthening relationship between Japan and USP. She said that this investment must surely reflect Japan's confidence in USP's role as a quality provider of higher

education in the region, especially in its ability to increase access to higher education through its Distance and Flexible Learning programmes.

*“Let me say that we feel very strongly that our relationship with Japan is deepening and strengthening and we are fully committed to demonstrating to Japan, that we will use its assistance to the fullest advantage of our students and especially our regional member countries, while strongly supporting Fiji’s aspirations to develop ICT related industries,”* the Pro Chancellor said.

The ceremonial handing over of keys was also witnessed by other dignitaries, including the Education Minister of Vanuatu. The Fiji government was represented by the Permanent Secretary for Foreign Affairs and the Acting Permanent Secretary for Education.

All 12 USP member countries are expected to benefit significantly from the project, which is being implemented under JICA’s Pacific Regional Programme to utilise ICT for advancing human development and ensuring equity of access to knowledge and information for the people of the Pacific.

### **3.3.4 Japan-Pacific ICT Centre Phase II to commence soon**

With the completion of the ICT Centre, work will shortly commence on the second phase of the construction. Phase II consists of a multi-purpose one hundred fifty seat lecture theatre building. It is intended that this theatre will promote the link between traditional Pacific art, culture, music and dance, and modern technology, and will be unique to the region.

The Grant Agreement under which this building is made possible is between JICA and the Government of the Republic of the Fiji Islands, and was signed on 24 November, 2009. The construction of the theatre will commence in May, 2010, and it is expected to be completed by 30 November, 2011.

## **4. PRIORITY AREA 1: LEARNING AND TEACHING**

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** The University will deliver relevant and high-quality programmes leading to improved levels of student success and graduates who are well-grounded in Pacific issues and who are (i) knowledgeable and well-informed, (ii) creative and critical thinkers, (iii) superior problem-solvers, (iv) effective communicators and team players, (v) competent leaders, (vi) innovative and entrepreneurial, (vii) ICT and information literate, (viii) socially and culturally responsive, and (ix) self-motivated and independent learners.

### **4.1 STAR – Strategic Total Academic Review**

Strategy 2.1 under Priority Area 1 Learning and Teaching in the USP Strategic Plan 2010-12 stipulates that a review of the whole academic portfolio be undertaken to review its relevance, quality and viability. With this activity embedded in the Strategic Plan, there has been some

movement on the ground directed at raising awareness on the work to be done, and the time and resources expected to be involved in this review process.

At its last meeting, the Senate noted the progress of the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) and approved the overarching framework guiding the implementation of the STAR project. In March 2010, the Senior Management Team (SMT), along with Heads of Schools and some Senior Managers, met to consider the STAR process and agree a project management strategy for it that includes timelines and deliverables. They agreed to endorse the following, which formed the Senate submission:

- That STAR will constitute a total comprehensive review focusing on the extent to which USP's curriculum, degrees and qualifications are; i) still sustainable and relevant to the needs of member governments and communities and ii) in line with current developments in higher education.
- That the reasons for having this review are i) it is a requirement of the new Strategic Plan under Priority Area 1; ii) it is part of USP's strategic growth process; iii) it is a timely response to the changing development needs of member states and communities; and iv) it helps to further enhance our competitive edge and comparator standing.
- That the review will be treated as a project known as the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) and will be undertaken and completed within the period of the Strategic Plan 2010-12.
- That the project leadership will come under the PVC L&T (and later the DVC L&T) who will draw up the composition of the project team, its workplan and its budget which will be presented to the SMT for further vetting.
- That the objectives of the review will be to look at the;
  - i) total curriculum, in terms of further culling of courses and programs for which there is poor demand, and the development of strategically important programs for which there is likely to be high demand, and to identify new growth areas ,
  - ii) degree structure, in terms of composition, majors and minors, maintaining balance between generic and discipline-specific courses, aligning L&T outcomes with the USP graduate profile, balancing theory and practical applications, and addressing the notion of a good all-rounder type of undergraduate degree,
  - iii) qualifications, in terms institutionalising the conversion to a credit points system and an assessment of the range and types of qualifications offered, within the overarching framework of quality, relevance and sustainability,
  - iv) comparability of our qualifications, in terms of accreditation, benchmarking, professional networks, and
- the processes, policies, and organisational and management changes required to achieve items i) – iv) That the expected outcomes of this total review will focus on; i) a curriculum that is relevant, quality driven, technology-based and feasibly sustainable; ii) a USP model that brands a unique qualification which stands in good stead alongside its international comparators; and iii) an ongoing institutional commitment to being a leader in driving and delivering quality and relevant higher education in the Pacific.
- That the review will be completed and is time-bound by the current triennium (2010-12) so priorities will need to be made.

That this review is not starting from scratch. It is instead complemented by a whole range of L&T reviews currently being undertaken by many different units at USP. Some examples of these reviews are the ongoing external reviews of schools, the restructure of programs, internal audits, the course and program deletions in 2009, and monitoring and evaluation exercises.

## **4.2 Introduction of Generic Courses**

Strategy 2.2 under Priority Area 1 Learning and Teaching in the Strategic Plan 2010-2012 entails the introduction of four core compulsory courses at the Undergraduate level, namely:

- Pacific Studies and the Environment;
- Communication and Information Literacy;
- Governance, Ethics and Sustainability; and
- English Language.

The above-named courses are being introduced in phases. In Semester 1, 2010 the English Language UU114 course was introduced at the 100-level. The second course, on Communications and Information Literacy, will commence in Semester 2, 2010, and the last two remaining courses, which are both 200-level courses, will be phased in next year or in 2012.

## **4.3 Proposed New Undergraduate Degree Structure**

With the introduction of the four compulsory generic courses, it was apparent that management would need to quickly agree on where they would fit in the current undergraduate structure. At the SMT/Heads of Schools Retreat in early March of this year, the question of how the new generic courses fit within the existing 20 unit degree structure was discussed in the context of the Strategic Total Academic Review. Given that Pacific values, “Pacific Consciousness”, and the essential academic skills incorporated in the generic courses are considered to be key attributes that should be shared by all USP graduates, the importance of the four generic courses is clear. The retreat offered a valuable opportunity for the academic leadership to reaffirm this, and clearly incorporate the four courses into the structure of all undergraduate degrees.

The SMT/Heads of Schools Retreat agreed to the following;

- that the proposed new undergraduate degree structure be changed from an 8/6/6 to an **8/8/6** pattern, and that this should take effect from 01 January 2011;
- that the new structure would incorporate two generic courses at the “100”, or first year level, and that the remaining two would be offered at the “200”, or second year level;
- that the 8/8/6 would translate to 8 x 100, 8 x 200 and 6 x 300 and that this would not in any way affect the current structure of the double majors;
- that it would still take the normal three years to complete the degree, even though two extra units have been added to the second year;
- that it would not incur any additional costs over and above the cost of the current degree of 20 units; and
- that it is important that the third year students take only six (6) courses, to ensure that students have sufficient time to reflect, sharpen critical thinking skills, develop academic maturity, and develop the intellectual curiosity required in the workplace and in postgraduate studies.

At its last Senate meeting, the Senate was also requested to approve the new undergraduate degree structure of 8/8/6, given the explanation provided above.

#### **4.4 USP Net Upgrade**

The USPNet upgrade project, funded through the AusAID 2009 grant, the Government of Japan and the ADB/Government of India grant, is progressing, although technical complexities have slowed its progress. Additional consultants are being involved to ensure a high quality, rational, and speedy upgrade. We hope to have the full upgrade accomplished in time for Semester 2, 2010.

To date, servers have been provided to five high-use campuses and some servers have been regionalised. A new audio and video platform, REACT, has been installed at some sites and is working well. The most complex change relates to a possible platform called iDirect—this is the subject of a most complex analysis.

An amount of F\$400,000 was also allocated under the Incentive Funding provided by Australia for the improvement of USPNet Broadband for students and staff services at the campuses. This has benefited students and staff at the regional campuses, as it has improved access to good facilities and quality, high speed net services.

#### **4.5 Nine External Advisers' Reports Completed**

One of the requirements of the Strategic Plan (Strategy 1.5) is that the External Advisers' Review of all programmes, which ceased in 2006, must be reinstated. The University reinstated this review prior to the start of 2010 as part of the Quality Audit implementation. Nine (9) reviews were completed in 2009, and eight (8) final reports were submitted to the last meeting of Senate in April 2010. This year, fourteen (14) external advisers' reviews are planned between May and November 2010. A separate submission detailing the EAs' reports is presented to Council.

The University welcomes the reinstatement of such independent reviews, as they are conducted by experts in the field of study under review, and the recommendations greatly assist in planning to improve the quality and delivery of programmes.

#### **4.6 The EDULINK SideCAP Project Final Dissemination Event**

EDULINK SideCap is one of the projects that is funded by the EU, as part of the ACP-EU Cooperation Programme in Higher Education for Improvement in Distance Education for African, Caribbean, and Pacific Universities. It involves five institutions, including USP. The project activities include workshops, the development of course materials, the production of quality assurance documents, and the establishment of participation in an interactive network. This project has been running for a period of 32 months, and concluded with the Final Dissemination Event, which was hosted by the University of the South Pacific from 8-12 February 2010.

The partnership between the European Union and the University has grown, and is expected to develop further in the future. There are many shared objectives, particularly in the area of scientific research, where there is great potential for further collaboration under a variety of different funding schemes.

#### **4.7 Pacific Academic Excellence Scholarship Awards**

I hosted a morning tea for the five recipients of the first Pacific Academic Excellence (PAE) Scholarship Awards on Wednesday 10 March 2010. It was interesting to note that all five recipients were young women. Two are from Fiji, and there is one recipient each from Kiribati, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. As students with outstanding academic achievements at secondary school, they are likely to be very successful at USP, and are an inspiration to their peers. The PAE Scholarship is designed to ensure that these high achievers can focus on their studies, free from financial concerns.

#### **4.8 USP Regional Campus Directors' Forum**

Representatives of the 14 campuses around the region met with the Vice-Chancellor, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and staff at the Laucala Campus from 15-19 March 2010, and discussed the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010-2012. I used the opportunity to challenge the Campus Directors, who are the “eyes and ears of USP” in the region, to reflect on their roles and how their leadership could be strengthened. I did this by posing the following questions:

- Does the University have the best people at its regional campuses as Directors, who are the face of the University to the particular countries concerned?
- Are our Campus Directors dynamic, agile, proactive, responsive, ethical and good role models?
- Are our Campus Directors good team leaders who are building a culture of excellence, of quality, and of productivity at our campuses?
- Is the University providing sufficient resources to the Directors for them to function effectively?

The Campus Directors were also reminded that all staff, including me, are the servants of our member countries, and that we should not make the mistake of thinking that because our titles are ‘high-sounding’ and our salaries are often higher than those of government ministers that our positions are exalted—without exception, all of us are the servants of our stakeholders.

Campus Directors also presented their achievements, voiced their grievances and offered their ideas for the future development of the regional campuses. Follow-up actions are currently being undertaken.

#### **4.9 Education for Sustainable Development in the Pacific**

Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is a vision of education that values culture, and seeks to empower people to assume responsibility for creating a sustainable future for themselves and their communities.

As the University of the South Pacific is a “Regional Centre of Excellence for ESD”, the School of Education launched a 3-volume series devoted to ESD on 31 March 2010. The books were produced as an output of a School of Education initiative, under the USP Asia-Pacific Cultural Centre for UNESCO (ACCU) ESD Project.

Contributors represent a number of USP member countries, including Fiji (Rabi and Rotuma), Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

**Volume 1 “Continuity and Survival in the Pacific”** presents a selection of articles by Pacific scholars exploring the ways in which Pacific societies live according to the principles of Education for Sustainable Development. The articles also provide some insight into current thinking about the ways in which Pacific peoples may take control in determining the future of the region.

**Volume 2 “Pacific Stories of Sustainable Living”** includes stories of Sustainable Living presented through the arts, including visual arts, poetry, chants, stories, dance and life stories.

**Volume 3 “An Annotated Bibliography”** provides a collection of abstracts and bibliographical information on ESD in the Pacific, and is a very useful text for those interested in further study on ESD.

#### **4.10 First Land Management Programme Advisory Committee Meeting at USP**

The first Land Management Programme Advisory Committee (PAC) Meeting was held on Wednesday 11 November 2009. The meeting, comprising representatives from most of the relevant partner agencies of USP’s Land Management Division, gave their blessings to the Division’s current offerings and new programme proposals. They particularly welcomed the strengthened emphasis on Urban Planning, which is an increasingly important area in all USP member countries. Overall, the meeting was very positive and showed the considerable value that PACs can add in obtaining support and valuable advice from relevant civil servants, non-government professionals, and students in a given area.

#### **4.11 International Conferences**

In an effort to improve our international profile, a number of international conferences will be organised this year. I invited schools and sections to submit applications for funding from the Vice-Chancellor’s Incentive Fund. The SMT has approved seven Conferences to be hosted by USP in 2010. They are:

No	School/Division/Section	Conference Title	Conference Dates & Venue 2010	Amount approved F\$
1	Faculty of Arts and Law	Social Policy, Social Welfare System and Human Security in the Pacific	September, Laucala Campus	\$85,334

2	Faculty of Arts and Law	Oceanic Creativity and Climate Change: The Role of Writers, Artist and the Media in Response to Environmental Change in the Pacific.	13-17 September Laucala Campus	<b>\$46,240</b>
3	Cook Islands Campus	Pacific Arts Association 10 <sup>th</sup> International Symposium of the Pacific Arts Association	9-11 August 2010 , Cook Islands Campus	<b>\$46,747</b>
4	Cook Islands Campus	Festschrift for Ron Crocombe	12-13 August 2010, Cook Islands Campus	Event approved but within the budget approved for 3 above.
5	School of Management & Public Administration, Laucala Campus	Small Business Development & Entrepreneurship in the South Pacific Island States	2 days in late May 2010, Laucala Campus	<b>\$10,000 and Balance to be met by FBE</b>
6	School of Engineering and Physics	International Conference on Renewable Energy and Climate Change	6-8 December 2010	<b>\$37,800</b>
7	School of Law, Emalus Campus	Culture & Law: Meaningful Legal Pluralism in the Pacific and Beyond	Sept 2010	<b>\$56,043</b>
	<b>Total Projects (7) and funding approved</b>			<b>F \$ 282,164</b>

## 5. PRIORITY AREA 2: STUDENT SUPPORT

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** The University will enhance the success of its students by improving learning environments and support, on-campus living and facilities, and will enrich campus life through a greater variety of cross-cultural experiences, thereby strengthening Pan-Pacific Consciousness across all campuses.

### 5.1 Campus Life

Campus life activities are on track following the appointment of Campus Life Group Manager in late October 2009. We have been working on improving all areas of USP's Campus Life Section, with special focus on the areas of on-campus accommodation facilities. Stage 1 of the establishment of USP's on-campus accommodation web site has been completed. In February 2010, renovations to the Halls of Residences were completed and students moved in to occupy the renovated spaces. The procurement process for the building of additional student accommodation is in progress.

The facilities and services associated with all aspects of the USP CRC sports and fitness centre are also being improved. Priority is being given to the USP swimming pool surrounds, and the

services on offer there. Improvements will include extending free use to all USP staff, adding BBQ and picnic facilities, and the introduction of swimming, water aerobics and scuba diving classes.

A number of initiatives are in the pipeline that will result in improved utilisation of the student bar operation. The main aim is to improve recreational facilities for the students.

The Campus Life team is working to introduce and support additional sports, such as cricket (20/20), baseball, and taekwondo do. The sports already offered will be reviewed, in order to ensure sustainability and personal growth opportunities for interested students. Certain community sports and events, such as the Kids Try-a-Thlon of 10 April, engage staff, students, and families in fun physical activities. This function was the first in a series of three triathlons for children at Laucala Campus, which was organised in association with the Fiji Triathlon Association.

In an attempt to build an increased sense of community and add value to the student experience, we will be introducing a range of exciting non-sporting activities that will be open to all enrolled USP students, staff and their families. These enjoyable and relaxing events will include Movies under the Stars, Market Days @USP, Family Days, Picnics in the Park, and a variety competition called “USP’s Got Talent”.

In addition to the sporting events organised by Campus Life, there are also USP teams that participate in competitive sports outside Laucala Campus, such as Rugby Union, Volleyball and so forth. The USP Women’s Volleyball Team also won the 2010 National Fiji Easter Championship for the very first time. I hosted a morning tea to celebrate the win, and most of the Suva-based press were present to report on the event.

## **5.2 New Structure for USPSA**

Discussions have been held with the federal USPSA executive, and I am pleased that the new structure is taking shape. I am also pleased to report that the 2010 Budget for the USPSA has been finalised. As the FIC has yet to receive a proposal that will make the new federal USPSA financially viable, the University has agreed to provide one-off funding for 2010.

## **5.3 Annual Surveys of Student Perceptions of their Experience and Satisfaction**

As part of the University’s attempt to gauge students’ perceptions of their experience and satisfaction with certain University services, two new surveys are currently being piloted. The Planning and Quality Office has rolled out the **Early Experience Survey**, which asks new students for information on when they lodged their applications, and how they perceived the quality and usefulness of the counselling and orientation events. Results of such surveys would highlight the areas where improvement is need if the University is to provide quick responses to students’ needs during their first few weeks as USP, a time which is most critical to academic success and happiness.

The second survey, on the **First Year Experience**, is also a pilot that will initially be limited to second year undergraduates at the Laucala Campus only. This survey will obtain information on students’ perception of and satisfaction with their first year at Laucala Campus. Again, the

results would provide inform the University as to those areas of student support that require the most improvement.

#### **5.4 Graduate Destination Survey (GDS) Reinstated**

As part of the University's strategy for enhancing services that would improve the employability of its graduates, the Strategic Plan requires the reinstatement of the Graduate Destination Survey, an annual exercise initially conducted in 2003 and for a few years thereafter, but with relatively poor response rates.

Using the Laucala April 2010 graduation, the GDS was reinstated and I am pleased to report that the response rate to date has improved dramatically to about 58%, which is the highest ever. This response rate allow for some meaningful analysis that will be scientifically sound and statistically valid. The survey is being expanded to include graduates from outside the Laucala Campus.

### **6. PRIORITY AREA 3: RESEARCH, GRADUATE AFFAIRS AND INNOVATION**

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** The University will increase the quality, quantity, focus, equity and dissemination of its research, leading to greater access, applications and benefit for the Pacific region.

#### **6.1 Research continues as a Priority at USP**

Using the Vice-Chancellor's Incentive Funds, the University Research Committee (URC) allocated \$90,000 in November 2009 to Frontline Research Projects. These are research topics proposed by USP staff that are issue-focused, short-term, and intended to produce information of practical use to stakeholders. Funds from this source were also used by the University's Research Office to create an online podcast library, intended to encourage students to download material that would supplement their learning and expose them to the current issues being research at other larger universities.

The University Research Office also used funds late in 2009 to create a series of posters intended to recruit students to the University at both postgraduate and undergraduate levels. These posters were in English and four USP languages, including those spoken in Fiji, Kiribati, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu. Expenditure late in 2009 has enabled the Research Office to set itself up as a one-stop shop for potential researchers and research students seeking advice on funding opportunities and procedural issues.

An amount of AUD \$800,000 (F\$1.175m) was allocated under the Vice-Chancellor's Incentive Funding contribution for 2009. In the area of research F\$200,000 was allocated. **The Animal Research Ethics and the Human Research Ethics handbooks** were successfully completed, and these are available in hard copies and also feature on the USP Research website. A short guide for researchers was also printed and circulated to all staff and students. The University Research Strategy was approved by the URC.

In 2010, the University continues to actively promote research amongst its staff and students, and has received funds from the Vice-Chancellor's Incentive Funding to support its work. The Research Office organized the **University Postgraduate Orientation evening at Laucala Campus, and broadcast this to all other University Centers and Campuses** at the beginning of the semester. In addition, the Research Office continues to fund the University Graduate Assistantship programme.

The Vice-Chancellor's Research Prizes scheme was successfully coordinated, and recipients recognized at the April Graduation Ceremony. The Research Office also continues to publicize the University's research and outreach via brochures, information packages, calendars, posters and other print and online materials.

## 6.2 2009 Vice-Chancellor's Research Prizes

The Office of the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation) at the University of the South Pacific has announced that two staff members and students have been awarded the **2009 USP Vice-Chancellor's Research prizes**.

These Research prizes were established in 2007 and are awarded annually. The prizes recognise excellence in research at USP and contribution to development in the Pacific region.

The **2009 Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Research Excellence** was awarded to *Dr Mohit Prasad, Senior Lecturer, School of Language, Arts and Media, Faculty of Arts and Law*. Dr Prasad's innovative research into Pacific work ethics exemplified by the success of Fiji golfer, Vijay Singh has resulted in the following:

- Conference Paper  
USP/Deakin University Double Dialogues Conference, Suva (July 2007). Vijay Singh and Indo-Fijian Work Ethics.
- Book Chapter  
Prasad, M. 2009. Vijay Singh's Indo-Fijian work ethic: the politics of diasporic definitions. In: Keown, M., Murphy, D. and Procter, J. (eds). *Comparing Postcolonial Diasporas*. MacMillan, London, pp 168-188.

The value of the Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Research Excellence is \$2000.

The **2009 Vice-Chancellor's Prize for Best Research Publication** was awarded to *Dr Surendra Prasad, Associate Professor, Division of Chemical Sciences, Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment*. Dr Prasad's research has resulted in the publication of two papers in the prestigious journal *Food Chemistry*:

- Prasad, S. and Chetty, A.A. 2008. Nitrate-N determination in leafy vegetables: study of the effects of cooking and freezing. *Food Chemistry*, 106, 772-780.

- Chetty, A.A. and Prasad, S. 2009. Flow injection analysis of nitrate-N determination in root vegetables: study of the effects of cooking. *Food Chemistry*, 116, 561-566. This research reports on nitrate values found in most commonly consumed vegetables in Fiji. The data provided by the above studies are of great value in identifying vegetables that have toxic nitrate levels, a possible causative of cancer, and raising public awareness of this issue.

The value of the Vice-Chancellor’s Prize for Best Research Publication is \$1000.

The **2009 Vice-Chancellor’s Prize for Best Student Research** was jointly awarded to **Mr Lincy Pende and Mr Moses Peter**. Mr Pende completed his Masters of Arts degree in Development Studies, School of Government, Development and International Affairs, Faculty of Business and Economics. His thesis was awarded an A-grade and is entitled: *Impact of urban growth on water supply and sanitation: a case study of Honiara city, the Solomon Islands*. Mr Moses Peter is a Bachelor of Law student who produced a comprehensive research project entitled: *Legal, economic and social issues arising from the leasing of customary land in Vanuatu*.

The value of the Vice-Chancellor’s Prize for Best Student Research is \$1000 to each awardee.

<p><b>7. PRIORITY AREA 4: REGIONAL &amp; COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT &amp; INTERNATIONALISATION</b></p>
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<p><b>STRATEGIC GOAL:</b> The University will exercise leadership and engage proactively with the region, its communities and internationally on major development issues.</p>
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**7.1 External Engagements**

I am pleased to inform the Council that since my last report a number of MOUs have been finalised and signed with various organisations for future cooperation with the University. This is indeed a very positive sign, as the signing of these MOUs assures confidence of these organisations in the University. These organizations have seen the value in USP as a premier regional organization capable of delivering benefits and creating impacts for its members.

**7.1.1 USP/UNIFEM MOU**

A MOU was signed on 14<sup>th</sup> January 2010, between USP and UNIFEM. This is the first time the two organizations have come together to systematically support and develop capacity on gender issues with future media professionals. UNIFEM Pacific will work with the Journalism Division of USP, as part of its “Gender Equality in Political Governance” (GEPG) project to develop gender-related course materials and projects for students. UNIFEM is committed to supporting and assisting the University in the future, in particular by supporting a feasibility study for a possible establishment of a Centre for Gender Studies at USP.

### **7.1.2 USP /UNDP MOU**

A MOU between the USP and the UNDP has been finalized to provide a framework of co-operation and facilitate collaboration between the two parties, on a non-exclusive basis, in areas of mutual interest. This ranges from technical assistance, knowledge management, internships to public events. This MOU is expected to be signed shortly.

### **7.1.3 USP/Landcare Research New Zealand MOU**

A MOU between USP and Landcare Research New Zealand was signed on 2 December 2009, Landcare Research has more than 30 years experience working with peers in the Pacific to deliver a range of services such as scientific research, surveys, training and consultancies in many areas of resource management to effect outcomes for sustainable development and conservation. Collaboration with USP has been increased through projects such as the current NZAID Government Agencies Fund project in which they are developing and sharing capacity in the botanical collections and databases in the South Pacific Regional Herbarium in the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment.

Through the partnership, Landcare Research will contribute to the scientific values and objectives of USP, based on their New Zealand experience and wider international collaborations. Given USP's acknowledged scientific expertise, Landcare Research sees the partnership as strengthening the effectiveness and relevance of its own scientific activities in the region.

### **7.1.4 USP/Korea University Exchange Programme MOU**

A MOU between the USP and Korea University was signed on Friday 15 January 2010, for an initial period of 5 years, to establish an affiliation between the two universities to implement a Student and Staff Exchange Programme, aimed at strengthening links between the two Universities. This MOU is the direct result of my visit to Korea University in October, 2009 sponsored by Korea Foundation.

The MOU will offer admission from one university to the other to qualified students to undergraduate and graduate courses, encourage exchange of scientific materials, publications and information and to prepare as necessary, additional working programmes. It will also allow both the Universities, use of their best endeavors to affect visits from one university to the other, by members of the academic staff for the purpose of participating in joint teaching, joint research conferences and joint cultural programmes.

### **7.1.5 USP/Erasmus Mundus Network for Africa, Caribbean and Pacific Partnership Agreement**

This partnership between the International Institute of Geo-Information Science and Earth Observation (as coordinator) in Netherlands, seventeen partners (from Europe and ACP Countries) and ten associates. The Erasmus Mundus Programme Window 10 is designed to support a one-directional flow of students from ACP countries to Europe for Master's course.

Although no students from the University travelled in 2009 as compared to six in 2008, there is a call for applications in 2010. I signed this partnership agreement on 7 February, 2010.

#### **7.1.6 USP- Fijian Trust Fund Board MOU**

The University of the South Pacific and the Fijians Trust Fund Board (FTFB) signed a MOU on 22 March 2010, the objective of which is to provide a framework for cooperation on a number of activities to promote a common vision and to advance mutual interests in the development of Fijian studies and language at the University. The University will establish an Advisory Committee for the Fijian Language and Culture Programme, which the CEO of FTFB will chair.

#### **7.1.7 USP/Confucius Institute Peoples Republic of China**

USP has been invited by the Chinese Embassy in Suva to apply to establish a Confucius Institute at the University. This is intended to strengthen educational cooperation between China and the South Pacific region. The establishment of a Confucius Institute will enable the University to offer Chinese language studies to its students and the wider community. The faculty, students, and the public will benefit from the exposure to Chinese culture and the opportunity for educational exchange. A project proposal has been submitted to the Chinese Embassy in Suva, which has been received positively.

#### **7.1.8 USP/ University of New Caledonia and University of Mauritius MOU**

USP signed a MOU with the University of New Caledonia and the University of Mauritius to run an international special programme leading to a common international certification in Multilingual Education. The programme will be delivered jointly, by the three institutions, and coordinated by USP. Students are administratively enrolled with the USP. Under the terms of the agreement completion of the programme is equivalent to completion of an undergraduate Diploma. The programme consists of eight Modules. USP will be offering three Modules, the University of New Caledonia three Modules, and the University of Mauritius two Modules. All modules of the programme will be offered in hybrid mode (includes face to face, print, online and video broadcast materials), and will showcase USP's experience in delivering programmes by DFL. This programme is regarded as an important joint initiative involving Francophone students and English speaking students.

#### **7.1.9 Meeting with University of Hawaii**

Several topics were discussed in a very positive and fruitful meeting between representatives of USP and the University of Hawaii. Topics included the parameters of future cooperation on student exchange programs, teaching modules and access to USPNET, faculty exchange, study abroad and summer programmes, joint degrees, publications, regional associations, and conference participation and co-sponsorship. A MOU is being drafted to cover some of these areas, and future collaboration will be enabled when Prof Vilisoni Hereniko, currently a staff of University of Hawaii, joins USP in August 2010.

### **7.1.10 Meeting with Tokyo's Future University President**

Tokyo's Future University President, Professor Takashi Sakamoto paid a courtesy visit to the University of the South Pacific. The Future University provides programme that includes distance education course for nursery and kindergarten teacher's education and for Child Psychology. Professor Sakamoto was optimistic about learning the activities and accomplishments achieved through distance education at USP. He also visited a nursery and kindergarten for conducting the development psychology experiments in Fiji. In addition Professor Sakamoto's schedule also included visitation to the Dean for Faculty of Arts and Law, the Acting Director for Graduate School of Business and the USP Educare Centre.

### **7.1.11 Commonwealth Day**

I was invited to be the Chief Guest at the Commonwealth Day Celebrations on 8<sup>th</sup> March by the Royal Society of Fiji and spoke on the theme of higher education in a global knowledge society and the importance of science and technology.

### **7.1.12 Earth Hour**

The University became the first tertiary institution in the region to join 1 billion people in 1,000 cities around the world in observing the Earth Hour on 27 March 2010.

USP observed Earth Hour by turning off all its lights at 8.30pm on Saturday 27 March. The University community was reminded that the EARTH HOUR is not about one hour in a year, so the University will need to devise ways to make long term changes that will not only help with the 'Climate Change' situation, but which can also be a cost saving measure.

The University is working hard to help meet the challenges of climate change in the Pacific Islands through training, applied research and community engagement. As part of our future plans, we are seriously looking at converting our campuses to renewable and alternate energy as part of the "greening" programme for the campuses.

### **7.1.13 Fiji Sanatan Dharam Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Convention**

I was the Chief Guest at the 51<sup>st</sup> Sanatan Fiji Annual Convention on 2 April. I spoke on the themes of education, technology and selected social problems. The gist of my presentation was that excellence should be the hallmark of education; that Sanatan, which runs 105 schools in Fiji, should create schools of excellence; that Fiji should utilize educational technology more fully; and that USP would be willing to work with the Fiji Government and other stakeholders to develop an academic network in Fiji (and other countries).

It is possible that we will sign an MOU with Sanatan Fiji to promote a closer links between the University and the schools run by Sanatan so that these schools act as a feeder school to USP.

#### **7.1.14 TISI Sangam Annual Convention 2010**

I was invited to be the Chief Guest for the final event of the TISI Sangam's Annual Convention 2010 on 5<sup>th</sup> April, and to present trophies to the winning teams. This presents another opportunity for a closer link with Sangam Fiji for its schools to act as feeder school to USP.

### **7.2 Regional Engagement**

#### **7.2.1 Graduation Ceremonies**

Since my last report, I have attended graduation ceremonies in the Solomon Islands on 9<sup>th</sup> of December 2009, Emalus Campus, Port Vila, Vanuatu on 11<sup>th</sup> December 2009, Alafua Campus Graduation, Apia, Samoa held on 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009, and most recently the Laucala Campus Graduation Ceremony of 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010.

The graduation ceremonies in the external campuses were very successful. It also gave me opportunity to meet with representatives of the member Governments. The inclusion of an extra graduation ceremony (SI) added considerable logistical pressure on SAS. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (L&T) has been tasked to do a review of graduation, including the timing of Solomon Islands graduation and options for April Laucala graduation, which is becoming difficult to accommodate in one ceremony.

#### **7.2.2 Laucala Campus Graduation Ceremony – April 2010**

The first of the Graduation ceremony for 2010 was held on 9<sup>th</sup> April 2010 at the Laucala Campus. The Chancellor and the President of Nauru, H E Mr. Marcus Stephen participated as the Chief Guest at this year's graduation. This year's graduation saw a total of **1210** students receiving degrees, diploma and certificates. Out of the total there are: **1** PhD, **126** Masters, **158** Postgraduate Diploma, and **56** Postgraduate Certificate level graduates. At the undergraduate levels, there are **787** degree, **68 Diploma** and **14** Certificate level graduates. It was pleasing to note that **341** graduates were at the postgraduate levels. It was also pleasing to note that for the first semester this year there has been an increase in postgraduate enrolments. The University expects to enroll more post-graduate students in future for course work and research based Masters and PhD studies.

We are looking at having a graduation ceremony in Kiribati in July 2010 to coincide with our visits to attend the Kiribati Development and Policy Dialogue.

#### **7.2.3 Development Policy Dialogues**

The organization of development policy dialogues in all our member countries is an important Strategic Plan initiative towards achieving that goal. The Faculty of Business and Economics organized the development dialogue series and plans to have a bigger and more visible presence in the member countries not only through more course offerings but also through better engagement with the Government through its policy makers.

Late in 2009, USP organized the **Vanuatu Development Policy Dialogue 2009**. Vanuatu's Foreign Affairs Minister, Mr. Joe Natuman commended the USP for organizing the inaugural USP-Vanuatu Development Policy Dialogue Conference in Port Vila last December, to discuss current global and regional issues of national relevance. Vanuatu saw value in this dialogue series and recognized the role of USP in capacity building in policy development.

The **Samoa Development Policy Dialogue 2009** was the final Development Policy Dialogue of 2009 and was held at USP's Alafua Campus in Samoa on 14 December 2009. It was well attended, with some 70 participants at all sessions, and was especially characterised by extensive and constructive debate, with numerous interventions from the floor. The Opening Address was given by the Honorable Niko Lee Hang, Samoa's Minister of Finance who also emphasized the benefits of the Dialogue to academics, government decision-makers and other participants, and hoped discussions would also result in USP becoming more relevant to the region and closer to its peoples.

For 2010, we will be organizing similar policy dialogues in Kiribati, Cook Islands, Tonga and the Marshall Islands in addition to the regular annual Fiji Update which remains an important feature in our calendar.

#### **7.2.4 Pacific Regional Education for Sustainable (ESD) Symposium**

The University hosted a Pacific Regional Education for Sustainable (ESD) Symposium at the Southern Cross Hotel. This symposium is one of two that will need to take place within the EDULINK, Network of Island University (NIU) project, which USP is leading. Partner regional universities on the project are the National University of Samoa (NUS) and the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG).

The NIU project is funded by the EU, under its EDULINK (ACP) programme. It is a three year project, worth Euro \$500,000 (85% from the EU). This project has three components: Management/Administrative Capacity; the Academic Relevance component; and Capacity Building in Research and Technology.

### **7.3 CROP Relations**

#### **7.3.1 SPREP Director's Courtesy Call**

The Director of the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional and Environment Programme (SPREP), Mr. David Sheppard, paid a courtesy visit to meet with me on the 25th of January 2010. The key areas that SPREP and the University will work in partnership are: building capacity; bio-diversity opportunities; waste management; climate change and communications. This is an opportunity to work together with an institution and build on shared resources and secure resources as part of CROP wide cooperation and collaboration.

#### **7.3.2 USP/SPBEA Meeting**

The University and SPBEA met on 5<sup>th</sup> February to discuss possible further collaboration between the two organizations. USP and SPBEA are already collaborating to review tests that we use for

ELSA and have also involved SPBEA in our discussions on credit points. USP/SPBEA possible future collaboration is also in line with the desire of the Forum Education Ministers and their Pacific Heads of Education. Further discussion will continue between our two organizations.

### **7.3.3 USP and FFA**

The University and FFA are collaborating in the selection and management of applicants for post graduate scholarships given by the Government of Japan on fisheries and marine studies to study in Japan. It is hoped that two scholarships will be offered in 2010.

### **7.3.4 USP and PIFS**

I called onto the Secretary General of the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat, who is also the Chair of CROP. The meeting centered on a number issues such as policy dialogue, capacity building, education, post Conference on Global Economic Crisis held in Vanuatu and other issues of mutual interest. The Secretary General was very supportive of the work being done by the University.

## **7.4 Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis**

The UN and the Government of Vanuatu, together with the ADB, Forum, SPC and USP hosted the Pacific Conference on the Human Face of the Global Economic Crisis (referred henceforth as Vanuatu GEC 2010) from 10-12 February.

In addition to the Vice-Chancellor, the Dean of FBE, Professor Biman Chand Prasad; Director of IOE, Dr Ana Taufe'ulungaki; the Head of the School of Governance, Development and International Relations, Professor Vijay Naidu; and the Co-ordinator of Marine Studies, Dr Joeli Veitayaki attended the conference.

The University had a high profile at the conference. We presented two papers: one on governance and legislative issues presented by Professor Vijay Naidu and the other on education presented by Dr Ana Taufe'ulungaki. These were well received. I facilitated a plenary session on the way forward.

The conference competition on the human face of GEC was won by one of our students. She was presented the prize by the UNDP Administrator, Ms Helen Clarke, which also increased our profile.

The conference also networked us with about 200 delegates to the conference, and we should see the University more involved with regional governments, CROP and international agencies in the future.

The contributions of the University to the conference were acknowledged by the UNDP Resident Representative to the Pacific at a function organized by the UN and also by the Secretary-General of the Forum Secretariat in his closing address. Later, the SG indicated to me that he

was very pleased with the way the University was providing intellectual support to regional efforts.

We intend to intensify our work in this area and build on both the momentum created so far, and further embed the University in the minds and lives of our governments and communities.

I took advantage of my attendance at the Conference to visit the Campus and have detailed discussions with the Campus Director, and to review the recent upgrade of USPNet.

In addition, I held discussions with the Vanuatu Minister of Education and his Director on educational issues. The Government has indicated its happiness with the way the University is responding to its needs, including the second chance programme and the proposal to teach some programmes in the French language.

## **7.5 International Engagements**

### **7.5.1 Visit to Korea**

I visited Korea from 9-16 October 2009 as a guest of the Korea Foundation, which met all expenses of this visit. This visit was undertaken with the view to broadening the University's international relationships both in terms of universities and development of partnerships. I visited four main higher education institutions in Korea starting with the visit to the Korea National College of Agriculture and Fisheries (KNCAF) which is the pre-eminent national college for agriculture and fisheries; Seoul National University, which is Korea's largest university; the Korea Advanced Institute of Science and Technology (KAIST), which is South Korea's premier science and technology university; and the University of Korea, which is the largest private university in Korea. I also held discussions with the Korean Foundation as well as undertook a programme of cultural visits.

The visit was successful in that all the institutions have indicated interest in potential links with USP. As a consequence of my visit we have already signed a MOU with Korea University, as reported under Section 4 of this report. We will continue to explore possible partnerships with other institutions in Korea.

### **7.5.2 IUCN Directors' Courtesy Call**

The Deputy Director General, Mr. William Jackson and the Regional Director, Mr. Taholo Kami made a courtesy call on Monday 1 February 2010. The visit was made to strengthen the ties the University shares with the world's premier environment organization and also to see the progress made, as far as their partnership is concerned. The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) helps the world find pragmatic solutions to our most pressing environment and development challenges. It supports scientific research, manages field projects all over the world and brings governments, non-government organizations, United Nations agencies, companies and local communities together to develop and implement policy, laws and best practice. The IUCN is the world's oldest and largest global environmental network – a democratic membership union with more than 1,000 government and NGO member organizations and almost 11,000 volunteer scientists in more than 160 countries.

## 7.6 USP IN THE MEDIA

The University greatly values its engagement with the Media as a way of promoting the University and its work. Though some events including media presence and press conferences have been mentioned elsewhere in this report, I wish to highlight a few below.

### 7.6.1 Media Activities Leading to 2010 Enrolments

An aggressive marketing, media campaign and advertising was undertaken in the lead up to this year's enrolment, commencing with the open day, meet the media luncheon and substantive advertisements in the local dailies, TV, radio and regional magazines.

### 7.6.2 Meet the Media Luncheon

This year, a very successful 'Meet the Media Luncheon' was organized to showcase the Support Services that the University provides, unrivalled within Fiji and within the USP region.

The objective was to get all the Support Services of the University to present to invited members of the media, 10 minute presentations on the efficiency and effectiveness of their services, and how they help and assist students during their time at USP. The occasion was also used to present USP's Academic Excellence Awards or Scholarships.

The 14 Scholarships which will be provided every year beginning this year 2010 will form the basis of the Pacific Academic Excellence (PAE) Awards. However, only two scholarships have been decided so far, with the rest to be announced and presented soon. These were presented to the student who received the highest marks in the Form 7 examination in 2009 and to the student who received the highest marks across the region in the USP Foundation Studies in Social Science.

### 7.6.3 Vice-Chancellor's Column in the Islands Business

One of the ways of promoting what we are doing at the University is to write about very topical issues in higher education not only internationally but also in the Pacific. Since early this year, I have been writing a column in the International issue of Islands Business, with the intention that it will be a regular monthly contribution. These columns have included **Higher Education and Development** – *Why is creation of new knowledge crucial?* (February Issue), **The Global Knowledge Economy: Implication for the Pacific Islands** (March Issue) and **Positioning USP for the Future** – *More competitive, technologically fast* (April Issue).

## 8. PRIORITY AREA 5: HUMAN RESOURCES

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** The University of the South Pacific will continue to be the employer of first choice in higher education in the Pacific Region.

## **8.1 Staff Forum - Welcome Back to the University, 2010**

We had a very successful Staff Forum meeting where I welcomed back staff to the University and to the 2010 academic year and I took the opportunity to express my gratitude to their efforts in 2009, and to highlight achievements so far and plans for 2010.

In an effort to give all staff opportunities to influence policy and suggest innovations, we will institute a system that will allow any staff member whose ideas are worthy of further development, to be invited to make presentations at meetings of the Senior Management Team.

## **8.2 Recruitment and Senior Appointments**

The University continues to face difficulties in making good quality appointments, especially at the level of professors in particular fields such as Accounting and appointments to the position of Executive Director HR, and Professorship in Public Administration are proving difficult. Despite these challenges, the University will intensify its efforts to attract excellent staff by being more proactive in its recruitment process. The University has been very fortunate to make a number of good appointments since the last Council meeting. They include:

### **8.2.1 Pro-Vice Chancellor (Planning & Quality)**

The new PVC (Planning and Quality) Dr. Michael Gregory joined the University on 21 December 2009. Dr. Gregory has extensive academic, institutional research and higher education planning experience. He is a former Director of Planning and Development at USP, and was extensively involved in the USP Futures Committee. Dr. Gregory has also written extensively on planning issues.

Dr. Gregory's primary responsibilities include the oversight of the implementation of the Strategic Plan, operational responsibility for planning, including data quality and integrity; promotion of a culture of effective monitoring and evaluation; and oversight of property and facilities; and assistance to the Vice-Chancellor in meeting the University's strategic and operational objectives.

### **8.2.2 Director of Institute of Education**

The new Director of the Institute of Education, Dr. Ana Taufe'ulungaki, rejoined the University on 4<sup>th</sup> January 2010.

USP is very fortunate to attract Dr Ana Taufe'ulungaki back to the University as Director of IOE. She is one of the leading educationists of our region who will revitalize and re-energize IOE to provide the region with first class research, consultancy and project management. Ana is very familiar both with the USP, having served previously as both Director of IOE and as Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research), and with the educational requirements of the Ministries of Education and of the region.

### **8.2.3 Professor in Computing Science and Information Systems**

Professor Eduard Babulak joined the University of the South Pacific as the new Professor of Computing Science and Information Systems at the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment at Laucala Campus.

Professor Babulak is an international scholar, researcher, consultant, educator, professional engineer and polyglot with more than twenty five years of teaching experience and industrial experience as a professional engineer and consultant.

He was an invited Speaker at the University of Cambridge, in the UK in March, 2009, as well at MIT, and the USA in September 2005. He was also an Expert-Evaluator for the European Commission in Brussels, in June 2007.

### **8.2.4 Director of Development, Marketing and Communications**

Mr. Jaindra Kumar Karan has been appointed the new Director of Development, Marketing and Communications.

Jaindra brings with him extensive knowledge and experience of the Pacific region having worked previously as Director, Trade and Investment, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (1996 - 2005) and Programme Management Officer at UNDP, Suva (1992-1996). More recently he was Fiji's Trade Commissioner to Australia (2006-2008). His extensive managerial experience and substantive technical knowledge in the areas of economic, trade and development policy at national, regional and international levels will be an asset to the University. Jaindra's main role will be to contribute to the achievement of the strategic development goals of the university by directing and coordinating the functions of the development, marketing, communications and alumni offices.

### **8.2.5 Dean, Faculty of Arts**

Dr. Akanisi Kedrayate has been appointed Dean of Faculty of Arts and Law. She has acted in this position for long periods of time since the passing away of Professor Bob Hughes. She brings to the job proven management experience, strong people skills, and a strong commitment to the Strategic Plan and the change agenda. She is also passionate about learning and teaching, and believes strongly in the regional nature and responsibilities of the University.

### **8.2.6 Others to join**

Professor Murari Lal has been appointed as **Professor of Climate Change and Environment** and Emeritus Professor Gillian Bolton-Lewis has been offered a one year appointment as **Professor of Teacher Education**.

Other new appointments expected to be made shortly include the Director ITS, Deputy Director Finance and other middle management positions in the Finance Office.

### **8.2.7 Deputy Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching)**

The position of the DVC (Learning and Teaching) has been advertised and an appointment expected to be made by the Council in May.

### **8.2.8 Executive Director of Human Resources**

The position of Executive Director, Human Resources has been advertised and we hope to make an appointment as soon as practicable.

### **8.2.9 Resignation of the USP Visitor**

His Honor Chief Justice de Jersey, the Visitor for the University has resigned. The only issue that required his attention which concerned the University was the finalization of the long standing case of Faleulu Maui. A judgment has now been made. The Visitor had requested to have in place an indemnity in his favor in case of any arguable liability before he delivered the judgment. The indemnity is now being put in place.

### **8.2.10 Resignation of Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and Innovation)**

Professor Patrick Nunn, PVC (R&I) has resigned his position to take up a position as Head of School of Behavioural, Cognitive and Social Sciences at the University of New England (UNE). He will leave us in August this year.

We are of course very disappointed by Professor Nunn's departure but the remuneration package at the UNE is almost double his current package so there is not much we can do in such situations.

### **8.2.11 Appointment of HR Advisor**

Ms Elizabeth Bare former Director of Human Resources, at the University of Melbourne has been appointed HR Advisor to assist VC and DVC on HR issues. She was engaged from 1-5 February, 2010 to provide assistance on the implementation of the HR review, performance and incentive review and strategic and practical assistance on the review of salaries and terms and conditions. Ms Bare will also assist with staff development particularly in leadership and management to align it to achieving the goals and priorities under the Strategic Plan.

The implementation of the recommendations of the Review of the Human Resources section is progressing well. The work of the committee has been assisted by Ms Elizabeth Bare, who is undertaking this work in an honorary capacity but with some consultancies. She is undertaking a number of key tasks including a major overhaul of the performance and reward system of the university, the functions of HR officers located in Faculties, a review of policies and HR management information system. She is also assisting the university in its leadership training programme. This has been a very effective arrangement and one that is clearly assisting the university in its plans to lift the quality of its services and operations.

### **8.3 Report on the redundancies – Progress since last report**

Efforts by Management to streamline and consolidate operations in both the academic and services areas of the University have inevitably resulted in redundancies. The University made every good faith effort to come up with workable alternatives to redundancy as a compromise where appropriate. Unfortunately, this was not possible for all staff made redundant and the majority have since accepted their redundancy and moved on.

As of 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010 a total of 35 senior positions of which 28 were academic and 8 comparable positions were made redundant. Of these, 3 position holders were successfully redeployed to positions in other sections of USP and 6 opted for early retirement. In addition to senior staff, a total of 34 Intermediate and Junior and Hourly Paid staff positions were also declared redundant and of these 28 were staff of the Dining Hall made redundant following the decision to outsource dining hall services. Of this number 4 staff members were successfully redeployed and 2 opted for early retirement.

However, it is regrettable that not all staff made redundant accepted compromises offered and final outcomes. Five academic and comparable staff and 12 Intermediate and Junior and Hourly Paid staff, all from the Dining Hall have filed industrial disputes and the University is currently engaged in settling these through the Industrial Disputes mechanism.

As reported to FIC in September, the process of outsourcing services at the Dining Hall and talks with the various staff Unions had begun. This process was completed and staff informed of the University's decision but unfortunately not all staff accepted this decision. While the majority of staff have accepted the redundancy, a group of 12 staff still remain at the dining hall serving the remainder of their notice period, which is due to end 14th March 2010. They have filed a dispute with respect to the duration of the notice period and the matter is currently being addressed through the disputes mechanism of the Ministry of Labor.

The Tender Evaluation Committee has awarded the tender and an update will provided in due course.

## **9. PRIORITY AREA 6: GOVERNANCE, MANAGEMENT AND CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT**

**STRATEGIC GOAL:** The University is committed to delivering institutional effectiveness through the highest standards of governance, management and continuous improvement.

### **9.1 Strategic Plan Implementation**

With 2010 being the start of the new Strategic Plan period, it was important for every staff member, especially SMT and senior managers to implement and deliver on the activities and expectations of the Strategic Plan. The Planning and Quality Office therefore spent some time looking at the strategic priorities and initiatives for 2010 and made an attempt to break these into tasks with timelines, milestones and end points in order that we could accomplish what we needed to achieve by improved operational planning and monitoring. All initiatives and tasks therefore have timelines with a designated person(s) responsible for them and these were

presented to the SMT and Heads of Schools at a special workshop in March 2010. Special emphasis has also been placed on data entry, integrity and reporting. A Senior Data Analyst has been appointed who is concentrating on this important function.

### **9.1.1 USP Strategic Planning Workshop, 5-6 March 2010**

The SMT, Heads of Schools and other senior managers met offsite at a workshop with the following objectives:

1. To review the progress on the University strategic initiatives for 2010 and ensure phased actions during the year
2. To ensure Faculty, School and Section plans for 2010/11 have been completed and that they reinforce the University's Strategic Plan; and that they contain relevant aims and objectives, initiatives and tasks, KPIs and targets with timelines and allotted responsibilities
3. To agree on a set of institutional KPIs and to review data on those as well as benchmarks and possible targets
4. To consider the total academic review process and agree a project management strategy for it, with timelines and deliverables
5. to review admissions and enrolments for 2010 and to consider the establishment strategy of Strategic Enrolment Management Plan for 2011 and beyond
6. To consider mechanisms to improve the work of the Heads of Schools.

A number of key issues were discussed at the workshop with follow-up actions points identified. The key outcome of this management retreat was the finalization of the 2010 priorities and objectives with specific timelines for implementation by staff.

One of the most important and critical tasks ahead for the University is the STAR project (Strategic Total Academic Review), which I have mentioned earlier in Section 4 on Learning and Teaching.. At the workshop, the meeting agreed to endorse the objectives for the comprehensive review, its focus area, timeframe and project leadership who will draw up the composition of the project team.

The analysis of the survey feedback on the workshop indicated that overall, participants were quite happy with the outcomes of the meeting.

## **9.2 Laucala Campus Master Plan**

The University engaged Sasaki Associates Inc. of the USA, to carry out the review and update of the Laucala Campus Master Plan. This review is an activity within the USP Governance and Management Enhancement & Strengthening (GMES) Project.

The review process, carried out from July to December 2009, has involved wide consultation with key University stakeholders to gain their views and comments on what the campus should look and feel like to the year 2030. The University received the Draft Master Plan document in January 2010 and is currently undergoing the final round of consultations with the key

stakeholders before the final Master Plan is submitted by Sasaki Associates Inc. at the end of February 2010. This has meant an extension of the final master plan submission date from December 2009 to February 2010, to allow the University to have a longer review period, incorporate a number of fundamental changes to the plan and to receive a more thorough and world class Master Plan. A separate report on the Master Plan is presented to Council.

### **9.3 Risk Management Plan**

One of the objectives of the Strategic Plan is to institutionalise a Risk Management Strategy of the University. The Risk Management Plan is under preparation and this will take into account all the potential risk and how these will be addressed. The Risk Management exercise was outsourced to RMSS, an Australian based firm last year. The firm completed the first six phases of the project successfully but its output on Risk Mitigating Plans needed strengthening. The Finance section has therefore built upon the firm's reports and has produced a comprehensive document on the subject. The risk report with the University's response will be submitted to the Audit Committee in due course and consequently to the Council

One of the main risk factor is that most USP buildings do not have Engineer's Certificate. Urgent action is now being taken to ensure that USP buildings have appropriate insurance cover for compliance and protection.

There has been good progress so far with properties and facilities. The work on the new roofing for the FBE buildings were completed on time.

### **9.4 Implementation of the Recommendations of Review of Human Resources Section**

With the review report received on 7<sup>th</sup> September 2009, meetings of SMT and HR Section were held to discuss the outcomes of the report. As a result, I immediately put in place a working group to undertake the implementation of the recommendations. The team comprised of SMT members as well as a senior staff from HR and representatives from AUSPS. Regular meetings have been held. The work of team has been greatly assisted by an advisor, Ms Liz Bare, formerly of Melbourne University.

Some of the key actions taken so far include the adoption of a new management structure with a new Executive Director, HR to be appointed soon, no deputy Director, with managers of four sections namely human resources operations, organization and staff development, OHS and industrial relations and HRMIS. The advisor has also assisted in several areas including the review of the staff performance system, development of job descriptions and KPIs for every post and a review of devolvement of HR officers to Faculties.

Other related work includes a draft staff development strategy being finalized with staff leadership workshops planned throughout the year. The benchmarking with QUT international benchmark for HR is progressing well.

## **9.5 Implementation of the ITS Review Recommendations Report**

The first draft of the Review report was received in August 2009 with copies distributed to ITS staff and SMT for comments. Comments were relayed back to the Consultants and the final report received in January 2010.

In implementing the recommendations, management and ITS agreed to work together so a joint Implementation Committee was established in January. The committee is chaired by DVC and the work of the committee assisted by an advisor, the former Director of ITS, Mr Kisione Finau.

Within ITS, six work streams have been set up led by a work stream leader each being accountable to the Implementation Committee for ensuring the delivery of outcomes within agreed timelines.

Currently, work is continuing on a new management structure for ITS which should be in place, once a new Director is appointed.

## **9.6 Review and Benchmark of Senior Management Remuneration at USP**

This review was commissioned by the GTF and a final report received in December 2009. I have made my response to the report and was discussed at the last GTF meeting on 13-14 April 2010.

# **10 RECOGNITION AND AWARDS**

## **10.1 Students Gold Medal and Prizes Awards Ceremony**

It was a proud moment for 13 University of the South Pacific scholars and their families when they were presented with gold medals and cash prizes at the University of the South Pacific's 2010 Medals and Prizes Awards Ceremony.

Each recipient had a story to tell of how they had come so far to deserve such an outstanding award. The Medals and Prizes Ceremony was held just two days prior to the actual April Graduation Ceremony, where over 1200 students graduated.

Gold medals are awarded to students who have achieved the highest Grade Point Average (GPA), which is the measure of the overall level of a student's achievement. The recipients were also awarded with cash prizes which are generally donated by corporate sponsors.

## **10.2 Dean FBE appointed new Chair of Oceania Development Network (ODN)**

At the recent 3<sup>rd</sup> ODN Conference held at the Naviti Resort on 14-15 April, it was announced that the responsibility for hosting the ODN Secretariat was formally transferred after more than 3 years from Dr Wood Salele (Chairman) and Ms Anita Latai (of the National University of Samoa) to Professor Biman Chand Prasad, the Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics,

USP. Professor Prasad was also appointed the new Chair of the Oceania Development Network at the Conference. USP will host ODN for two terms.

## **11. UPCOMING MEETINGS/EVENTS**

### **11.1 2010 Shanghai World Expo**

The University will be represented at the 2010 Shanghai World Expo by Allan Alo and the dance troupe from the Oceania Centre for Arts and Culture. The South Pacific Tourism Organization has generously sponsored their month-long participation. In addition, promotional materials for the University have been sent to Shanghai via the Fiji Islands Trade and Investment Bureau (FTIB). Posters and brochures will be displayed in the Fiji section, as well as in the shared areas of the Pacific Pavilion. The USP promotional DVD will also be played and some materials in Chinese are being developed for prospective international students.

### **11.2 14<sup>th</sup> Annual Presidents' Meeting of Pacific Rim Universities (APRU)**

I will be attending the 14<sup>th</sup> annual meeting of the Presidents of Pacific Rim Universities scheduled to be held at the University of Auckland from 30<sup>th</sup> June to 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2010. APRU is a consortium of 42 leading research universities in the Pacific Rim. The consortium aims to foster cooperation in education, research and enterprise thereby contributing to the economic, scientific and cultural advancement of the Pacific Rim. I have been invited by the Vice-Chancellor of the University of Auckland to make a presentation on the sustainability of nations and regional organizations in our region. I will also have discussions with the Vice-Chancellor and explore how USP might become a member of APRU.

## **12. CONCLUSION**

This year promises to be an exciting year for us - this is the first year for the implementation of the Strategic Plan. The SP will provide a clear focus for our work for the next three years. The University is now in a very good position to achieve its institutional KPIs for 2010, provided that the positive momentum of the first quarter is built upon. I wish to thank the SMT and all staff for their dedication and willingness to set realistic goals for their own work, the achievement of which will result in the collective success of the University. The University cannot afford to be complacent in the current atmosphere, when its key clients, from individuals to member countries, all feel the strain of limited economic resources, and wherein there is new competition from many other regional organizations and national universities.

Support from Member Governments has also improved, in spite of the precarious economic position of many governments.

The focus of the next quarter will be on the recruitment of senior staff and the bedding down of the partnerships with Australia and New Zealand. Reporting on the use of donor funds will be revamped to provide better quality outputs. The number of international linkages will be increased, and existing relationships will be made more meaningful. The University will engage

a marketing consultant to examine its activities in the region, and ensure that the breadth of its services and capacity is clearly communicated to all its constituents.

We will also need to ensure that the USP culture is one of excellence; service to the region; integrity and openness; innovation; and delivering results to our stakeholders. It is vital that we go beyond personal, sectional or national interests and embrace the call for a more cohesive University committed to giving our region the best it deserves.

Quality must underpin our learning and teaching, research and innovation--and everything else we do. This is what will increasingly differentiate the USP brand from others. We will need to work hard to maintain and enhance our quality.

Finally, I wish to thank everyone –the Pro Chancellor and Chair of Council, Deputy Chair of Council, Chair of FIC and all Council members, Member Governments, Senior Management Team and staff, students, stakeholders and development partners who all contributed to improvements at the University.

Professor Rajesh Chandra  
**Vice-Chancellor and President**

19 April 2010