

Press release: 02- September-2021

**Statement by USPSA President & Chair of Student Council on the Times Higher Education Rankings Achievement by USP** (as delivered at the zoom meeting on 2/09/2021)



Kia Orana and Warm Pacific greetings to you all from the Cook Islands. Acknowledging the presence of our Vice-Chancellor & President Prof. Ahluwalia, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors, members of the Senior Management team, members of the Staff Unions, fellow student leaders and ladies and gentlemen. Today's announcement of USP's ranking amongst top 10% globally by Times Higher Education Ranking, marks a significant turning point for the Pacific's premier educational institution.

This achievement calls for celebration in unity with all our students, staff, alumni's, development partners and the entire Pacific region, Though I cannot express fully, the excitement spirit on the screen today, but on behalf of the University's Student leaders from all our 14 campuses, I convey to the wider USP Community- a MASSIVE CONGRATULATIONS!

We would like to sincerely thank all our hardworking Senior Management team, led by the Vice-Chancellor & President Prof. Pal Ahluwalia for their unwavering commitment and dedication towards our Pacific Pride, our USP. Our inclusion today into the World University's Ranking not only speaks volumes about where USP is now headed, but with the combined recent achievements among others, where we ranked 11<sup>th</sup> in Crisis Management this year and 4 of our own academics being ranked in top 2% of the Influential World Scientists by Stanford University, tells us that our journey towards excellence has kicked started!

Despite some of the roughest of waves that we have faced recently and with our geographical complexities, our diversity is what we take pride in. Being one of the world's most diverse University's, culturally, geographically and student population wise, our diversity here does not divide us, in fact, it unites us. With such a significant achievement today, we must always remember that: We are the premier regional University representing a distinct Pacific culture, united by One Ocean. We are custodians of Pacific heritage and our environment.

By saying this, as staff and students, working together, we not only represent our Pacific values, but most importantly, we carry these values wherever we go and in whatever we do. As we celebrate this momentous occasion today, let me assure you that the USP Students Association is committed to working hand in hand with the

University Management in providing opportunities for aspirational leaders to respond to unique Pacific challenges that are innovative, relevant and appropriate.

As I conclude, saying thank you or Meitaki Maata to all our staff and students is not enough, I say congratulations, for we all made this happen as the USP family, together, through our diversity and our unity. USP continues to play an influential and integral role in advancing the collective regional interests of large ocean states through its values of excellence and creativity, ethics and accountability, respect and inclusivity and supporting our pacific people as we journey together to build a resilient blue Pacific that our leaders have envisioned.

Let me say this today, and we have said this before, USP is redefining its boundaries, as USP and as the Pacific family, the horizon is not our limit, neither is the sky, countries have sent space rovers to Mars, I say we will take the University beyond that for at USP, possibilities are limitless and that is how, we shape the Pacific futures, as one ocean, one people, one voice and one journey!

Thank you and Meitaki Maata

*USPSA President & Chair of Student Council*

*Mani J. Mate*

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