



USP Beat

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Suva Sangam College Students participating in the Online Open Week via Zoom

USP'S ONLINE OPEN WEEK - A RESOUNDING SUCCESS

The University of the South Pacific ended its inaugural week-long Online Open Week on 9 October on a high note, receiving incredible response from potential students and the general public.

The Online Open Week began on 5 October, providing an opportunity to interested secondary school students and public, access to a wide range of information about the courses and programmes offered by its 3 Faculties through its various schools and institutes, the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCESD) and Pacific Technical and Further Education (Pacific TAFE) and the support services that are available to students.

Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia, said the Online Open Week was a first for the University and the fantastic response and interest from school students and individuals was testament of USP's reputation for excellence in teaching and research as a premier university in the region. USP is ranked amongst the top 50 universities in Oceania region.

Participation through an online platform provided secondary school students an opportunity to experience what studying at a university would be like. One of the great features of the online interaction was that students could re-visit the site multiple times to access information and videos throughout the week. This provided them more opportunities to research and consult with their parents, teachers and peers to assist them in making their choices.

As a precursor to the Online Open Week, USP held 3 very successful consultations with Principals and Career Teachers 116 secondary schools in Suva, Lautoka and Labasa. More than 160 Principals and Careers Teachers from 116 schools participated. These consultations provided a platform ahead of the Online Open Week to meet the demands and expectations of the schools. This put USP on a good footing to allow it to ensure that it did not fall short of student expectations.

The high response rate from schools and students seeking detailed information

and answers in specific areas was a key indicator that USP delivered well in providing relevant information through its online platform. Most schools said the students enjoyed watching the videos that gave a good insight into USP and its work covering various faculties and sections.

At the end of the week 60 schools and over 4000 students participated in various zoom sessions. The Online Open Week website attracted over 6000 page views with 2000 online chat interactions from schools and the general public. The Facebook Live session reached over 35,000 views during the week.

Apart from Fiji and regional member countries, Australia New Zealand, United States and United Kingdom were the top four countries where the Online Open Week platform was accessed.

USP thanked all its sponsors, staff and students for their support and assistance in making its Online Open Week a great success.

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USP CELEBRATES FIJI'S 50th ANNIVERSARY OF INDEPENDENCE AND MARKS BREAST CANCER AWARENESS MONTH

Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete, Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services was Chief Guest at The University of the South Pacific's celebrations to commemorate Fiji's 50th Anniversary of Independence. The event was also held to mark Breast Cancer Awareness Month.

The Faculty of Arts, Law and Education (FALE) hosted a morning tea on Friday 9 October that began with a march by students and staff. Dean FALE, Dr Akanisi Kedrayate thanked the Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services for gracing the occasion.

On Breast Cancer Awareness, Dr Kedrayate said they were not gathered only to support the cancer victims but to ensure that a positive environment was created and available to them so that they don't feel alone in the fight against Breast Cancer. "I hope that we will continue with the spirit of being supportive," she said. A donation box was set up to support the important work of the Fiji Cancer Society and staff contributed generously.

Hon Waqainabete spoke about Fiji's Health Services, COVID-19 and Health Forecast for

the next 25 years during the celebrations. He said diseases such as cancer had become part and parcel with what we deal with every day and 80 - 90 percent of treatment is available in Fiji and there is cure, if detected at an early stage.

"Early screening can help deal with cancer as triple assessments are done that includes clinical, radiological and pathological," Hon Waqainabete said. He recommended that people examine themselves regularly and avoid traditional medicines to cure Breast Cancer.

"It's important for everyone to understand that early referral is necessary. Some patients used traditional medicines and then sought medical help only when they were in their last stage," said Dr Waqainabete.

Speaking about the COVID-19 Pandemic that has affected all our lives, the Minister for Health said it is very important to have a healthy lifestyle as many youngsters have died because of COVID-19.

"With COVID-19, we know we have been hit by the one-in-a-century pandemic.



Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete, Honourable Minister for Health and Medical Services was Chief Guest at The University of the South Pacific's celebrations to commemorate Fiji's 50th Anniversary of Independence and Breast Cancer Awareness month

We also know that there are more than 30 million people affected worldwide and about 1.5 million have died," he added.

Honourable Waqainabete said the Fiji Government was keen to ensure that for the next 25 years there is a good public health care system that can support such pandemics.

USP staff members who are Breast Cancer survivors shared their experiences about living with and undergoing treatment for cancer.

Dr Kedreyate extended her appreciation to FALE staff for organising the morning Tea. She thanked all staff for their generosity in raising funds for the Fiji Cancer Society.



The Association of The University of the South Pacific (AUSPS) Women's Wing and USP Staff Union (USPSU) helped raised \$3000 by hosting a Pinktober Morning Tea on 23 October to create awareness about breast cancer. The proceeds will go to the Fiji Cancer Society.

**MARK THE DATE!
NOVEMBER, 2020**

FALE: First Year student Interviews for School of Education
21 November

Study Week
16 - 20 November

Examination Period
23 November - 4 December



USP LAUNCHES ITS FIRST SEABIN

The University of the South Pacific's School of Marine Studies (SMS) joins a global seabin movement this week by launching its first seabin at the Marine Campus in Laucala, Suva.

Seabins are essentially floating bins, which provide practical and tangible solutions to reduce the plastics found in our oceans. Created by Australian surfer and philanthropist, Pete Ceglinsky, a seabin processes 25,000 liters of seawater per hour, removing rubbish and micro plastics and filtering chemical pollutants such as oil.

Fitted to a pontoon, the submerged bin uses a pump to suck rubbish from the sea surface.

The seabin was originally purchased by Bing Gibson from Seabin Fiji and is managed by Carl Probert of Fiji World Olympian Association. Mr Probert approached Marine Pollution Masters student, Andrew Paris for collaboration with USP.

Launching the Seabin Project, Director of SMS, Professor Ciro Rico congratulated the team.

"This is a great research tool for data collection and we applaud the collaboration between SMS staff, students and the rest of the team that assembled the seabin, including partners from the sporting fraternity," Prof Ciro said.

He said the seabin deployed at the university's jetty would help researchers in the field of ocean pollution, micro plastics, as well as in waste management projects

at the university.

Under the supervision of Dr Chinthaka Hewavitharane, Mr Paris and Postgraduate research student, Alex Kwaoga assembled the seabin and pontoon using recycled waste materials.

"Ocean pollution has become a major problem in our region and I am confident that this Seabin Project will be the beginning of a combined effort to amplify the urgent need to save our oceans and seas from all kinds of litter".

"The bin catches everything floating in the water and I check the bin on a daily basis and I use the garbage collected for my research," Mr Kwaoga, the Solomon Island research student said.

Dr Chinthaka acknowledged the support and collaboration from the Fiji Surfing Association and the Athletes for the Environment (AFTER) in the lead up to the installation of the seabin.

"The Seabin Project is a prime example of what can be achieved when concerned individuals and academic institutions like USP team up to find innovative solutions to save our planet".

"At the end of the research we expect to gain insights into the amount and types of anthropogenic waste that has been deposited into the inshore Laucala Bay area as well as gauge the replicability of the project for other sites around Fiji," says Dr Chinthaka.

Representing AFTER and the various sporting associations, Fiji Olympian, Carl



USP SMS Postgraduate Research student, Mr Alex Kwaoga explains the SeaBin on the pontoon at the USP Marine Jetty

PHOTO: SMS, USP

Probert said the joint effort by AFTER and the various sporting institutions and USP's School of Marine Studies to explore solutions to marine litter and its negative impact on the environment is a great success.

After months of planning and preparation, the seabin was mounted to a newly constructed pontoon with the aid of Institute of Marine Research (IMR) technicians, Luke Rogoyawa, Timoci Varinava and Ramesh Prasad.

Upon deployment at the USP School of Marine Studies Jetty, the device was trialed for several days with some fine-tuning required. Research work began on October 2 and is expected to run through the month of October.



From Left - Right: Mr Carl Probert, Dr Chinthaka Hewavitharane, Mr Alex Kwaoga, Professor Ciro Rico and Mr Andrew Paris after the successful launch of the "SeaBin" at the USP Marine Campus jetty on Monday, October 12, 2020. PHOTO: SMS, USP.

SOLAR PV POWER SYSTEM AT USP MARINE CAMPUS GETS NEW LEASE OF LIFE



Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr Giulio Paunga (centre) with the project team. USP alumna and system installation team member Ms. Timaima Marica is standing on his right,

The USP-KOICA grid-connected photovoltaic (GCPV) system at the marine campus has recently been refurbished with the installation of new inverters.

The GCPV system, one of the first to be established in Fiji, was part of a two million dollar grant to The University of the South Pacific under the Korea East Asia Climate Partnership, led by Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA).

The system came online in February 2012 and over nine years the system has produced significant savings for USP but has also played a major part in minimizing University's impact on the environment. The system on average produces 55,000 units of electricity per annum saving USP about F\$21,000 annually while reducing its annual carbon footprint by 27,000kg. This plant supplies approximately 15% of electricity requirements of the marine campus and feeds into the EFL grid when not in local use.

This year, recognising the importance of this investment towards USP's priority to be more environmentally and financially sustainable, the Vice-Chancellor & President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia, approved funding to rehabilitate the system. The rehabilitation project included the replacement of the 8 x 6 kW Solar PV inverters that had reached the end of their design life with two new 3 phase, high efficiency 25 kW inverters. The

work included re-configuration of the PV array strings and general cleaning of the structure and panels.

The work was completed within 2 weeks and the system was successfully recommissioned on the 15th September 2020. The entire project cost was \$24,000.

With a payback period of just 1.5 years, Dr Giulio Paunga, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Campuses, Estates & Infrastructure) remarked at how impressed he was at the economic benefits the system afforded, while helping to reduce USP's impact on the environment.

During a small commissioning and technical showing ceremony, Dr Paunga thanked all those involved in the project, including the contractors CBS Power Solutions and KOICA for the initial partnership with USP in 2012 that continues to reap benefits

for the USP community to this day. He also expressed optimism for the potential of future projects to continue to reduced USPs cost of operations and impact on the environment.

Project coordinator, Dr. Atul Raturi, from the School of Engineering and Physics thanked the government of Korea and KOICA for initially funding the project. He also acknowledged the support provided by various sections within USP, the two system Installers-Clay Energy (original installation) and the CBS (rehabilitation).

Dr. Raturi also congratulated Ms. Timaima Marica, a graduate engineer from the School of Engineering and Physics (SEP) who was one of the key members of the installation team. He said he looked forward to seeing more students, especially female, getting involved in the field of sustainable energy.



DVC Paunga in discussion with the project team.



NAURU PRESIDENT AND USP CHANCELLOR VISITS STUDENTS AT USP NAURU CAMPUS

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, M.P., Minister for Education and current Chancellor of The University of the South Pacific visited USP Nauru Campus on 15 September with Chief Secretary, Minister Reagan Aliklik, M.P.; Secretary for Education, Ms Darrina Kun and other officials of the Government. This was His Excellency's first official visit to the Campus.

The Campus Director, Ms Alamanda Lauti and executive members of the Students Association greeted his Excellency on arrival, who was then given a tour of the Community and Academic Library, followed by a tour of the Campus. The Community Library is managed by The University of the South Pacific Nauru Campus.

Ms Lauti said it was an honor and a privilege to have His Excellency and the delegation visit the University campus which is jointly



Campus Director describing the various historical and cultural images on the atrium wall to His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, M.P., Minister for Education and Chancellor of The University of the South Pacific and Minister Reagan Aliklik, M.P.

owned by the Nauru Government with eleven other Pacific Island countries. She also took the opportunity to congratulate the President on his appointment as Chancellor of The University of the South Pacific.

The Campus Director also thanked the Government for their continued investment in its human resources and said "This is indeed a wise and strategic investment in our quest for "Desperate Imagination." We certainly have challenges ahead of us but with a clear strategic approach we can overcome any barriers as we have done so in the past. May I reiterate the University's

commitment to the Government of Nauru to assist with its development plans and research."

She acknowledged the support and commitment of the Government of Nauru, the Deputy Minister for Education and the staff of the Ministry of Education and looked forward to working with them for the greater good of the University and Nauru.

His Excellency offered words of encouragement to the students and shared his experience as a student at Emalus Campus.

REPUBLIC OF CHINA, TAIWAN HANDS OVER SOLAR POWER SYSTEM TO NAURU CAMPUS

His Excellency Ambassador Dean Wang, Ambassador of the Republic of China, Taiwan officially handed over a solar power system to The University of the South Pacific's Nauru Campus on 28th September. The total cost of the project was USD363,000.



The Deputy Minister for Education, Hon Richard-Khyde Menke, His Excellency Ambassador Dean Wang, Republic of China, Taiwan, His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, M.P., Minister for Education and Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific and Campus Director Alamanda Lauti

His Excellency President Lionel Aingimea, M.P., Minister for Education and Chancellor of The University of the South Pacific attended the official handover by the Republic of China, Taiwan. Also present at the handover were the Australian High Commissioner, Her Excellency Angela Tierney; Government Ministers, former USP Chancellor, Hon Marcus Stephen and other distinguished guests.

Nauru Campus Director, Ms Alamanda Lauti, thanked the Republic of China, Taiwan on behalf of the Vice-Chancellor &

President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia; Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Campuses, Estates & Infrastructure) Dr Guilio Paunga; staff and students of USP Nauru Campus for the generous donation to the University.

"We thank the Republic of China (Taiwan) and her people for investing in Nauru's University," said Ms Lauti. She said Climate Change is the single biggest issue facing humanity today and I hope that all USP regional campuses will transit to clean energy source which will also reduce

campus operational costs. She also thanked the Chancellor and the Government of Nauru for their continuous support.

The Deputy Minister for Education, Hon Richard-Khyde Menke thanked the Government of the Republic of China, Taiwan for its continued commitment to the Government of Nauru's vision for wider national development in Nauru.

His Excellency Ambassador Dean Wang highlighted the importance of clean energy and Taiwan's provision of solar panels across various Government sectors since 2010. He said assistance to the Educational Sector such as provision of scholarships and short term vocational programs is a priority area for the Republic of China, Taiwan to help towards capacity building.



ENVIRONMENTAL JOURNALISM TRAINING VITAL FOR PACIFIC JOURNOS

The first-ever environmental journalism workshop on the Suva Bay-Foreshore area was an eye-opener about amazing, abundant natural habitat at our doorstep and its gradual destruction, says The University of the South Pacific Journalism Programme coordinator Dr Shailendra Singh.

The two-day workshop was organised by the USP Journalism Programme and Earth Journalism Network (EJN) with the theme 'Causes, Impacts of Pollution in the Suva Bay and Possible Solutions'.

According to Dr Singh, creating awareness was crucial since most Suva residents were unaware of this natural wealth and its demise.

He said the workshop filled a crucial gap in providing vital training for Pacific journalists.

"The Pacific faces numerous environmental challenges of a serious nature, but lacks dedicated environment reporters. The workshop last week helped address that shortcoming, at least to some extent," Dr Singh said.

According to Dr Singh, journalists in Fiji and the Pacific were generalists by necessity, rather than specialists, because the industry was too small to support specialisation.

"We are fortunate that an internationally-renowned environmental journalism organisation like the EJN is assisting us in this regard, not just through their expertise, but through cash grants to carry out workshops and reporting assignments," said Dr Singh.

The EJN Pacific Partnership coordinator, Donna Hoerder, said they were pleased to see participants from the journalism school at USP and Fiji National University, as well as media practitioners in Fiji and region learning more environmental reporting.

The workshop also included three days' training on writing compelling and effective environmental stories as well as a field trip to the Suva lagoon.

First-year journalism students Sosiveta



Caption

Korobiau (Fiji) and Leila Parina (Papua New Guinea) said the workshop provided useful skills and training to produce environmental stories while Fiji National University journalism student Loata Waqanivalagi said the workshop was a great way to understand the science jargons and report better on the environment issues.

Presenters included:

- Professor Vijay Naidu, former head of USP's School of Government Development and International Affairs – shared reflections of his time as a recreational fisherman along the Suva Bay/lagoon;
- Salanieta Koro, founder of the Happy Mangroves Project – The importance of the mangrove ecosystem along the Suva foreshore;
- Dr Matakite Maata, USP's School of Biological and Chemical Sciences – Suva lagoon contamination;
- Dr Gilianne Brodie, USP Institute of Applied Science deputy director – changes in the diversity of opisthobranch mollusc in the Suva lagoon;
- Dr Mark O'Brien, Birdlife International Pacific's regional programme coordinator – significance of shore birds of the Suva lagoon;
- Joeli Bili, project officer for Women in Fisheries Fiji – Women, fisheries and food security;
- Cherelle Jackson and Donna Hoerder, who spoke about the EJN Oceans Guide and best practices in environmental journalism.

- Rufino Varea, a USP postgrad researcher – Applying biomarkers for monitoring pollution impact in Viti Levu's marine environment;
- Andrew Paris, USP a postgrad researcher – Microplastics in the greater Suva inshore area and;
- Dr Isoa Korovolavula, USP's acting director of the Institute of Applied Science, – the impact of socioeconomic changes and conservation interventions at the Laucala Bay coastal environment.

While delivering his keynote address at the two-day workshop, Prof Naidu said the Suva foreshore had been under 'enormous' pressure from decades of destructive practices with little to no public awareness about the various afflictions.

He said the problems had been exacerbated by no sustained public awareness campaign, absence of environmental issues in Pacific news media coverage and lack of leadership.

The workshop was attended by USP scientists and other experts, young and upcoming researchers, youth environment champions, student journalists and media representatives.

*Jacqueline Suthi (Solomon Islands) is a final-year journalism student at USP. She is also a senior reporter for Wansolwara, USP Journalism's student training newspaper and online publication.



Name: Filipe Tawailasa Veisa
Occupation: Post Graduate Officer
Section: Pacific Centre for Environment & Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD)
Year Joined: 2014
Campus: Laucala, Fiji
Home Country: Fiji

STAFF PROFILE

Most memorable moment at USP?

Memories - some make you laugh, cry or even get you angry but one thing for sure is it holds a deep place in our hearts. I have so many memorable moments but the one that stood out most is meeting and shaking hands with the royal couple. We rarely get this kind of opportunity but I was lucky to be part of the event in 2018.

Best part about your job?

Meeting students every new semester and assisting them in any way possible to complete their programme.

What do you like most about your Campus?

The diversity of people that I work with and the different students I meet every day.

What motivates you?

My family has been the greatest motivator towards all of my success. I thank God for all those that I surround myself with, which has contributed immensely to every achievement accomplished thus far.

What has been your favourite project at USP?

I worked under at PaCE-SD and my interest lies specifically on Food Security, Disaster Risk and Climate change.

How has COVID-19 affected you and your section?

COVID-19 really did not have any impact on me personally but most of our research students have

been affected. This in terms of carrying out their research at their respective countries. At the moment we are trying to find ways in mitigating this impact especially for our scholarship students who have certain timeframe to complete their studies, but as we always say at the centre, we are resilient people, whatever may come across us, we will be ready to stand and fight against it.

Best remedy for work stress?

My remedy is to take your leave when given the opportunity and spend most of your time with your families. Work will always be there. Remember we only have one life - if you die today someone is always there to replace you.

Where did you receive your qualifications?

All my qualifications are from USP right from Bachelors to Masters, including my Doctor of Philosophy in Climate Change, which I am currently pursuing.

“ USP is one of the unique universities in the world, owned by a 12 member countries and a highly regarded university in the Pacific region. USP has been providing quality education for most of our current leaders including those that had gone past us. An academic higher education institution, and its prestigious diversity of colors with its fine qualified staff, I would recommend USP to anyone. ”



Name: Shahenoor Saiza Ali
Programme: Bachelor of Law
Faculty: Arts, Law and Education
Year Joined: 2017
Home Country: Fiji
Campus: Laucala, Fiji

STUDENT PROFILE

Why did you choose USP?

I chose USP as a monumental step in realising my personal, academic and career goals and it could be accomplished more efficiently by studying here. It was also due to it being recognised internationally for higher education and the various opportunities such as JENESYS, Student Exchange Programme to overseas universities and inhouse internships.

What are your career goals?

To improve peoples lives and communities through justice for all. I want to attain justice for the vulnerable in the society and work towards achieving gender equality.

Preferred mode(s) of study?

Face-to-face and online. There are certain units that can be done online while in other units, interactions are important to have constructive debates and share ideas.

Which course have you enjoyed the most? Why?

Public International Law. In this unit, I learnt enormously about global legal systems, and related it to the laws in Fiji. This gave me an opportunity to perceive Fiji laws from a different view and identify and recommend improvements.

Favourite hangout at USP?

The white tables and the library.

Where do you see yourself 5-10 years from now?

I see myself associated with NGOs such as the UN or NGOs aiming at achieving gender equality and rights of children. On the latter, I see myself established

with my own law firm where I take matters for the vulnerable and ensure justice is attained.

How has COVID-19 affected your studies and mode of study?

I have not been affected very much by it as I have been an online student for 3 years. However, I was mentally disturbed in the first semester this year as I committed myself for face-to-face studies, thus when the crisis emerged, it was a challenge to change my mindset. In essence, being an online student or 3 years assisted me in the change.

How is USP preparing you for the future?

USP is providing me with education and qualifications on laws in Fiji and the Pacific region. It is also developing me from a teenager into a matured young woman. I have also developed personally by being provided with platforms to boost my confidence in public speaking, become independent and self-reliant. USP has provided me with an opportunity to visit Japan through JENESYS which broaden my international knowledge. I was also chosen to study a semester in Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia which has helped me see new perspectives and concepts that broadened my horizons by engaging in conversations with other international students.

“ USP is a prominent university which unites and welcomes Pacific countries cultures and values. It not only provides students with Pacific exposure but opportunities to explore international countries through its student exchange programmes. Choose USP! ”



INTENSIVE ROOT CROP-BASED CROPPING SYSTEMS FOR FOOD SECURITY, SUSTAINABILITY AND CLIMATE RESILIENCE TRAINING



Participants during the training session

An intensive three-day training on “Root Crop-based Cropping Systems for Food Security, Sustainability and Climate Resilience” was held at the Alafua Campus in Samoa with the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) from 21 – 23 September.

The event was coordinated by USP’s Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD) through its European Union (EU) funded Intra-ACP GCCA+ Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) project. The main objective of the three-day training was to enhance climate resilience within eight villages in the Matautu District and Taga Village of Savai’i, by training local farmers on implementation of crop-based systems solutions.

The training followed a capacity needs assessment carried out in February this year, in the two villages mentioned. Lack of technical knowledge on agricultural practices was one of the key capacity needs identified during the assessment. Twenty-three farmers, 15 males and eight females, in Samoa now have a wealth of new knowledge on how to plant crops to ensure food security and better nurture the soil they depend on to grow food.

Alafua Campus Director, Dr Joeli Veitayaki, expressed his appreciation for the support from local partners, particularly the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environment (MNRE). Dr Veitayaki also acknowledged the EU for funding the training.

“The EU is committed to supporting climate change adaptation in the Pacific and works closely with USP to deliver concrete results at community level through delivery of practical capacity building activities like these,” Dr Veitayaki said.

Acting SAFT Head of School, Dr Siaka Diarra said USP SAFT provides training opportunities that are aimed at developing capacity to practically enhance climate resilience through the implementation of intensive crop-based cropping systems.

The Intra-ACP GCCA+ PACRES project will continue to support further climate resilience activities in Samoa in the coming year.

The EU Intra-ACP GCCA+ PACRES project is jointly delivered by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP), the Pacific Community (SPC), the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) and USP.

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Shaping Pacific Futures

USPBeat Magazine

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