



USP Beat

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Chief Guest, Hon. Praveen Kumar, Fiji Minister for Youth and Sports, Mr Robert Vaughan, Officer in Charge for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for the Pacific (OHCHR), Mr Sheldon Yett, Regional Representative for UNICEF, Regional students & all participants at the opening.

USP-UN HUMAN RIGHTS INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY 2020 A SUCCESS

International Youth Day 2020 with the theme 'Youth Engagement for Global Action' and focus area on 'Innovating Pacific Youth with sustainable food security during COVID-19' was held on 12 and 13 August 2020 at USP AUSAID Performance Space.

The event was a partnership between the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for the Pacific and The University of the South Pacific (USP).

The 2 days programme emphasised the importance of youths recognising the socio-economic impacts of COVID-19 in the Pacific which will greatly affect the areas of food security. There was a need to adapt a holistic approach from different stakeholders to engage youths to strategically foster innovative and creative ways for some solution based ideas that

can allow for resource identifications, resource mobilisation and resource utilisation by youth leaders.

This event allowed other international, regional, national, and community-based organisations to participate and youth voice to be recognised to further enhance their engagement and participation in national, regional, and international events.

Thirty youth representatives engaged in the conference with different stakeholders and held international, regional, and national discussions on COVID-19, its socio-economic impact, and finding innovative solutions.

On the first day, the key stakeholders set up their booths to provide awareness and services to USP students and the public on useful information about COVID-19 and how organisations are dealing with the pandemic. Young entrepreneurs also sold

and marketed their products.

Professor Derrick Armstrong, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Research, Innovation and International (RII), USP, extended warm welcome to the Chief Guest, Hon. Praveen Kumar, Fiji's Minister for Youth and Sports; Mr Robert Vaughan, Officer in Charge for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights Regional Office for the Pacific (OHCHR); Mr Sheldon Yett, Regional Representative for UNICEF; Regional students and other participants.

He said that the Pacific's youth population can innovate the Pacific with affordable, accessible, and sustainable solutions for the food security crisis during COVID-19, provided they are given quality advanced education and employment.

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USP's Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia and participants at the closing ceremony

Professor Armstrong said that USP empowers youth participation through sustained focus on regional students and regional cooperation that young students and researchers of today can help realise the sustainable development goals as we have aligned the University's strategic research themes to the global Sustainable Development Goals.

Mr Vaughan thanked USP for hosting the event and thanked all the UN Agencies for the contribution.

He said that it is very apt that this year's theme is 'Engaging youth for global action' as now, more than ever, we need young people to stand up for human rights and fight against the scourge of global inequality, poverty and continue to call for climate justice.

"By building the participation, we strengthen democracy, we create intergenerational equity, and we look beyond years and age," he said.

Mr Yett added that the young people worldwide and particularly those most vulnerable are facing major disruptions that affect their skills development and access to economic opportunities and livelihoods, while also dealing with the psychosocial impacts of the crisis on their communities and families.

Hon Kumar, while delivering his address emphasised that 2020 has not been an

easy year for everyone, particularly youth and that it is a year of many challenges, and extraordinary moments COVID-19 is undeniably the cause of many of those situations and it is impacting us daily.

Hon Kumar said that the theme highlights how the engagement of young people at the local, national and global levels is enriching national and multilateral institutions and processes and also shows we can engage with our youth to bring about real change that enhances the lives of individuals and their communities.

He said that there is a need to engage youth with fresh ideas and fresh minds to strategically foster innovative and creative ways for solution-based ideas that can allow for resource identifications, resource mobilisation, and resource utilisation by youth leaders.

Making the closing remarks, Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor and President, USP, said the theme is a call for all of us to come together and recognise the contribution of youth in addressing the challenges they are facing in the food security crisis during a pandemic.

He said the conference gave them the courage and confidence to face the many challenges in their ways and to embrace the opportunities that will arise.

He concluded that it is our responsibility as regional contributors to help others,

collaborate, and build a more youthful society for the benefit of the Pacific region.

Mr Sanaka Samarasingha, The United Nations Regional Coordinator in the Pacific, challenged youth participants to have the courage to claim their rights for their own voices as Pacific leaders of today – not tomorrow.

What are you doing as young Pacific people of today to be the voice of the unreached voices you represent? Mr Samarasingha challenged participants to think and act critically about it.



Participant, Zaira Begg delivering her remarks at the Conference

USP DONATES RESEARCH EQUIPMENT TO KASTOM GARDEN ASSOCIATION

The University of the South Pacific (USP), through the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCESD) collaborated with the Solomon Islands based Kastom Garden Association (KGA) last month in a study on the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic on community food security, education and livelihood in selected villages around Honiara and the Guadalcanal plains.

In appreciation of the collaboration and to assist with ongoing survey and research capabilities, the University donated a tablet and an audio recording device to the KGA management this week at the University's Solomon Islands campus in Honiara.

The tablet contains a "KoBo Toolbox" software application, which is handy for researchers and social scientists to undertake community studies and be able

to analyse data collected on a daily basis.

USP Solomon Islands campus senior staff representative, Leila Galo welcomed the KGA management team on behalf of the Acting Campus Director, Dr Patricia Rodie at the handover.

"I believe this will indeed support their work and research with Solomon Islands communities and I look forward to see KGA utilize this opportunity and more collaboration with USP in the future," said Ms Galo.

Speaking from USP's Laucala campus, PaCE-SD Acting Director, Dr Morgan Wairiu acknowledged KGA's support as well as the Technical Centre for Agricultural and Rural Cooperation (CTA) and the International Fund for Agricultural Development (IFAD) for the financial support towards the

survey.

"USP is happy to partner with KGA in conducting the study on the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on community food, health and livelihood.

"In appreciation of KGA's endless support, USP is donating a tablet and voice recorder to KGA and we know that KGA will use the equipment for its monitoring of food security interventions in the future. The University is also grateful to CTA and IFAD for providing financial support for the study," Dr Wairiu said.

Dr Wairiu also acknowledged the USP Solomon Islands campus's Acting Campus Director, Dr Patricia Rodie and the USP PaCE-SD survey team for supporting the research and facilitating the handover in Honiara.



From left: Dr Michal Ha'apio, Mr John Walenene Jr, Ms Leila Galo, KGA Chairman, Mr Frank A. Tabai and KGA Manager Mr Tikai Pitakia. (Photo: Lachlan Eddie, SI USP campus, Honiara).

OPENING OF OUTREACH COMMONS IN DAVUILEVU AND WALU BAY

It was a huge achievement for The University of the South Pacific (USP) as it opened its two Outreach Commons in Davuilevu and Walu Bay on 5 August.

The Outreach Commons is an alternative space for students to access the teaching, learning, and research systems offered by the university. Students residing close to these Commons will now be able to access these facilities without having to travel to Laucala Campus.

In Semester 1, during restrictions imposed due to COVID-19, USP closely monitored student participation and engagement on moodle. USP's call center team recorded a small percentage of students inactive due to a lack of steady internet connectivity and personal computers/laptops. USP then decided to bring access to USP services closer to the home of students through these two facilities, including full access to USP WiFi and network.

Apart from this, the Outreach Commons will also provide an alternative space for USP such as Library outreach, enrollment drive, and marketing campaigns.

Professor Jito Vanualailai, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education welcomed the school principals, staff and students of USP and thanked everyone for availing their time for the opening of two USP's Outreach Commons.

He said that the Outreach Commons is yet another of the University's innovative projects, keeping in mind the wellbeing of our students, at a time when we are all trying to adjust to the 'new normal'.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has necessitated changes in how USP conducts its academic activities this academic year to



USP's Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia in the opening of Outreach Commons at the Hexagon Building, Davuilevu

ensure learning and teaching continues without significant interruption to the progress of students. Specific academic regulations have been amended to enable an adjusted learning environment so that these changes do not adversely affect the student learning outcomes," he said.

"It is without a doubt clear that the period March 2020 to date are indeed unprecedented times that have called for an unprecedented level of mitigation in terms of Health, Safety and Security within USP both here in Fiji and at its campuses in our member countries."

Professor Jito mentioned that along with the focus on revamping Online Conference Services, came the need to support and supplement Teaching and Learning services – primarily through the provisioning of infrastructure services for Moodle and related supplementary tools.

Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Pal Ahluwalia extended his appreciation to all the guests present in

Hexagon Building, Davuilevu, and Food court, Walu Bay.

He said the University is very fortunate because it is at least able to conduct a few face to face classes when most Universities have to contend with holding online classes only.

He said that the Outreach Commons is an innovative response to the global crisis that has affected the world.

He added that Semester 1 progressed well following the challenges brought on by COVID-19 as the University drew upon its 30 plus years of experience for flexible learning and teaching to guarantee education continuity for the rest of the Semester, including online assessments and examinations.

Prof Ahluwalia said that the USP team brought its knowledge together and was able to respond effectively to ensure students get quality education and access facilities nearer to their homes.



Professor Stephen Pratt, School of Tourism and Hospitality and Professor Jito Vanualailai, The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education at the opening of Outreach Commons in Walu Bay

TUVALU CAMPUS DIRECTOR VISITS STUDENTS ON REMOTE NUKUFETAU AND VAITUPU ISLANDS IN TUVALU

Tuvalu Campus Director, Dr. Rosiana Lagi, visited the Central Islands of Tuvalu (Nukufetau Island and Vaitupu Island) in July to meet current students, offer and enrol new students for USP programmes and courses and meet the Secretaries of the two Island Councils.

The Secretaries of the Island Councils coordinate USP students and assessments in the outer islands. During her visit, she spent time consulting with about 70 Pacific TAFE students who are completing their school-based programme at the Motufoua Secondary School on Vaitupu Island.

These students are currently completing Certificate IV in Information Technology and Certificate IV in Accounting and Diploma in Business Administration. These students are preparing to be workplace ready when they graduate from high school.

During Dr. Lagi's consultation with the students she discussed further study opportunities and pathways students can take after completing their current programmes. She informed them of scholarships available to Tuvalu students and the need for them to achieve good

grades to qualify for these scholarships. Dr. Lagi stressed to the students the need to be skilled to be employable not only in Tuvalu but in other parts of the world. She challenged the students to focus on studying and becoming responsible Tuvalu citizens so that they can help build a more resilient Tuvalu.

The Principal of Motufoua Secondary School, Mr. Fineaso Tehulu, acknowledged the Tuvalu Campus Director's visit and stated that the visit inspired and motivated the staff and students. He added that the school has two priority areas – Learning and Achievements and Discipline.

Dr. Lagi was also able to visit some USP Alumni. Yoshihiro Tsuda who teaches at Tolise Primary School in Vaitupu, Island graduated with a Certificate in Teaching (Primary) last year and currently teaches Year 5 with a total roll of 37. Mr Tsuda said he was very excited about the Campus Director's visit.

She was also his lecturer and he was grateful for her support when he was completing his studies. Her support changed his life to be a better teacher.

Despite being partially blind due to a childhood injury, Mr. Tsuda has enrolled into the Bachelor of Education (Primary) program cohort that will run during the 2020 summer break in Tuvalu to advance his teaching skills. Some of the things Mr. Tsuda enjoyed while studying at the USP Tuvalu campus was working in groups and making friends. He particularly appreciated the Campus Director giving her time to assist him and his classmates.

Dr. Lagi is looking forward to new programmes and courses to be taught as cohorts in Tuvalu. Programmes taught in cohorts allow students in Tuvalu to have face-to-face class, consequently increase retention and pass rates.

She thanked the two fenua Vaitupu and Nukufetau as well as their Island Secretaries for providing support for USP students and logistics for her short visit. Dr. Lagi said visiting the islands is significant as it gives a personal touch and connection between the university and the community. Subsequently, boosting morale of the students and parents during this challenging time.



Dr. Lagi with the USP Pacific TAFE Motufoua Secondary School Based Cohorts

LAUNCH OF HAND WASH STATIONS AT LAUCALA CAMPUS

Professor Pal Ahluwalia, USP's Vice-Chancellor & President officially launched the Hand Wash Stations at Laucala Campus on 14 August 2020.

The current COVID-19 health protection guidelines by the World Health Organization and Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services highly recommend regular handwashing with soap and water for 20 seconds as often as possible hence USP's Estates & Infrastructure (E&I) installed hand wash stations throughout the campus over the past month. Similar installations are in progress on the other USP regional campuses.

This is yet another initiative by USP to keep staff, students, and visitors safe as we have begun face-face classes from Semester 2. This is a time when we are all trying to adjust to the 'new normal'.

Professor Ahluwalia, in his remarks, emphasised how remarkable the University staff have been in handling the COVID-19 Pandemic situation.

He said that USP DISMAC prepared a USP COVID-19 Pandemic Management Plan which served as a guideline on escalating and de-escalating actions to be taken



The Vice-Chancellor & President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia Launching the Hand wash station.

within the University in response to the evolving pandemic situation.

Prof Ahluwalia mentioned that it was pleasing to see how USP responded to the Pandemic considering the safety of staff and students.

"It is good to see the cooperation and we have installed hand wash station to keep ourselves clean. This is a medical practice we are required to follow according to the guidelines," he said.

The USP Student Association (USPSA), Secretary-General, Mr Emosi Vakarua

said the launching points out the commitment that the University has made in providing a safe environment for all.

"USPSA is thankful for the continuous improvements the University is making around its campuses. In the wake of COVID-19 Pandemic, everyone must take responsibility and ownership of ensuring that we maintain safe hygiene practices," he said.

Mr Vakarua said the University is providing handwash stations, handwashing soap, appropriate awareness, and more to keep the USP Community safe, however,

even bigger responsibility rests with us all and that is to make use of these facilities and initiatives.

He added that the student leaders and volunteers are assisting various departments where possible to ensure that we uphold standard hygiene practices.

"Our students across the region are very resilient and resourceful, we have seen many amazing projects, witnessed and facilitated several welfare projects, and collaborated with various sections," he said.

Congratulations

to our 37 students that were admitted to the bar





Name: Roreen Dayal
Occupation: Activities Coordinator
Section: Campus Life
Year Joined: 2014
Campus: Laucala, Fiji
Home Country: Fiji

STAFF PROFILE

Most memorable moment at USP?

I was given an opportunity as a staff to participate in cultural exchange programme JENESYS and visit Japan.

Best part about your job?

I get to interact and support not only the USP Family but the community members as well.

Favourite thing about USP.

The opportunity given to every staff to further develop and enhance their skills with financial benefits.

What has been your favourite project at USP?

Organising USP Family Day, where I get to meet the USP family members, creating fun activities for the kids and also at the same time inviting kids from the Orphanage to spend a fulfilled day with us. This is way of giving back to the USP Community and a day dedicated to them.

What do you like most about your Campus?

The landscape and how it complements the overall existence of USP, the facilities such as counselling service, medical center, gym, swimming pool and squash court all available in one campus.

What three words would you use to describe your role?

Creative, Fun, Supportive

Best advice you have ever been given?

Never give up, keep trying till the last breath.

What has been your greatest career achievement

Developed a new fitness challenge that has helped many staff and students which resulted in positive change in them. I am very enthusiastic about this programme as I see student's dedication and hard work when they lose almost 13kg in 12 weeks.

How has COVID-19 affected you and your section?

Campus Life had to reschedule events and activities that were planned for semester 1. Also Campus Life adopted the online delivery mode for services such as Counselling, Fitness sessions

Where did you receive your qualifications?

University of the South Pacific

With the diverse culture of people that are in the workforce, I got to learn a lot from the USP Community. USP is not just an academic institution but also envisioned with the responsibility to promote a sense of community, promote physical, social, spiritual and intellectual growth. With the social and economic diversity creating an atmosphere of understanding and sensitivity among students and staff.



Name: Aseli Tuicolo
Programme: Bachelor of Engineering - Mechanical
Faculty: Science, Technology & Environment
Year Joined: 2016
Home Country: Fiji
Campus: Laucala, Fiji

STUDENT PROFILE

Why did you choose USP?

I joined USP in 2016 doing foundation courses in the pure science discipline. I chose USP because I knew it had the capacity to facilitate the engineering program with the best resources available right here in the pacific.

What are your career goals?

I have always dreamt of a career in the fuel industry. It is my ultimate career goal to be a helping hand in the sustainable development of the Pacific's energy industry through exploration of power alternatives that can be accessible to everyone while being environmentally conscious.

Preferred mode of study?

Face to face classes has always been the best mode of study. Lecturers are filled with so much knowledge that face to face teaching delivers the information in a way other modes cannot.

Which course have you enjoyed the most? Why?

Advanced Mechanical Design (MM365). We had an in-depth study of not only how a part/product is designed but more importantly on the stages of its development. Many of us today take for granted the simple motor vehicle. The integration of mechanical designs, loads, electrical works, etc. is so amazing and without foreknowledge may never fully appreciate an engineer's work.

Describe how you feel about studying on your campus?

The engineering department has a place for its students to study (engineering block), labs available and restaurants; being on campus is definitely a second home for some of us.

Three words to describe USP

NURTURING. RESILIENT. PROGRESSIVE.

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

2020 has not been kind to most of us especially when we are about to join the workforce. However, I am adamant that I will be in a managerial position for some fuel industry; making plans of how I can help my fellow Fijians lives better through access to energy for power, lighting, utilities and even cooking.

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

2020 has been filled with so many challenges however, USP has delivered my courses exceptionally in spite of the global catastrophe. The lecturers and teaching teams made sure all data I required for my final year projects was made available to me. Other than not being physically present in school everything else seemed just fine in terms of my studies.

USP LIBRARY RECEIVES BOOK DONATION FROM THE USA EMBASSY



The United States Ambassador to Fiji H.E. Mr. Joseph Cella handing over books to USP Library in the presence of USPSA Federal Vice-Chair

The University of the South Pacific's (USP) Library received a boost to its print resource collection with a donation from the Embassy of the United States of America in Suva on 18 August 2020.

The Asia Foundation's *Books for Asia* programme provided titles donated by American publishers to institutions in cooperation with the Embassy.

Professor Pal Ahluwalia, USP's Vice-Chancellor and President, accepted with gratitude the books that were presented by the United States Ambassador to Fiji H.E. Mr. Joseph Cella at Laucala Campus.

A total of 50 books were donated covering academic disciplines of Accounting, Management, Business & Finance/Commerce, Ethics and Governance, Information System and Marketing inclusive of literary works.

Professor Ahluwalia thanked The Embassy and The Asia Foundation for its generous donation and appreciated the continuous support since 1980.

He said the new additions to the library would greatly benefit both students and staff of USP academically and professionally.

Professor Ahluwalia emphasised that these books are freely available and easily accessible

to individuals across the USP regional campus libraries network. .

H.E Cella was pleased to hand over the books and to meet library staff inclusive of four fellow Americans working at the Library.

He said that the Embassy was proud to partner with The Asia Foundation in this great venture to promote education and continuous learning.

H.E Cella said that the goal is to connect students, educators, and leaders with the knowledge the students need through the institutions they use.

The Asia Foundation is a nonprofit international development organisation committed to improving lives and expanding opportunities across the Indo-Pacific. The Foundation's Books for Asia program is the leading provider of donated information resources in the region. The programme currently delivers a quarter million books a year to thousands of institutions in 18 countries.

At the conclusion of the hand-over University Librarian, Elizabeth Fong echoed her thanks to the US Embassy and the Asia Foundation for its assistance to the USP Library over the years which included collection development, funding for professional library studies, conference attendance, regional meetings and capacity building of regional library staff.

MARK THE DATE! SEPTEMBER, 2020

SEMESTER 2, 2020

19 - 27 September:
Mid-semester Break

14 - 22 November:
Study Week

23 November - 04 December
Examination/ Assessment Weeks

TRIMESTER 3, 2020

31 August:
Trimester Begins

UPCOMING EVENTS

1 - 4 September:
USP Careers and Internship Fair 2020

23, 24, 25 & 27 September:
USP Pacific Market Day

28 September – 1 October
Health Week

Your Moodle shell has all the details of your continuous assessments schedules.

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