

USP Beat

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Gold medalists and prize winners after the Medals and Prizes Ceremony

USP HOLDS MEDALS AND PRIZES CEREMONY TO RECOGNISE ITS 66 HIGH ACHIEVERS

Sixty Six graduates of The University of the South Pacific (USP) were proud recipients of gold medals and prizes when it held its annual Medals and Prizes Ceremony at the Japan – Pacific ICT Multi-Purpose Theatre at Laucala Campus on 24 September. Chief Guest, Pro-Chancellor, Mr Winston Thompson presented the medals and Prizes together with the sponsors in each category.

This year there were 5 more categories of prizes than previous years because of a record number of high achievers. There were 45 categories in total indicating a high number of students excelling in their chosen fields of study.

Three graduates received the Vice-Chancellor and President's All-Rounder prize for the best combined academic

performance and record service to the community. Krisneil Prasad and Branesh Prakash won the male category and Vishalini Pritika Chand in the female category.

USP also saw a record number of females (41) receive awards this year. USP is continually working towards advancing and promoting gender equality in the work place and see talented women progress leadership roles they desire, with deserved remuneration.

Of the 66 recipients, forty-one were from Fiji, twenty-one from USP's regional member countries, and four international students from Nigeria, Papua New Guinea, Bangladesh, and the United States of America. The twenty-one regional member students were from Vanuatu (4), Solomon

Islands (4), Tonga (7) and Samoa (5).

Thirty eight awardees were sponsored under various scholarship schemes such as the National Toppers Scheme; Tertiary Education and Loan Scheme (TELS); Australian Awards Pacific Scholarship; Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment Graduate Assistant scholarship; Pacific Scholarship for Excellence in Research and Innovation and USP's staff sponsorship scheme.

In honouring the high achievers, Professor Pal Ahluwalia, USP's Vice-Chancellor and President said that the 66 graduates were a testament of the Pacific region's richness of intelligent and talented individuals who have the drive and capability to excel anywhere in the world.

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“These awards are, but a small tribute to honouring your hard work, dedication, and accomplishments in your respective fields of study. Each one of you here tonight has been chosen purely on merit and we are proud that you all are excellent ambassadors of this University and your country and will remain so in the future,” he said.

The Vice-Chancellor further added, “The road to excellence requires hard work, dedication, focus, ambition, commitment, and countless sacrifices. It is not an easy path. Our young achievers have shown us that anything is possible if one has the right mind-set, attitude, and inspiration to

achieve one’s goals.”

He also congratulated the parents, guardians, spouses, families, and friends, for providing the awardees a strong foundation to excel, adding that it was a proud occasion for them as well.

Sponsors for all categories were also greatly acknowledged and Professor Pal highlighted that the partnership between the private sector and USP has seen greater collaboration with students gaining practical knowledge and research opportunities with the best organisations in the region.

Corporate sponsors funded 34 awards for

this event. The Event’s sponsors were Post Fiji, Westpac, ANZ, Vinod Patel, Fiji Sun, Formscaff, Tana Plaza Pharmacy – Vanuatu, Neerus Pharmacy- Tonga, Superdrug Pharmacy, Marsh Ltd, Printhouse, Quality Print, Five Squares, Credit Corp, Fiji Institute of Accountants, Price Waterhouse Coopers (PWC), Reserve Bank of Fiji (RBF), KPMG, Total Designs, Fiji Development Bank, Tanoa Hotel Group, IXOM, Vodafone Fiji Ltd, Datec Fiji, Tropical Garments, Fuji Xerox Business Centre, GEM Office Products, Telecom Fiji Limited, Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), Core Builders, Lodhias Travel Centre, Communications Fiji Limited and Gremm Chemicals.



Graduates receiving their Medals and Prizes



USP UNDERTAKES WORK FOR PACIFIC WASTE MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME

The University of the South Pacific's Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) has commenced work on the European Union's (EU) Pacific Waste Management (PacWastePlus) Programme, through a service agreement focused on developing a sustainable capacity building programme for waste management in the Pacific.

PacWastePlus is funded by the European Union and implemented by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP) to improve and enhance waste management activities and the capacity of governments, industry and communities to manage waste to reduce the impact on human health and the environment in participating Pacific island countries.

IAS has been engaged by the PacWastePlus programme to develop a minimum standard for training in the eight target waste streams, undertake a national training capacity needs assessment, and to conduct a stocktake of available waste

management training throughout the Pacific region.

The national training capacity needs assessment will identify what skills countries feel their staff and waste management workers should have. They will also look at previous training courses delivered, which has helped to provide the up-skilling they seek.

In addition to the Needs Assessment, IAS will undertake the first ever stocktake of waste management training courses in the Pacific. This will help evaluate the status of waste management skills and competencies training available in the Pacific and inform the development of academic and professional waste management training needs in the Pacific island countries.

The stocktake seeks to identify and undertake an initial assessment of available courses in the management of PacWastePlus programme will focus

on priority waste streams of; hazardous wastes (specifically asbestos, E-waste and healthcare waste); solid wastes (specifically recyclables, organic waste, disaster waste and bulky waste); and related aspects of wastewater (water impacted by solid waste).

The Training Stocktake will be analysed against the training needs of countries, and will enable IAS and PacWastePlus to identify any training gaps, invest in existing courses to benefit members, or seek to develop new courses to fill any identified gaps.

Waste management remains a crucial responsibility for all countries, despite the unprecedented challenges faced by Pacific islanders today. The University is grateful to PacWastePlus for the opportunity to apply its quality applied scientific services to implement activities under PacWastePlus Programme for the better management of waste in the Pacific region.



USP's Dr. Isoa Korovulavula discusses the various training available on waste management with PacWastePlus member country focal points during an earlier held programme Steering Committee Meeting in Fiji

41 PACIFIC ISLANDERS NOW PROUD RECIPIENTS OF SEAFOOD BUSINESS MICRO-QUALIFICATION

The Pacific is now the only region in the world with 41 qualified awardees to hold a Micro-Qualification in Establishing and Operating a Small Seafood Business. This has been made possible through scholarships awarded by the University of the South Pacific (USP) Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) Programme.

Recognising the need to build capacity for small-scale seafood businesses, the USP PEUMP Programme held a second regional cohort of the micro-qualification commencing on August 24, with 26 scholarships awarded and delivered through the USP-Pacific Pacific Technical and Further Education (TAFE) in Suva, Fiji. Out of these, 15 recipients are women including one from Kiribati, three from Tuvalu, one from Vanuatu and the rest from Fiji.

The first regional cohort, which was held in June 2020 had 15 graduates, nine of which were women.

Adi Alesi Viai, a nama (seagrapes) entrepreneur who dives and sells the coveted green caviar, said the course had really emphasised time management and planning for her business activities in Fiji.

“I dive for my own nama and I pick it very conservatively as I want to sustain their growth for future generations. After my harvest, I do my best to meet the demand of my customers and I factor in enough time to harvest, deliver and also sell,” she said.

Olevia Matage said her family runs a barbecue business in Tuvalu’s capital, Funafuti, mainly cooking seafood and the course had encouraged her to streamline their eatery to include a creative consumer attraction strategy and how to manage finances more responsibly.

Romone Montin from Vanuatu, said the sea continues to push, challenge and prime every aspect of his life.

“I come from Malekula, which is the second largest island, and apart from 30 distinct languages in my community, our Pacific Ocean offers us sights to see that you cannot find anywhere in the world. This is why marine conservation was part of my career path. I have set up an



41 Pacific Island recipients of seafood business micro-qualification

aquaculture project previously, and with the knowledge gained from this course I will ensure my community back home can make money for themselves given the challenging times,” he said.

Raoinaba Tarawariki, transits into a seafood vendor and fisherwoman when she is in Betio, Kiribati to contribute to her family business as she works on completing her tertiary studies.

“This course helps me connect to reality on the ground back home and how I can use all these tactics that sustains our businesses and to ensure the concept is sustainable for our Pacific Ocean and our future as Pacific Islanders,” she said.

Elizabeth Galomule, a teacher with maternal links to the Solomon Islands worked with her mum to cook fish meals as a child and this income sustained the whole family.

“Whilst my mum is very astute with money, she lacks the skills to have a proper business plan in place since there are plans to branch out. These two weeks I have reminisced my humble beginnings on how to broaden the cuisine menu and transform to trend,” she said.

The Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education of USP, Professor Jito Vanualailai said, “with its mission and the current challenge presented by the global pandemic, COVID-19, the USP is more determined to provide communities and countries in the Pacific region with relevant,

cost-effective and sustainable solutions, including entrepreneurship opportunities to rise above challenges.”.

The two-week face-to-face micro-qualification course focused on the fundamentals of establishing and operating a small seafood business, business models and business plans, marketing strategies, basic accounting, records and operational management, legislative requirements for business establishment and ongoing compliance. It will assist Pacific Islanders to operate their businesses successfully and help entrepreneurs to establish a new business.

USP is one of four key implementing partners of the overall PEUMP Programme, an initiative funded by the European Union and the Government of Sweden. USP, as an implementing partner, focuses on building the capacity for Pacific islanders through education, training, research and development in fisheries and marine resources management.

The overall EUR 45million Programme promotes sustainable management and sound ocean governance for food security and economic growth, while addressing climate change resilience and conservation of marine biodiversity. It follows a comprehensive approach, integrating issues related ocean fisheries, coastal fisheries, community development, marine conservation and capacity building under one single regional action.



THE FUTURE BELONGS TO THE YOUNG - CHIEF GUEST, MARC SU

The Chief Guest at USP Tuvalu Campus' Open Day was His Excellency the Ambassador of Republic of China (ROC) Taiwan, Marc Su. In his opening address he said, 'the future belongs to the younger generation and they are also responsible for future developments.'

Ambassador Su was speaking to about 300 students and members of communities who converged at The University of the South Pacific (USP) Tuvalu Campus and later at the Nauti Primary School Ground to participate in the 2020 USP Tuvalu Campus Open Day on Friday 14 September.

Also attending the event were Officials from the Government of Tuvalu, members of Parliament, the Diplomatic Corp and USP Tuvalu Campus Advisory Committee.

Ambassador Su highlighted the significance of choosing the right subjects in high school that will be relevant to the students for their university programme and future career.

He said USP has quality programmes that can shape the Pacific's future, but it was the responsibility of the students to select the appropriate one. 'USP is famous for its network and links with regional and international partners and believes that USP Tuvalu Campus would be the best place for students to improve their ability to get the right knowledge and capacity to contribute to their own future.

H.E. Marc Su has always been supportive of events organised by USP and his office funds the English Language Programme developed by the Campus.

After the official opening, a booth tour

and a panel discussion were held. Eight students representing the eight island communities in Tuvalu participated in the panel discussion and spoke on critical issues faced by them and proposed solutions.

Some of the proposed solutions included diversifying the economy base, creating employment, developing local resources, purchasing relevant resources for schools, creating more awareness on COVID-19 and translating water management and land policies in the vernacular language. Panellist and representative from the Funafuti Island Community, Ms. Sandra Taasi, wants to see qualified people in Tuvalu develop industries to consequently see Tuvalu graduate from being one of the Least Developed Countries and not be dependent on handouts.

The purpose of the panel discussion was to develop the students critical thinking skills and confidence in public speaking.

In responding to the panelists, former Prime Minister, Mr Enele Sosene Sopoaga congratulated the young leaders for their courage in raising some of the critical issues pertaining to Tuvalu and stated that they are young leaders whose actions and decision now are helping their future and the future of Tuvalu. He stressed to them the significance of thinking globally and acting locally.

Mr Sopoaga said during the COVID-19 pandemic, with restrictions on travel and trade in place, it is paramount for all to explore local solutions to these issues such as decentralising development and using resources in the outer islands.



Chief Guest, HE Marc Su, Ambassador ROC Taiwan

Each panelist was awarded a computer tablet as a token of appreciation for their work.

In handing out the tablets, Tuvalu Campus Director, Dr. Rosiana Lagi, said it was a good learning tool for remote students. She thanked the students for their time and their parents for their support. She thanked the Deputy Vice Chancellor (Regional Campuses) and the Information Technology Services Department for the provision of the tablets.

The Open Day concluded with a cultural performance by the students held at Nauti Primary School Ground.



Invited Guests and the Panelists after receiving their Tablets



Vaitupu Island Community Students

COVID-19 PANDEMIC REJUVENATES STUDY MODE

The deadly COVID-19 global pandemic is redirecting a number of individuals to further their academic qualifications.

The increase in numbers at the orientation session for the Master in Business Administration (MBA) programme at The University of the South Pacific (USP) Lautoka Campus on 29 August is an indication that many individuals are now deciding to further their education, either after losing their employment or working reduced hours. A decline in their busy work environment is giving people an opportunity to further their academic path.

USP Lautoka Campus Director, Dr Pramila Devi said they have now made the orientation session mandatory in order for new students to know what facilities and services are available to support them in their study.

Dr Devi told the students that the two-year academic journey at USP will thoroughly boost their personal and career development. She, however also reminded the students that their journey will be challenging but full of excitement and they should all embrace the challenges to sail out victors.

Guest motivational speaker at the orientation, Ravineet Sami, who recently

completed his MBA through USP's Lautoka Campus urged all the new entrants in the MBA programme to capitalise on the positive effects of COVID-19. Sami is the Executive Director Finance for University of Fiji

He emphasised that the students should focus on the various positive effects of the pandemic rather than the negative. If there was no COVID-19, many of the students present in the room for the MBA orientation may not have been there, he said. He said that the pandemic had provided an opportunity to many individuals to realign their academic qualifications.

According to Sami, graduating with an MBA was the "most beautiful achievement" of his career. He however reminded the new students that during the two-year tenure of the MBA programme, a lot of dedication, hard work and sacrifice are needed.

"As a working student you will have to properly manage your time, and family support will play a vital role towards your success in this course.

"If you have children, your spouse will have to take a lot more responsibility of the family in order to allow you to devote 100% of your time to your studies," he reminded the students.



MBA students for cluster 5

READING IS EXTREMELY VITAL FOR POSTGRADUATE STUDIES, STUDENTS TOLD

Students undertaking postgraduate studies at The University of the South Pacific (USP) Lautoka Campus have been advised to inculcate a culture of reading during the tenure of their programme.

Lautoka Campus Director, Dr Pramila Devi, during orientation last week for the Postgraduate Diploma in Agriculture programme, encouraged the students to properly manage their study time.

Reinforcing the Director's advice, Shaleshni Prasad, Student Learning Support (SLS) specialist at the Lautoka Campus informed the students how reading is as integral component of their higher education studies.

Prasad said unlike undergraduate studies, the postgraduate programme is quite intense and requires a lot of reading.

"While doing your Postgraduate Diploma programme, you have to read a lot of research material, so reading and understanding will take a lot of your time.

As part of her specialist support Prasad explained that books and texts have a pattern, and once students are able to understand this pattern, reading becomes quite easy.

The SLS officer also reiterated the importance of time management while undertaking higher education studies. "Along with a lot more reading, as a student you have to properly manage your time otherwise things will become very difficult for you," she said.



Acting Student Learning Specialist Shaleshni Prasad with students



Name: Ruveni Gacala
Occupation: Scholarship Officer
Section: Student Administrative Services
Year Joined: 2016
Campus: Laucala, Fiji
Home Country: Fiji

STAFF PROFILE

Most memorable moment at USP?

Whilst a student, I was selected to be the graduate speaker in 2014 graduation ceremony during the Term of the King of Tonga as the Chancellor

Best part about your job?

Interacting with students and having that opportunity to influence their goals and commitment towards their studies.

Favourite thing about USP.

This reality is that in USP we live, study, interact and share with our fellow Pacific vuvale. We are diverse in culture, language, way of life but we are one and connected by our Blue Pacific Continent identity. USP is our common ground so we learn to appreciate and value each other and our diversity.

What motivates you?

My parents! They had invested in my education while making significant sacrifices along the way. Not to mention, giving back to the University and the Government as my sponsor in my early days of tertiary education.

How has COVID-19 affected you and your section?

At SAS, one of our core roles is to serve students face to face. With COVID mitigation plans, this means that we have to ensure that we continue on our core business by other means such as transforming a number of services to online modalities. It also means that we have to be more

creative in how we reach out to students and offer them the choice of USP as their Premier choice for Tertiary Education in the region.

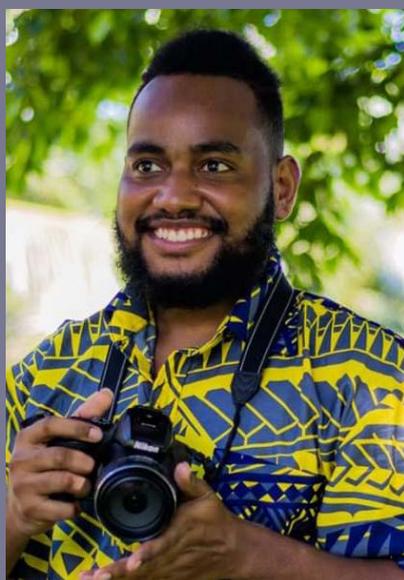
What has been your greatest career achievement

Securing my current role as scholarship officer. Being the scholarship officer has its fair share of challenges and rewards. At times, I have visited regional member countries meeting with scholarship officials, high school students and parents and at time government delegations. The success stories are those moments when I see sponsored students graduating. It's the feeling of knowing that their investment is making great returns.

Where did you receive your qualifications?

At USP since Foundation studies, Bachelor's and Postgraduate Degree

“
At USP one does not only get a qualification but also establish that lasting relationship with our fellow Pacific islanders. For some, they have never had the opportunity to visit other Pacific Islands, learn about their culture, language, way of life etc, but you can do all this at USP – we are a vibrant pot of cultural diversity. Our facilities are state-of-the-art and our campuses are simply breathtaking. Build your education with us and together we will shape our futures.
 ”



Name: Yannick Vealee Kalpukai
Programme: Bachelor of Science (Marine Science)
Faculty: Science, Technology & Environment
Year Joined: 2017
Home Country: Vanuatu
Campus: Laucala, Fiji

STUDENT PROFILE

Why did you choose USP?

I was interested in the courses they offered. Particularly marine science since I love the ocean.

What are your career goals?

To help maintain our marine resources as we the pacific people rely on our marine resources. Also to start an aquaculture farm in Vanuatu and teach other people how to farm aquatic animals.

Preferred mode of study?

I prefer face to face

Which course have you enjoyed the most? Why?

I enjoyed MS324-Aquaculture in pacific island countries the most because of my interest in starting an aqua farm and this course gives me all knowledge about farming or aquaculture. The course coordinator too is the best one I have come to know over the 4 years in USP Laucala.

Describe how you feel about studying on your campus?

I have lived in the halls for 4 years, I would say I love the feeling of studying on campus. Much safer and more easy than living and studying off campus.

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

5-10 years I see myself completing my masters and

helping people in Vanuatu practice aquaculture. Also owning a aquaculture farm in Vanuatu.

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

COVID-19 has caused all our courses to become online courses, the courses have become less adventurous and exciting as we have to do everything online and this affects our interests in doing assignments and quizzes.

How is USP preparing you for the future?

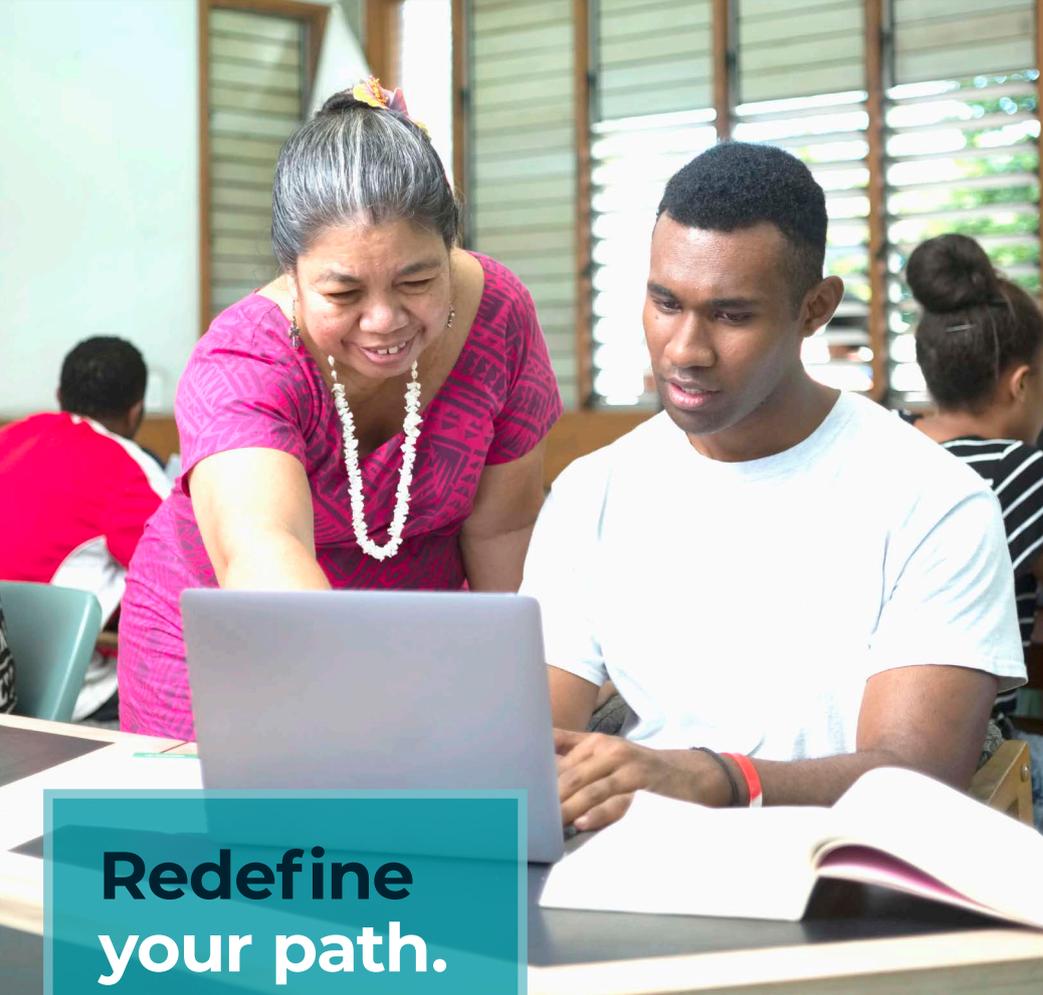
USP has taught me a lot based on the career I have chosen. The things to do and not to do in order to get a job and succeed in it

What is your advice to other students?

Try your best in everything you do whether its outside the classroom or inside the classroom, respect other students. If you fail, do not be ashamed. Take that as a lesson, get up, pull up your socks and say to yourself I am going to win this. It's not the end of the world. And finally, in everything you do, do not forget the people who are rooting for you and that is your family back at home and do not forget the Lord.

“
USP has been my home for the past 4 years. I got good friends and good teachers who have helped shape me. I am going to graduate at the end of the year, I thank USP for directing me almost to the end of my degree and shaping my future.
 ”





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At USP, we build and inspire work ready graduates. We forge leaders in industry, government and research to solve regional and global problems, share ideas and create innovative solutions that have far-reaching impact.

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Semester 1, 2021

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MARK THE DATE!

OCTOBER, 2020

UPCOMING EVENTS

Debate Competition (TONGA CAMPUS)
Starts Friday 2 October

FBE & FIA's Professional Development Committee - Seminar on "Managing Stress during COVID-19"
2 October

USP ONLINE OPEN WEEK
5 - 9 October

PaCE-SD Seminar Series - Panel Discussion: 50 years of Development and Climate Change in Fiji
9 October

FALE Webinar - PHA RESEARCHERS ACROSS COVID SEAS
8 October

Fiji-China Friendship Singing Competition
28 October

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

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