Cecelia Carol Louis had a special sense of intuition from a young age, making her realise early on what she wanted to pursue as a career.

She was born into a loving family of four in Port Vila, the capital of Vanuatu. When she was a few years old, her parents decided to relocate to their home island, Malekula.

Cecelia attended primary school in Malakula before returning to the city to attend secondary school. The lush green vegetation surrounding her family home struck a chord in her and ignited her curiosity about nature and the harmonious existence of humans and animals.

“Our home is by the sea. On one side, we are surrounded by big trees, small gardens, and the glossy leaves of shrubs and bushes, and on the other side lies the peaceful blue Pacific Ocean. While in school, I learnt more about the environment, its importance, and the need for conservation. This was when I finally dawned on me, and I realised the path I wanted to take for higher education.

“For me, this is personal. I want to preserve the environment I remember as a child. I want to hold on to those memories. We are the caretakers of this earth, and if we do not take care of the environment, we can see the consequences of the rising climate change crisis. Who should we blame? Humans are interconnected with the environment and its resources.”

After high school, Cecelia enrolled in USP for foundation studies before pursuing the Bachelor of Science programme in 2017. However, she faced an obstacle that led her to leave university and work in an IT company in Port Vila for five years.

In 2011. However, she faced an obstacle that led her to leave university and work in an IT company in Port Vila for five years.

The journey to this point had not been easy, but she believed in her self and took each challenge as a beautiful blessing.

“After graduation, I told myself that I am still a few steps away from being able to effect change and fight to preserve our environment.”

Cecelia decided to pursue a Postgraduate Diploma in Islands and Ocean Stewardship, specialising in Biodiversity and Conservation Management. She was the first female to complete this programme at the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development. Her success inspired her to start her master’s degree at USP this year, focusing on assessing the condition of seagrass beds in Vanuatu.

“I chose this topic because it is one of the valuable marine species and many individuals do not understand its importance to the marine ecosystem. I am simply reflecting on how the seagrass population is significantly declining back home in Vanuatu.”

Through her research, Cecelia has identified coastal infrastructure development as one of the main contributing factors to the decline in seagrass beds, which leads to harsher impacts of climate change.

“Seagrass beds are carbon sinks and are critical in helping global temperatures from increasing significantly. It is essential to the marine ecosystem as it provides coastal protection, feed to our coastal wildlife, and supports the fish population that millions of people rely on.”

Cecelia plans to work on her research and complete her master’s degree this year, allowing her to pay for her studies. Not only would it help her to pursue her dream, and she would be her mentor. She would be the first female to complete a master’s degree at USP.

The journey to this point had not been easy, but she believed in her self and took each challenge as a beautiful blessing.

For me, this is personal. I want to preserve the environment I remember as a child. I want to hold on to those memories.

“It took me several years to get my degree because I only registered for five units per semester to balance my work, allowing me to pay for my studies. Not many people would admit this, but I failed Mathematics in high school. I didn’t even try to pursue my dreams. I’m a firm believer that the only thing that matters is having the strength to get up and carry on no matter how many times you fall.”

Life continued through those canoe balls at Cecelia, which caused further delays in completing her degree. She found out she was pregnant.

“It was tough. I thank God that both my parents are civil servants; my mother works in the health sector and my father works in the education sector. I was blessed to have a strong support system. My parents took a break from school to take care of my daughter, Kyla Valentine Louis, in 2018 when I gave birth to a beautiful baby girl. After giving birth to my second daughter, I decided to continue my studies at USP.”

As a single parent, she had to balance work, her studies, and family time to ensure she provided for and cared for her daughter while she continued chasing her dreams.

“It took dedication, discipline, and an unwavering sense of focus to do it all at the same time. I worked hard and ensured everyone and everything was taken care of.”

In 2019, Cecelia returned to USP to continue her studies. This time around, she was determined to make it to the finish line so that she could provide for her daughter and her family. She moved to Fiji in 2020 to finish her studies and graduated with a Bachelor of Science degree in 2022.

“I felt so overwhelmed and happy because my parents were here with my daughter to see me graduate. It isn’t an easy journey to get to where I am now.”

The journey to this point had not been easy, but she believed in herself and took each challenge as a beautiful blessing.
OUR VISION
To shape Pacific futures by empowering students, staff, and alumni to become inspirational agents of positive change leading to innovative, cohesive, resilient, and sustainable communities.

OUR MISSION
To influence Pacific Islanders through the pursuit of excellence in knowledge by providing world-class education and research that improves the lives of individuals and communities.

OUR VALUES
Our Pacific Values of inclusive family, participatory and open dialogue guide everything we do:

People
The safety, well-being and needs of our students and staff are paramount and fundamental to our success. We are committed to ensuring that our students and staff achieve their potential to shape better Pacific futures.

Ethics and Accountability
We will uphold the highest ethical standards and operate with integrity. We are committed to fostering a culture of transparency and accountability ensuring that we uphold high academic and professional standards.

Creativity and Excellence
We will embody excellence, inspiring students and staff to embrace innovative solutions for the benefit of our communities.

Respect and Inclusivity
We will honour our Pacific heritage and traditions as well as respect, recognise and celebrate the diversity of our students and staff, ensuring that there are equal opportunities for all through an inclusive culture.

USP GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES
USP aims to promote the development of the following attributes in all our graduates:

Academic Excellence
- Extensive knowledge of and relevant skills in a particular discipline or professional area;
- Capacity for critical thinking and independent, self-directed, life-long learning;
- Digital literacy and advanced information and communication technology knowledge and skills; and
- Problem-solving and research skills.

Appreciation of the Cultures of the Pacific Islands
- Acknowledge and appreciate the unity and diversity of Pacific Island cultures;
- Understanding of the diverse economies and environments of the Pacific Islands; and
- Commitment to the maintenance and strengthening of the societies of the Pacific.

Intellectual Curiosity and Integrity
- Deep respect for truth and intellectual integrity, and for the ethics of scholarship;
- Intellectual curiosity, creativity, entrepreneurship, innovative and openness to new ideas;
- Commitment to interdisciplinary understanding and skills; and
- Respect for the principles, values and ethics of a chosen profession.

Cross-cultural Competencies
- Understanding and appreciation of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity;
- Respect for human rights and dignity in a global context;
- Commitment to accountability, ethical practice and social responsibility; and
- Demonstrated oral and written proficiency in the English language.

USP ANNUAL REPORT
2023

Capacity for Leadership and Working with Others
- Effective interpersonal communications skills;
- Resilient, adaptable and be empathetic;
- A commitment to gender equality and social inclusion;
- Leadership, organisational, teamwork and time management abilities; and
- Personal maturity and self-confidence.

USP ANNUAL REPORT
2023

Appreciation of the Cultures of the Pacific Islands
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- Understanding of the diverse economies and environments of the Pacific Islands; and
- Commitment to the maintenance and strengthening of the societies of the Pacific.

Intellectual Curiosity and Integrity
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- Commitment to interdisciplinary understanding and skills; and
- Respect for the principles, values and ethics of a chosen profession.

Cross-cultural Competencies
- Understanding and appreciation of social, cultural, and linguistic diversity;
- Respect for human rights and dignity in a global context;
- Commitment to accountability, ethical practice and social responsibility; and
- Demonstrated oral and written proficiency in the English language.
I am pleased to present an all-inclusive record of achievements and impacts for the year through The University of the South Pacific (USP) Annual Report. The University displayed creativity, resilience, and resolve to serve and shape Pacific futures by preparing work-ready graduates despite the challenges it faced.

As the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, it was an honour and privilege to work and serve alongside Council members, the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Senior Management Team, staff, and students in shaping Pacific futures against the backdrop of a dynamic environment that was largely impacted by financial constraints.

Despite resource challenges, USP maintained its 1001–1200 position in the prestigious Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings and achieved the following ranking across three subject areas: 801–1000 in Physical Sciences, 501–600 in Social Sciences, and 610–800 in Business and Economics, with an overall ranking of 401–600 out of 1,591 institutions. The University also ranked 12th in the Top 50 Crisis Management category and 101–200 in the Global Top Innovative Universities category in the World University Rankings for Innovation (WURI).

The 30th Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific and Governor General of Solomon Islands, His Excellency Sir David Okete Vuvuiri Vunagi, was installed at the Laucala Campus graduation ceremony in August 2023. He succeeded the 29th Chancellor and Head of State of the Independent State of Samoa, His Excellency Afioga Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II. The other 2023 graduation ceremonies included Laucala Campus in March and August/September, Samoa Campus in April, Emalus and Tuvalu campuses in May, Nauru and Marshall Islands campuses in June, Solomon Islands Campus in September, and Tonga Campus in October.

The University Council also reappointed Professor Pat Walsh as Deputy Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair of Council for a second term of three years.

I extend my sincere gratitude to all Council and Committees of Council members, the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Senior Management Team, staff, and students across all campuses, development partners, alumni, communities, and supporters for helping the University fulfill its vision and mission.

Together, let us continue to embrace good governance while shaping Pacific futures.

Dr Hilda C. Heine, Ed.D  
Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council
Vice-Chancellor and President’s Report

Warm Pacific Greetings

In my address at the inaugural Conference of Pacific Education Ministers (CPEM) meeting in Auckland in March 2023, I expressed the immense honour and privilege that I felt as Vice Chancellor and President in leading The University of the South Pacific (USP) and acknowledged our Pacific leaders who, over 55 years ago, had the prescience of their navigating forebears to establish an institution of higher learning and set us on a course over the horizons in pursuit of Excellence and Equity. Over the years, our continuous focus on these two key tenets – Excellence in the delivery of post-secondary qualifications and Equity in outcomes – has assisted the University in finding its bearings and provided direction through our many challenges.

We began 2023 in great anticipation that the change of government in Fiji in December 2022 would result in the rebuilding of relations and the restoration of regular funding by Fiji as well as the repayment of arrears that had accumulated exponentially. The warm and joyous reception that my wife Sandy and I received from Honourable Sitiveni Rabuka, the Prime Minister of Fiji, on behalf of the Government and people of Fiji upon our first visit back to the Laucala Campus after our deportation in 2021, was an unequivocal signal that relationships were on the mend. This was soon followed by the resumption of Fiji’s contribution of FJ$14m for 2023 and FJ$18m towards its arrears.

For USP, these shifts have exposed deeper issues that impact learning, teaching, digital, distance and place-based learning. As part of management’s strategy to better understand these global sectoral changes, we earnestly embarked at the start of 2023 on an institutional data analysis initiative that quickly demonstrated that our University and region have not been immune to these global challenges.

Our data mirrors the patterns and alarming declines in student numbers experienced internationally. Apart from the “COVID lift” in 2020 and 2021, which was a common phenomenon across the globe, our analysis show that the University’s student numbers have been on a downward trajectory across all our campuses since 2018. The data also shows that there have been significant changes in the profiles of our students: more students studying online; fewer students travelling outside their home country to study; fewer students on scholarships; and more students studying part-time, to name a few.

Critical questions are therefore being posed about our systems, processes, and service delivery models. Consequently, and over the course of 2023, we have begun to use institutional data more systematically to address these issues and to guide our decision-making. As is evident in this report, we are ensuring that we continue to deliver quality academic programmes and undertake research of international standing. Retaining our place in the 1001-1200 band in the Times Higher Education (THE) World University Rankings for the third consecutive year is testament to our pursuit of excellence.

In terms of major infrastructure, the University finally received FJ$19.5m from QBE Insurance Group, as full settlement for the Communications Building that was destroyed by a fire in 2018. Planning for a new building and ancillary facilities began immediately.

In December, we took possession of the new ADB-funded campus development in Solomon Islands. This new campus will enable the University to make significant advances in our endeavour to meet the growing needs of Solomon Islands as well as those of our other member countries.

There is an impressive array of other achievements and highlights that marked 2023, and these are presented in this report in accordance with our Strategic Plan (SP) 2022-2024 and are organised by the five Priority Areas (PA): Education; Innovation and Partnerships; Regional Campuses and Global Engagement; Regional Cooperation through the CROP Network; and Governance and Intelligent Use of Resources. Together, they represent the collective efforts of all our staff, students, and partners and demonstrate our resilience and steadfast commitment to meet the needs of our students, communities, and member governments.

As a university founded on ancient familial connections, I know that we can do more together than alone – it is in our DNA. It is this very collective spirit and commitment that is the bedrock of regionalism and is fundamental to our future and ongoing relevance and offers us a solid foundation from which we can continue to build for the future.

On a personal level, I am deeply humbled by the decision of the Council in November 2023 to reappoint me for a further two years. I am honoured to continue as Vice-Chancellor and President and I am immensely proud of USP’s achievements and profoundly passionate about the exciting possibilities before us. While I am under no illusion that we face sizable and deep challenges ahead, I remain committed to working even harder to serve our region and to elevate our institution to even greater heights.

Professor Pal Ahluwalia
Vice-Chancellor and President
The University of the South Pacific (USP) was established in 1968 and enacted by a Royal Charter (Charter) granted by Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II in 1970.

The Royal Charter and Statutes frame the governance structure of the University. The Charter incorporates the purpose, objectives, and powers of USP. It establishes the Council as the governing body, the Senate as the academic authority and mandates the key Officers of USP, including the Chancellor, the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Deputy Vice-Chancellors and Vice-Presidents. The Statutes supplement the Charter and prescribe the powers and functions of the Council, Senate, and the Officers of USP.

USP has twelve member countries: the Cook Islands, the Republic of Kiribati, the Republic of the Marshall Islands, the Republic of Nauru, Niue, Solomon Islands, Tokelau, Tuvalu, the Kingdom of Tonga, the Republic of Vanuatu, Samoa, and the Republic of Fiji. Its primary objective is to advance and disseminate knowledge through teaching, consultancy, research, and innovation. USP’s primary mandate is to provide appropriate levels of education and training and to be responsive to the well-being and needs of the communities of the South Pacific.

The ceremonial head of the University is the Chancellor. USP’s Chancellors are Heads of State or Government of member countries. The University is governed by its own Council, chaired by the Pro-Chancellor, and comprised of the Vice-Chancellor and President, Deputy Pro-Chancellor, representatives of the twelve member countries, Australia and New Zealand representatives, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat Secretary-General, USP Senate representatives, staff and student representatives, and co-opted members. The executive head of the University is the Vice-Chancellor and President.

The USP Convention is the agreement between the University as a legal corporate entity and its member countries recognising the continued operation and further development of USP in each member country. The Convention, and any ancillary domestic legislation, supports the Royal Charter under which the University operates and also serves to consolidate the legal basis of its operations with and for the member countries into the future.
Maintaining a safe, healthy, and vibrant culture and environment for the University is a high priority for the Council. It oversees the University’s efforts to maximise the value it creates for stakeholders by ensuring its graduates are work-ready, its research delivers significant benefits to the communities, and the University contributes to a safe and healthy environment.

The Council meets at least twice yearly. The Council and the Senate are served by a network of committees that have specialised remit. These committees meet on a regular basis and report to each Council meeting. The following are key committees of the Council.

**Executive Committee**

The Executive Committee exercises the Council’s powers delegated to it and advises the Council on governance, key operations, and financial matters. Delegated powers from the Council include the appointment of the University Visitor, Auditor, and Co-opted members to the Council, as well as determining tuition fees and financial commitments.

**Finance and Resources Committee**

The Finance and Resources Committee advises the Council on matters concerning the University’s consolidated finances, fixed assets, and proposed business ventures. The Committee reviews the University’s financial performance and provides strategic advice on its investments and investment performance. It is responsible for overseeing and monitoring the University’s financial portfolio, approving financial policies, reviewing all significant financial proposals for the Council’s consideration, and ensuring financial sustainability.

**Audit and Risk Committee**

The Audit and Risk Committee advises the Council on the University’s accounting, control, and reporting practices. The Committee considers external and internal audit reports and reviews internal audit practices. It monitors the performance and effectiveness of external and internal audits and ensures that the University’s processes and systems are audited prudently.

**Governance and Nominations Committee**

The Governance and Nominations Committee provides advice and makes recommendations to the Council on the USP Charter, Statutes, and policies, the appropriate governance structures and processes, the nominations to the Council, and the award of University distinctions.

**Remuneration and People Committee**

The Remuneration and People Committee exercises governance responsibilities with respect to oversight of the University’s remuneration and benefits policies and their application to USP staff members, including the remuneration of the Senior Management Team and succession planning for senior staff.

**The Senate**

The Senate is the principal academic authority at USP. It is responsible to the Council for maintaining the highest standards in teaching, learning, and research. The responsibilities of the Senate include setting the admission criteria for programmes and courses, approving and reviewing courses in terms of their academic quality, overseeing academic regulations, approving and monitoring academic policies, and upholding academic freedom and integrity.

The Chair of the Senate is the Vice-Chancellor and President, who reports to the Council on matters considered and resolved at the Senate meetings. The Senate has a broad membership encompassing the heads of academic units, senior academics, and representatives of staff and students. The Senate meets four times a year and reports to Council. The Senate is supported in its work by committees and working groups.
GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE

Council

Executive Committee (EC)
Finance & Resources Committee (FRC)
Audit & Risk Committee (ARC)
Governance & Nominations Committee
Remuneration & People Committee (RPC)
Search Committee
Joint Appointments Committee for VCAP, DVCs, VPs & COO
USP Trust Fund
Student Discipline & Appeals Committee (SDAC)

PRINCIPAL OFFICERS

His Excellency Sir David Vuvuiri Vunagi
Chancellor

Honourable Dr Hilda Cathy Heine
Ed.D
Pro-Chancellor

Professor Pal Ahluwalia
BA, MA, Sask, PhD FIh
Vice-Chancellor and President

Professor Jito Vanualailai
BSc, S.Pac, ME, Ryukyus, PhD Kobe
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Education)

Dr Giulio Masasso Tu’ikolongahau Paunga
BA Wesleyan, MA, PhD Daito Bunka
Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Regional Campuses and Global Engagement)

Professor Gurmeet Singh
BCom MCom MPH PhD J&K (Acting) Deputy Vice-Chancellor & Vice-President (Research and Innovation)
Head of School of Business & Management

Walter Fraser
BA, PGCdipCom
Chief Operating Officer
Professor Surendra Prasad
BSc (Hons) MSc, PhD, Kanpur
Head of School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean & Natural Sciences (SAGEONS)

Professor Bibhya Nand Sharma
PGDIT MSc, PhD, S.Pac.
Head of School of Information, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Physics (STEMP)

Dr Rup Singh
BA PGDip, MA, PhD, S.Pac.
(Acting) Head of School of Accounting, Finance and Economics (SAFE)

Associate Professor Sandra Tarte
BA Hons, PhD, ANU
(Acting) Head of School of Law and Social Sciences (SoLaSS)

Dr Matthew Hayward
BA (Hons) Exim, MA, UoD, PhD UoD
(Acting) Head of School of Pacific Arts, Communication and Education (SPACE)

Dr Rup Singh
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(Acting) Head of School of Pacific Arts, Communication and Education (SPACE)
KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

**PA 1 Education**

**KPI 1** – Overall pass rates (%), excluding PTAFE

The overall pass rate of 74% is below the target of 80% but above the pass rate of 72%.

**KPI 2** – Number of bachelor withdrawals/deregistrations

The number of withdrawals and deregistrations for 2023 was 2,737, which exceeded both the target and actual figure of 2022, which was 2,381.

**KPI 3** – Overall student satisfaction with the quality of educational experience

The KPI increased by 1% from 79% to 80%, surpassing the target of 74%.

**KPI 4** – Overall student satisfaction with student support services

The KPI met the target of 90% but is slightly lower than the rate of 2022, which was 91%.

**PA 2 Research, Innovation and Partnerships**

**KPI 5** – Student Enrolment (EFTS) growth

The EFTS declined by 6%, while the target was a 2% growth from 2022. The EFTS has also declined from the year 2021 to 2022 by 16%. EFTS contains HE status only. The KPI continues to be affected by the impact of COVID-19 on members and Fiji’s student loan and scholarship allocations.

**KPI 6** – Overall bachelor graduate employment rate (%)

This is a lagged indicator, and the current rate of 66% is an interim figure. The GDS 2023 result will be available in May 2024. The current number of graduates is 24.

**KPI 7** – Number of EFTS Master’s by Thesis/PhD students

Like KPI 5, this data continues to be affected by the impact of COVID-19. The EFTS for 2023 is 240, which is 10 EFTS less than the target and also 5 EFTS lower than 2022.

**KPI 8** – Number of Master’s by Thesis/PhD completions

Like KPI 6, this will be finalised in May 2024.

**KPI 9** – Research Income ($)

The audited figure is $9m, which is $1.5m lower than the target. The figure has significantly increased by over $4m from the previous year.

**KPI 10** – Number of research outputs

The KPI was 211 as of 21 February 2024. This indicator is lagged by 6 months, the final figure will be available after June 2024.

**PA 3 Regional Campuses and Global Engagement**

**KPI 11** – EFTS of international students

Like KPI 5 and 7, this KPI continues to be affected by the impact of COVID-19. The current EFTS stands at 171, which is lower than the target of 255. It is also lower than the EFTS of 2022, which was 239.

**KPI 12** – Percentage Spend on Regional Campuses (%)

The audited figure is 10.3%, which is slightly lower than the target as was the actual for 2022.

**PA 4 Regional Cooperation through the CROP Network**

**KPI 13** – Development Partnership Funding ($)

The audited figure is $48.6m, which is higher than the target of $45m and the funding for 2022, which was $46m.

**PA 5 Governance and Intelligent Use of Resources**

**KPI 14** – Operating surplus as a proportion of total income (%)

The audited ratio is 27.4%. This is higher than the target of 26.8%. The higher margin is mainly due to the receipt of extraordinary income for grant arrears, insurance proceeds for the USP Communications Building, and additional development assistance for PTAFE initiatives. Without these, the operating surplus margin would have been 10.3%.

**KPI 15** – Commercial Income with 10% profit

The audited figure is $11.3m, which is lower than the target of $13m and income of 2022, which was $11.7m.

**KPI 16** – Senior academic staff as a proportion of total academic staff (%)

The ratio of 9.5% is lower than the target of 11% but higher than the ratio of 2022, which was 8.5%. This proportion is calculated using the staff numbers as at mid of Semester 2, 2023.

**KPI 17** – Staff Engagement Survey

This KPI was renamed from “Staff Satisfaction” to “Staff Engagement Survey”. The Staff Engagement Survey is expected to be undertaken in 2024.
Introduction

Since its establishment in 1968, the University has been committed to nurturing skilled and knowledgeable leaders from the Pacific Islands who can contribute to the progress of their communities. This commitment is guided by key medium-term strategies, frameworks, and operational plans, including the USP Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework, the USP Strategic Plan, and the vision for a Blue Pacific Continent outlined by Pacific Island leaders.

In 2023, the University played a crucial role in the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) project, which demonstrated its continuing dedication to improving the quality of education across the Pacific Islands.

During the year, a significant aspect of the University’s efforts to enhance education quality was the thorough review of all undergraduate academic programmes. This review process was led by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice President Education and was informed by two important policies that had been recently approved:

1. The Academic Programme Prioritisation Policy, which provided a comprehensive model for reviewing and prioritising academic programmes, including efforts to revitalise and rationalise them.
2. The Learning Pathways Policy, which aimed to develop seamless learning pathways between sub-degree and degree qualifications offered by USP, making education more accessible and continuous for students.

The University has remained resolute in its efforts to enhance the overall quality of student experience. To achieve this, Academic Units worked hard to develop and analyse responses to institutional surveys and external reviews, ensuring a continuous feedback loop for improvement.

The Teaching Quality Committee (TQC) required Academic Units to regularly report on actions taken in response to Course Experience Surveys (CES) and similar feedback mechanisms. In addition, the University actively engaged with industry partners to ensure that educational programmes remained in line with the changing needs of stakeholders across the region, including employers, ministries, industries, and professional bodies.

In 2023, the University also recognised the importance of external reviews, as evidenced by assessments conducted for the Professional Diploma in Legal Practice (PDLP) and Marine Studies programmes. These reviews included various support sections of the University, such as the Centre for Flexible Learning (CFL), International Office, Student Administrative Services, and Campus Life. These sections played a pivotal role in enhancing service delivery and overall institutional effectiveness.

Through these concerted efforts, the University reaffirmed its commitment to educational advancement, ensuring that its programmes remained responsive to the needs of the communities while preparing future leaders to address the challenges of the present.

Academic Milestones

The recent accomplishments in the areas of quality of teaching, student outcomes and learning gains, and learning environment are noteworthy. These accomplishments are aligned with the Teaching Excellence and Student Outcomes Framework and are guided by the objectives and initiatives outlined in the USP Strategic Plan 2022-2024.
Quality of Teaching

The University is currently reviewing its undergraduate academic programmes, guided by frameworks such as Education 4.0 and the Pacific Regional Education Framework. This is to ensure that the programmes remain purposeful and relevant in the face of evolving educational landscapes, including the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) and other global forces. The approach is inclusive and reflects the University’s dedication to programme revitalisation and rationalisation.

Moreover, on 5 April 2023, the University submitted the Reaffirmation Review Report to the Western Association of Schools and Colleges (WSCUC) Senior College & University Commission (WSCUC) for reaccreditation. This marked the culmination of the initial accreditation cycle that lasted from 2018 to 2024, which demonstrates the University’s commitment to excellence and accountability. The WSCUC’s rigorous accreditation standards were instrumental in guiding the University’s pursuit of educational excellence, promoting equity, and advancing its mission to serve Pacific Islanders.

Student Outcomes & Learning Gains

The Curriculum Review and Development Unit (CRDU) was established on 1 March 2023 to improve the student learning experience and meet external accreditation standards. By centralising curriculum oversight, the CRDU ensured standardisation, streamlined development processes, improved coordination, and accountability. This initiative aimed to enhance transparency, foster collaboration, and ultimately improve student learning outcomes.

Moreover, the Postgraduate Programme Outcome and Alignment project successfully integrated the University Programme Outcomes across all relevant programmes. This comprehensive alignment ensured consistency and coherence between University Programme Outcomes, Programme Learning Outcomes, Course Learning Outcomes, and assessments, strengthening the quality and relevance of the University’s postgraduate offerings.

Overall, these achievements highlight USP’s unwavering commitment to educational excellence, student success, and regional development. As the University continues to adapt to changing dynamics, it remains steadfast in its mission to nurture the best minds and empower communities through education.

Learning Environment

In 2023, CRDU and CFL engaged in a series of professional development workshops. The workshops were designed to advance staff expertise in various areas, such as the implementation of engaged learning and teaching models, the intersection of artificial intelligence with assessments, and quality assurance in educational programme delivery. Internal and external experts, including representatives from Quality Matters, facilitated these sessions through online and face-to-face formats.

The primary objective of these workshops was to enhance the team’s competencies in dealing with contemporary challenges in curriculum development and evaluation. The emphasis was on refining skills in critiquing assessment rubrics, managing micro-qualifications, and aligning with external accreditation bodies’ recommendations.

As a notable outcome of these endeavours, the staff attained accreditation as Peer Assisted Study Session Supervisors, demonstrating the University’s commitment to nurturing a supportive learning environment. These initiatives fortified academic support mechanisms and solidified USP’s standing as a preeminent leader in education within the region.

Academic Support Services

Campus Life

Campus Life offers a variety of programmes and resources to support students with their personal, academic, and social development outside of the classroom. In 2023, these services included student recreational and sporting activities, counselling and wellness services, career guidance, and support from the Disability Resource Centre. Specific activities and initiatives included collaboration with the Fiji Ministry of Health and Medical Services and the Fiji Cancer Society to provide free sexual and reproductive programmes, such as Pap smears, screening for sexually transmitted infections, breast examinations, and family planning services; free Zumba and cardio classes for students and staff at the Laucala Campus; a six-week introductory sign language class for staff and students; partnering with Westpac to conduct a financial literacy workshop for students at the Laucala Campus and hosting the Annual Entrepreneurship Fair, which attracted 2,778 participants over four days. The annual USP Careers Fair was also held in October, where 38 major employers interacted with final-year students and provided opportunities for them to learn about different organisations and roles.

During 2023, Campus Life also worked closely with Empower Pacific and the Ministry of Health and Medical Services to provide psychological support to students and a mental health awareness programme was implemented in collaboration with the USP Students Association (USPSA). To improve counselling services, the Centre worked with the Information Technology Services (ITS) team to launch an online application form for counselling sessions.

In sports, the USP Men’s Rugby Team made it to the quarter-final stage of the Suva Rugby competition, while the Women’s Raiders Team emerged as champions of the Fiji national 9s rugby league tournament held in Sigatoka. The Sports
Office also worked closely with all of the USP teams and coaches to prepare the students for the inter-tertiary games held at the University in September.

Through these initiatives and activities, Campus Life created a vibrant and inclusive campus community that fostered holistic student growth and success.

Library

In 2023, the Library undertook a series of initiatives to improve the student learning environment and enhance the overall student experience at the University. These initiatives were aligned with the University’s commitment to promoting academic success and creating an enriching learning atmosphere. They included various activities, strategic resource enhancements, and specialised services across different library sections.

The initiatives helped to broaden the scope of information literacy and research support services for students. They included customised sessions and improved access to an extensive range of digital resources. This enabled the University to build a strong foundation for equipping students with essential research skills. By adopting this strategic approach, the University ensured that students were proficient in navigating the complexities of academic research, resulting in better learning outcomes and experiences.

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The customer and information services were improved. The improvements included modernising the library loan system and adopting interactive engagement platforms such as LibAnswers and LibGuides. These changes highlighted a student-centric approach to service provision, simplifying access to resources and creating a supportive academic environment that proactively responded to the needs of the student body.

The Pacific Collection was expanded and digitised, marking a significant step towards preserving and providing access to a broad range of Pacific heritage. This initiative enriched the pool of research materials available to students and staff, offering profound knowledge about the cultures and histories of the Pacific.

Moreover, the Library played a crucial role in digitising resources and maintaining the Pacific Islands Marine Resources Information System (PIMRIS), which helped to support specialised research and learning in marine studies. These efforts ensured that students and researchers had easy access to valuable and often scarce information, thereby improving the quality of research and learning in the field of marine science.

The library network has significantly enhanced the learning and research infrastructure by implementing cutting-edge technologies and digitisation services. The Integrated Library System (ILS) has been comprehensively utilised, and students now have round-the-clock access to online resources. These initiatives have made it easier for students to access academic materials, supporting their educational pursuits regardless of time and location constraints.

The Library also played a significant role in promoting sports education and research by managing sports-related information and resources meticulously. This initiative contributed to a holistic university experience, addressing the interests and educational requisites of students pursuing studies in sports and related disciplines.

Student Administrative Services

The Student Administrative Services (SAS) received and processed around 20,600 admission application forms from across all 14 campuses. Pacific TAFE supported the admissions of its students, while the Schools assisted in postgraduate admissions. From the applications, a headcount of around 20,000 students were admitted to various programmes offered by the University. The admission terms included semesters, trimesters, flexi schools, and cohorts. Registrations were successfully conducted in all 14 campuses during the semesters, trimesters, and flexi schools.

SAS evaluated 6,050 applications for completion of programme, out of which 4,685 students were included in the graduation rolls. Nine graduation ceremonies and a total of 3,775 examinations were administered at 252 exam sites across the region in 2023. The second semester examinations scheduled from 6 to 17 November were disrupted by Tropical Cyclone Mal, but despite the delay, over 97% of the grades for courses that were tested in the first week of exams were made available before the University closed for the Christmas break.
In 2023, SAFE refocused its strategy on enhancing collaborative and impactful research, promoting quality learning and teaching, and improving the overall student experience. Several initiatives were launched to ensure that the activities of the School remained innovative and relevant in these key areas of its core business.

Learning and Teaching

- SAFE successfully delivered all its academic courses and programmes as planned despite the high staff turnover. The School adopted innovative and pragmatic strategies to recruit high-quality staff.

- The School ensured that all its major programmes were registered with the Higher Education Commission of Fiji. Moreover, SAFE’s academic programmes underwent rigorous internal reviews, which resulted in realigning learning outcomes with USP graduate attributes and reconfiguring assessment portfolios. SAFE completed a similar exercise with the Vanuatu Qualifications Authority.

- SAFE staff participated in workshops covering various topics, such as curriculum alignment, accreditation, and programme design. SAFE staff participated in the annual Pacific Update Conference, with the Australian National University, covering a wide range of topics across the major disciplines of the School.

- SAFE staff were recognised and rewarded for publishing in high-ranked journals.

Partnerships and Engagements

- The School collaborates with external stakeholders, industry partners, and advisory and accreditation bodies to review and update its academic programmes. It received a further six-month extension for the Fiji Institute of Accountants (FIA) accreditation and undertook preparatory activities for CPA re-accreditation.

- Guest lectures were delivered by industry experts and policy practitioners from various sectors, including accounting, finance, government, multilateral organisations, statistical agencies, and regulatory bodies, covering a wide range of topics across the major disciplines of the School.

- The School collaborated with its student body, the Accounting, Finance and Economics (SAFE) to successfully hold a panel discussion titled “Envisioning the modern Pacific entrepreneur”. The panel featured SAFE alumni who operated MSME businesses and was moderated by Dr. Nacanieli Rika, Senior Lecturer in Accounting and Finance.
A diamond in the rough,
Lui’s life journey polished by determination

Felse Vitolo Lui was born in 1950 into a poor family living in a small village along the northern coast of Savai’i in Samoa. Like many other children growing up in his community at that time, he faced a bleak future with few prospects.

Lui recalled that many born in that period were raised by the struggles of their parents, who worked tirelessly to put their children through school, as education was relatively new and a way of securing a better future.

“My parents soon after moved to Apia so that my father could find paid work to support the family and educate us - the children. Both my parents had only basic formal education, so they were barely numerate and literate. They can count, read, and write in Samoaan only.”

His parents’ perseverance and dedication to providing a better life for their family ensured that Lui got his primary education at the Catholic Marist Brothers’ School at Mulivai, Apia, from 1967 to 1966. He then progressed to secondary study at St Joseph’s College, on the outskirts of Apia, from 1966 to 1969.

During his secondary school years, he participated in various projects and activities, one of which was a project in 1966 that contributed to improving their school: a block of modern flush toilets to replace the vintage pit latrine of the early days.

“For millennials who have never sat on one of these, it comprised a basic wooden shelter mounted over a 10- feet pit fitted with a long bench with six circular holes on which to sit and ‘do your business’. It was the most popular spot, particularly in the mornings, to dodge the ‘homework check’ and for smokers of the school.”

In his final two years at St Joseph’s College, Lui attained the New Zealand School and University Entrance certificates. Based on these results, he was awarded a government scholarship in 1970 to pursue further education at The University of the South Pacific (USP), which had just been established two years prior.

“It was during this period that tragedy befell his family as Lui’s father, who worked as a casual labourer, died. As it was where he met his wife. Our children seemed to have USP DNA in their systems. When our children had grown up a bit and my wife, Ruby Janola, could work, she joined the USP Alafua Campus in 1988 to work in the Accounts Division until she retired 30 years later, in 2018.”

As a regional institute, USP holds a special place in his life as it was where he met his wife. The now 73-year-old recalled, “In our days, the first year of study at USP involved taking the Foundation Year. Preliminary II for those who have attained NZUE or Preliminary I for those with only NZ School Certificate.”

He said, “Studying at USP was fun as we had a number of geography field trips to the Rewa agricultural area. These trips exposed us to Fiji and ordinary Fijians in their natural environment, enabling me to see how we are similar and different and bear witness to their lives and experiences.”

In recognition of his academic performance, USP awarded me the New Zealand Institute of Chartered Secretaries prize. However, I graduated in absentia as I didn’t want to wait another three weeks for the ceremony because by then, I had a wife, a fellow Samoan scholarship student, and a baby waiting for me here in Samoa.”

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Reflecting on his journey at USP, Lui added that the University had served him, his generation, and the Pacific region well thus far.

“My son, Karras Harre Lui, daughters Lita Eki Lui, Muriel Theresa Lui, Tamaa Utulei C. Lui, son-in-law Etuale Junior loane, and grandson Kendrick Lui have all studied at USP, and they all hold reputable positions in Samoa’s Government and private sector.”

Learning and Teaching

In 2023, SAGEONS received several student scholarships, including the ACIAR Scholarship for Higher Degree by Research (HDR), USP-Samoan Agriculture Bursary Scholarship, Australia Awards Pacific Scholarship, and Regional Countries Scholarship. The Centre for Agriculture, Research and Extension (CARE) provided support by hosting student practical training, which helped students improve their employability skills in the agriculture industry. Around 40 Discipline of Agriculture and Food Technology (DAFT) students were attached to the Fiji Ministry of Agriculture and other agricultural institutions for 20 weeks of vocational practical experience.

SAGEONS organised multiple seminars and training sessions during the year, where final-year students and staff members could enhance their knowledge and skills. In 2023, an external panel review of the Discipline of Marine Studies (DMS) was completed, and an onsite visit to the Laucaul Campus was carried out in August. The School also made a few adjunct appointments to assist with teaching and research.

Research

SAGEONS staff had the opportunity to attend overseas conferences and visits, which helped to establish and strengthen new and existing collaborative research, resulting in a number of high-quality publications.

A number of SAGEONS staff were acknowledged for their achievements in securing funding for research in areas such as sustainable agriculture intensification systems, waste energy solutions, soil and better farming system management, and soil information for yield forecast.

Ms Roselyn Lata, a Teaching Assistant in Chemistry, was awarded the first prize in the poster competition at the 2nd Commonwealth Conference held in Trinidad and Tobago.

In 2023, the Division of Geography, Earth Science and Environment (DGESE) collaborated with Monash University to contribute to the Revitalising Informal Settlements and their Environments (RISE) project. The project was a joint research initiative with the International WaterCentre of Griffith University, USP DGCEO of Laucaul Campus and Emalus Campus, and the University of Papua New Guinea. The project’s main objective was to support better water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) planning in urban informal settlements. The project provided WASH and urban planners with data, information, and tools to use during the scoping and early design of WASH services for underserved settlements.
Conferences and Meetings

- In September 2023, the Geospatial Science Unit hosted the China-Fiji Seminar and Training on Remote Sensing Technology and Applications in Marine Coastal Zones. Later in November, the 2023 Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council Conference was held at the University. The conference focused on the theme “Improving Resilience in the Pacific Islands through GIS and Remote Sensing” and drew more than 250 participants from the region and internationally. During the conference, the Pacific GIS and Remote Sensing Council (PGRSC) National Focal Points had the opportunity to showcase their in-country activities around GIS and remote sensing. The conference also hosted a one-day series of ESRI special sessions. The conference featured 63 presentations, six workshops, National Focal Points lightning talks, and 16 thematic sessions.

- SAGEONS and the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme team attended the PEUMP Steering Committee Meeting and EU-Pacific Round-Table Dialogue held in October 2023. A briefing paper highlighting the main activities implemented in the fourth and fifth years and the resulting positive outcomes was presented.

Partnerships and Engagements

- In 2023, SAGEONS continued building positive relationships with internal and external stakeholders and fostered strong collaboration with colleagues and scientists across the region and internationally. The School is firmly committed to nurturing a conducive academic environment for innovative knowledge creation and inter-disciplinary research in biology, chemistry, agriculture, geographical studies, and marine and environmental management.

- A three-year MOU was signed with the Chinese Academy of Tropical Agricultural Sciences (CATAS) to foster cooperation in research and training between both institutions. Similarly, an MOU with the Jiangsu Academy of Agricultural Sciences (JAAS) was also signed to promote mutual cooperation in teaching and research.

- A training session for farmers in Upolu was conducted at the Alafia Campus in partnership with the University of Waikato.

HIGHLIGHTS

New accredited Pacific Ocean Finance Certificate Programme turning tides for the Pacific

A new milestone was reached with the launch of the Pacific’s first-ever accredited Pacific Ocean Finance certificate programme. The programme is delivered under USP’s component of the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme, funded by the European Union (EU) and the Government of Sweden.

Pacific TAFE delivered the Pacific Ocean Finance certificate programme in June 2023, aiming to improve the collective regional understanding of ocean finances and its challenges and identify opportunities for the Pacific.

In the outskirts of Lautoka, a suburb on the western side of Viti Levu, Fiji, Rohinil Kumar grew up raising livestock, assisting his parents with backyard gardening, and often helping with their family business of selling fresh vegetable produce, among other assorted goods, at the town market every weekend.

What started as a chore later became an opportunity for Rohinil to earn some pocket money when he began his educational journey at Drasa Primary School, a mere three kilometres from his home.

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During his two-year postgraduate studies, Rohinil met students of varying age groups returning to pursue further studies or upgrade their qualifications in the field of climate change.

"This was another highlight for me. Most of the students I studied with are now working in various ministries in Fiji and being with them in a classroom setting allows us to share our experiences and learn from each other."

After completing his postgraduate studies at USP, Rohinil became a teaching assistant at the USP School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS).

"Learning never stops! Joining USP in 2016 is a choice I never regretted because it has brought me this far. I never really imagined myself doing what I'm doing today.

"After my father's passing, I thought of leaving school after Year 13 to help mom at the market. I never imagined myself in a teaching space, let alone completing my bachelor's and postgraduate studies."

Despite his accomplishments and education from USP, the 26-year-old keeps himself grounded by revisiting his early beginnings selling vegetable produce at the Lautoka market.

Rohinil's mom, 58, lives alone in Lautoka and is still carrying on their family business that has been running for over 26 years.

"I return home every semester break and long public holidays to spend time with my mom and help her at the market. The reason I do this is because it is where everything started from. If not for that humble beginning, I wouldn't be here doing what I do today," Rohinil explained.

"I would like to encourage students to pursue their dreams and upgrade their qualifications to continue to make a difference and move up the ranks in their workplaces. USP offers various upskilling programmes and has flexible learning options for those juggling work and parenthood, among other responsibilities."

Rohinil is now working on his intent paper, as he hopes to pursue his master's degree in the near future.

"The thought of helping my mom by securing a decent job fuelled my determination to complete my studies at the region's premier institute. After completing his undergraduate studies in 2019, Rohinil graduated with his bachelor's degree in 2020 and decided to pursue a Postgraduate Diploma in Climate Change.

"When I enrolled in the postgraduate programme, my lecturer, who acknowledged my performance during my undergraduate studies, approached me and asked if I wanted to do part-time tutoring for his Geography units.

"From then on, I signed my contract as a part-time tutor at USP while pursuing my postgraduate diploma.

"What I loved about postgraduate studies at USP while being a part-time tutor is the university's flexible learning options. As a postgraduate and working student, USP offers some units online or blended, allowing us to do our work and prioritise our studies."

Many people often think about completing their studies within the period of programme completion. However, most don't realise that studying at USP is, in itself, a journey of self-development, and at times, your study timeline will differ from that of your colleagues and friends.

"I did one postgraduate unit per semester starting in 2020, and it took me two years to complete my programme instead of the one year for full-time students."
**Our People, Our Stories**

Mouna Yangnmali overcomes doubts to pursue postgraduate studies

Mouna Yangnmali’s journey started when she gave up her career in Papua New Guinea to move her family to Samoa and support her husband.

Mouna recently graduated with a Postgraduate Certificate in Business Administration and Human Resource Management. However, this did not come without sacrifice and dedication. It started with leaving a budding career to become a stay-at-home mom.

“My husband got a job here in Samoa, so we moved our little family here from Papua New Guinea. I left my job and career to support his dream. Two years down the line, I felt that whatever little I had left of a career was dwindling, so I enrolled at The University of the South Pacific,” Mouna shared.

She added, “It did become frustrating at times, and I thought, really? Did I decide to just move to Samoa? But I found an open door with USP. I enquired, and they said yes. I was left with two options: either pursue this long-time dream to pursue law or work to do something I could achieve within a short amount of time, and it turned out to be Business Administration.”

Three months after beginning this pursuit of upskilling at USP, Mouna is the only Papua New Guinean to graduate from the Samoa Campus this year.

“I feel so proud, happy, and blessed. I see it as an opportunity to open doors for more Pacific Islanders within the region to study at USP as well. As most know, Papua New Guinea is not a member country of USP, so maybe with me attending USP here in Samoa, this can also be an eye opener for others,” Mouna said.

She added, “I like to think I am a late bloomer. I am a mother and wife who is still pursuing studies. My son sometimes asks me if I am the oldest person in my class, but I believe slowly is the fastest way to get to where you want to be. This sort of thing has been an encouragement, and I have been inspired because there are others in the MBA programme who are also mature students. I get to learn from these students and at the same time learn about different cultures as well.”

Mouna found studying alongside a multicultural group to be an exciting and enriching experience.

“At the USP Samoa Campus MBA Programme, I think I am the only Melanesian with all my Polynesian classmates; it is great. I learnt so much about how they live and their cultures. It is a journey and quite an experience for me. I thank USP for that as well, for giving me this opportunity to study here in Samoa,” she shared.

She said, “My children have been the backbone of my academic journey; I have my son, who is also studying with me at USP.”

“When I first applied to USP, I doubted myself. I thought, am I going to make it? But I learnt something. Out of that doubt in myself, there was an opportunity to dig deeper within myself to find the courage to keep going. It’s like I tried to do more research to find out about my doubts, and this created the opportunity for me to learn about myself and what I had in me to get me to the next step,” Mouna said.

“My encouragement to young people is there is nothing wrong with having doubts; as long as you find out more and explore what you are capable of, you can overcome those doubts.

“I had doubts about being able to do my master’s, and today, I have one foot through the door to completing my postgraduate certificate. I got my children to come to witness me graduate today because I hope this will motivate them, that if their mom can achieve this, they can too,” she added.

Mouna hopes her achievement will add to the contributions of the many students from Papua New Guinea who have graduated from USP before her and will help their nation get a step closer to becoming a member country of USP.
Learning and Research

- The Discipline of Social Work initiated a student exchange programme with Western Sydney University. In Semester 2 of 2023, two third-year students from USP were the programme's first participants of the programme. They completed their fieldwork placements in Sydney, while three students from Western Sydney University enrolled in USP's Fieldwork Practice course. Placements for these students were arranged with the Ministry of Women, Children, and Social Protection, Live and Learn, and Reproductive Health. Additionally, two Australian National University (ANU)-USP History Master's Scholarships were awarded to USP students starting in Semester 2 of 2023. ANU will fund four tuition scholarships for Master’s by Thesis until 2026 to support student research.

- In 2023, SoLaSS initiated a series of workshops for postgraduate students. These workshops covered a range of topics, including proposal writing, literature review, methodology and ethics, working with theory, using Excel and other apps for quantitative analysis, publishing, budgeting, and mental health. Additionally, the School conducted postgraduate confirmation of candidature presentations twice in a semester.

- The Mid-Term Review presentations for five PhD students took place in early September. Additionally, three staff members of SoLaSS graduated with PhDs in 2023. They were Dr Atele Dutt (Sociology), Dr Anawaite Matadradra-Tuvuki (Psychology), and Dr Tima Tuvuki (History), and Dr Tima Tuvuki graduated with PhDs in 2023. They were Dr Atele Dutt (Sociology), Dr Anawaite Matadradra-Tuvuki (Psychology), and Dr Tima Tuvuki (History). Dr Halter revealed that the book started as an extracurricular exercise in a USP law class in 2019 and resulted in a draft university-wide exercise. The International Court of Justice (ICJ) is the judicial institution of the United Nations, and it determines legal issues of international law. In 2023, the ICJ adopted a resolution requesting the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion on the obligations of states with respect to climate change, human rights, and intergenerational equity.

- The School of Law and Social Sciences (SoLaSS) at the University of the South Pacific (USP) held a two-day workshop on human rights and the protection of women's rights. This workshop was held in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to support the Pacific Islands Forum's call for strengthened collective action to proactively manage the regional security environment.

Regional Campuses and Global Engagement

- An initiative that began as an extracurricular exercise in a USP law class in 2019 continued in 2023, focusing on an extraordinary journey to the United Nations General Assembly. In March 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion on the obligations of states with respect to climate change, human rights, and intergenerational equity.

- In August, SoLaSS collaborated with the ANU Department of Pacific Affairs and the Citizens' Constitutional Forum to organise a two-day workshop on human rights and the protection of women's rights. This workshop was held in collaboration with the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to support the Pacific Islands Forum's call for strengthened collective action to proactively manage the regional security environment.

- In December, the Leadership, Governance, and Human Rights programme organised a one-day workshop in collaboration with the Pacific Human Rights Defenders Network and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The workshop aimed to strengthen the capacity of women human rights defenders to identify, mitigate, and respond to risks and vulnerabilities.

Pacific Islands Legal Information Institute (PacLII)

- In 2023, the PacLII website received 23.6 million hits and published 5,800 legal documents, which included legislation, case law, and journal articles. This reaffirms the critical role that PacLII plays in providing access to legal information from 20 jurisdictions across the Pacific region. A stakeholder summit on maintaining and enhancing free access to law in the Pacific region was held in September 2023 at the Emalus Campus. At the end of the summit, the participants endorsed the Vanuatu Declaration, recognising the significance of PacLII as a cornerstone to the rule of law and access to justice.

Law graduates in Tonga successfully complete PDLP

- A group of USP law graduates based in Tonga successfully completed the Professional Diploma in Legal Practice (PDLP) in January 2023. The PDLP programme was offered for the first time at the USP Tonga Campus, facilitated by lawyers from the Tonga Attorney General’s Office. The 11 law graduates were joined by the Hon. Attorney General Linda Simiki Fakauautumui SC, USP Deputy Vice-Chancellor of Regional Campuses and Global Engagements Dr Giulio Masasso, Dr Tima Tuvuki, and Tonga Campus Director Dr Robin Haeva to celebrate their achievement.
It’s never too late to pursue your passion

The adage “It’s not the destination that matters, it’s the journey that counts” reflects the education aspirations of Eileen Story, a mother of two, who recently completed her Bachelor of Arts in Social Work, Management and Public Relations from The University of the South Pacific.

From the unspoiled paradise of the Cook Islands, complete with white sandy beaches, blue lagoons, and lush green mountains, Eileen enjoyed her childhood with her family in Rangiura, Nikao, a village settlement located on the north coast of Rarotonga.

She attended Avatea School for her primary education before joining Tereora College. During her time there, she had a group of clever friends, most of whom went to university immediately after graduating. However, she chose to join the workforce immediately and stayed behind for a few years before eventually moving to Australia.

“Throughout the years, the thought of pursuing a degree never crossed my mind until I moved from Sydney, Australia, with my two children to Mauke in 2018, one of the best-kept secrets of the Cook Islands.”

Eileen described living in Mauke, Pa Enua (the islands of the Cook Islands outside of the administrative capital Rarotonga), as having many benefits and providing a great lifestyle for her children, but some areas needed attention.

Like most Pacific Islanders who live on smaller islands away from the mainland, Eileen faced her fair share of challenges, like the high cost of essential supplies, which covers the cost of shipping. “At one time, Mauke also went without a dentist for an entire year, so the people were paying their own fares to travel to Rarotonga to get their teeth fixed and back.”

After six months of living in Mauke, she realised that education was a significant problem on the island. Students struggled to gain enough credits, and only a few could continue their studies in Rarotonga. The others dropped out of school.

“This was when I decided that I would stand as a candidate in the 2022 General Election to represent the people to the best of my abilities. It was important to me that I, too, must further my education to gain a deeper understanding of our people and the societies that we live in.”

Her passion for helping those in her community propelled Eileen to further her studies and pursue a Certificate in Social and Community Work to expand her knowledge on social change, social and ecological justice, gender equity, individuals, families, groups, and communities.

“The certificate required the completion of eight courses, and after I completed the courses, I decided to carry on and complete another four courses to achieve a Diploma in Social and Community Work.”

“In the last semester of completing my diploma, I was determined to complete my degree and the remaining 12 courses. I majored in Social Work with a minor in Public Relations and Management. Though I wasn’t successful in the elections, the great thing about studying social work is that it will be useful no matter what career path I choose.”

Eileen’s passion for personal development and commitment to helping others inspired her to keep pushing through the many challenges she faced in the past four years.

“Looking back over these last four years of study, it has been a crazy ride and an absolute juggle with COVID-19, looking after my family, work, volunteer initiatives, campaigning for the elections, and relocating from Mauke to Rarotonga.”

“At one point, I even broke my foot and had to attend the USP graduation to accept my certificate with my foot in a cast. To stay on top of everything, I used the calendar in my diary to record all assessments, exams, social events, kids’ events, work trips, and holidays. I would check this daily to ensure I hadn’t missed any deadlines and was across everything for the next month.”

“Because of the way the university was set up, it took me 10 years to complete my studies. This was when I decided that I would stand as a candidate in the 2022 General Election to represent the people to the best of my abilities. It was important to me that I, too, must further my education to gain a deeper understanding of our people and the societies that we live in.”

Her passion for helping those in her community propelled Eileen to further her studies and pursue a Certificate in Social and Community Work to expand her knowledge on social change, social and ecological justice, gender equity, individuals, families, groups, and communities.

“The certificate required the completion of eight courses, and after I completed the courses, I decided to carry on and complete another four courses to achieve a Diploma in Social and Community Work.”

“In the last semester of completing my diploma, I was determined to complete my degree and the remaining 12 courses. I majored in Social Work with a minor in Public Relations and Management. Though I wasn’t successful in the elections, the great thing about studying social work is that it will be useful no matter what career path I choose.”

Eileen’s passion for personal development and commitment to helping others inspired her to keep pushing through the many challenges she faced in the past four years.

“Looking back over these last four years of study, it has been a crazy ride and an absolute juggle with COVID-19, looking after my family, work, volunteer initiatives, campaigning for the elections, and relocating from Mauke to Rarotonga.”

“At one point, I even broke my foot and had to attend the USP graduation to accept my certificate with my foot in a cast. To stay on top of everything, I used the calendar in my diary to record all assessments, exams, social events, kids’ events, work trips, and holidays. I would check this daily to ensure I hadn’t missed any deadlines and was across everything for the next month.”

“It has been a real struggle to juggle. I will not lie, but if I can do it, I know others can, too.”

Eileen highlighted that her biggest challenge was the final year of her studies, 2023. Her role as the Smaller Island States Officer in the Pacific & Regional Division at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Immigration (MFAI) required her to travel regularly.

“There were times that I was completing assignments at night while away for work, and in mid-2023, I happened to be in Fiji for work the same week of my mid-year exams – so I had to sit this at the USP Suva Laucala Campus.

“Just to top it off, last November, the Cook Islands hosted the 52nd Pacific Islands Forum, and two of my final exams were in the middle of the Forum, so I was sitting exams before joining the MFAI team at Forum meetings. It was such a full-on year, and I’m thankful I made it through!”

Reflecting on her academic pursuit at USP, Eileen shared that the highlight of her studies was proving to herself that she could complete the degree. She started wanting to complete a certificate and enjoyed the coursework.

“I made sure to align the topics of my assignments with my interests, my work role, and issues that are affecting our Pacific people today. For example, the role social policy has historically played in social development in the Cook Islands and how global institutions have shaped the Cook Islands’ social policy landscape.

“Looking back over the past four years of study, I am proud of myself for committing to study as it will not only be of great benefit for myself and my family, but it will provide me with the tools I need to help others in whatever role I take on currently or in the future.”

Eileen hopes her story will inspire Pacific people of all age groups, especially those her age who are considering studying in 2024.

At 42 years old, she says, “It is never too late to study. If you want to study, just know that you can achieve whatever you put your mind to.”
Communication

- In 2023, the new Bachelor of Arts in Communication & Media offered by SPACE showed remarkable progress, with a student from the programme winning the Head of School’s Award for Most Outstanding First Year Student. This programme is popular among new students and aims to create graduates ready to enter the workforce in the fields of communication, media, digital media, marketing, public relations, and communications management. The programme is designed to be future-oriented and prepares graduates to meet the challenges of emerging industries.

- English language proficiency has been a key priority for the Pacific region, and SPACE is committed to fulfilling this demand. In 2023, a fully revised UTLA model (English Language Skills for Tertiary Studies) was launched after a university-wide consultation in 2021 and a successful pilot in 2022. The revised course focuses on current, regional, and relevant content, using a skills-and-process-based model to enhance critical thinking and enable students to express their ideas in the specific ways required by their respective disciplines.

- Recognising that English language proficiency is crucial for students long before they reach university, SPACE has introduced a new Master of Arts in English Language Teaching & Leadership. This programme is specifically designed for experienced teachers, heads of language departments, school principals, curriculum developers, and assessment specialists who want to improve their subject area expertise while gaining leadership skills to drive effective change in their institutions. By completing this course, participants will be better equipped to lead the development of English language proficiency across the region.

- In 2023, the Fijian Studies team conducted a World Press Freedom Day, which was attended by high-profile representatives from media and other organisations. The event showcased Pacific journalism and emphasised the importance of fearless, ethical, honest, and responsible reporting. One of the main highlights was the screening of a three-year Memorandum of Understanding with Fiji Times Limited. This agreement will allow journalism students to broaden their readership by having their articles from the student newspaper Wansolwara published in The Fiji Times.

Education

- In 2023, a major international research project called Climate-U was completed. The project was aimed at transforming universities for a changing climate. The closing events of the project were hosted by SPACE at USP and brought together researchers from USP, Fiji National University, and Uni Fiji with international partners including University College London (project lead), Kenyaatta University, and the University of Passo Fundo. The project explored the role of universities in addressing the climate crisis. Recognising the crucial role played by higher education institutions in responding to the climate crisis through research, teaching, community engagement, and public awareness, it culminated at USP in November with the Climate Change Student Symposium and Project Closing Event at the ICT Lecture Theatre, Laucala Campus.

- The team involved in the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) activities in Tuvalu had a productive year. They worked towards strengthening the capacity of Pacific education institutions by implementing programmes such as the Early Childhood Education Competency Framework and Pre-Service Curriculum, Special Inclusive Education courses, Teacher Development and Utilisation, Beginning Teachers Induction and Mentoring Programme, and training of untrained teachers. In 2023, the Discipline of Education completed the first phase of the PacREF activities in Tuvalu, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Tonga, Solomon Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and Palau.

- The Education Discipline secured funding for teacher training in Chuuk and the Marshall Islands through the ADB-funded Improving the Quality of Basic Education in the North Pacific project. The training was to be conducted in cohorts and offered the Certificate in Educational Assessment in Chuuk and the Master of Education in the Marshall Islands. Additionally, the Education Discipline hosted the Early Childhood Education in the Pacific Talanoa Symposium, which was part of a research collaboration with Monash University Play Lab.

Institute of Education

- The Institute of Education played a significant role in establishing the structures and processes for coordinating PacREF. It also contributed to the creation of the Implementing Agencies Fonu (JA Fonu) and developed the Wansolwara regional framework for collaboration. In 2023, the Waka Moana Learning Hub was launched to support teachers and students throughout the region in the areas of numeracy and literacy.

- The Institute successfully led the Graduate Certificate in School Leadership (GCSSL) programme in the Marshall Islands, with four cohorts completing it. Cohort 2 from Chuuk completed the GCSSL in blended mode, while Cohort 2 in Solomon Islands is underway. Additionally, the GCSSL programme was offered for the first time in Tuvalu, providing valuable training to school leaders across the country.

- In 2023, several projects were successfully completed, including the Tonga Education Support Activity (TESA), which aimed to improve the literacy and numeracy outcomes of primary school children in Tonga. TESA was a collaboration between the Tonga Ministry of Education and Training and the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT). Additionally, the Tuvalu Learning Project (TuLEP) collected data from schools and community talanoa sessions across the islands of Tuvalu throughout the year. A research report was then submitted to the Tuvalu Ministry of Education, Youth and Sports.

Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies

The Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies (OCACPS) hosted several significant events in 2023, which included:

- "Pacific Postcards" – photography exhibition by Jason Chute
- "The Accident" – play by Larry Thomas shown at the Fiji Fringe Festival
- "The Art of Wisdom" – solo art exhibition by Jossia McNamara
- "Blue Wave Collective" – art exhibition
- 10th International Lapita Conference "Weaving the Past, Present and the Future"
- "Variant" – art exhibition by Jeka Laki
- "Memories" – retrospective exhibition featuring the works of Jane Ricketts
- Two-week filmmaking course taught by Ben Wheeler
- "Mirror mirror" – solo art exhibition by Susie Elliott
- "A Dance in 5 Installations" – performance by the Oceania Dance Theatre, choreographed by Glenville Lord
- "Unheard Stories. Disappearing Ecologies" – symposium on the climate crisis and culture loss
Innovation can change lives  
– Chrisnrita’s inspiring story

Chrisnrita-Amanu Leong’s life story is filled with creativity, innovation, and resilience. In 2016, she started a small perfume business while studying at the USP Laucala Campus. Later, she became a pioneering member of a new media organisation and the face of Tavuli News in Solomon Islands. Currently, she is a full-time employee of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC).

Chrisnrita began her academic journey at the USP Laucala Campus in 2015, pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Journalism and Information Systems. Back then, she hadn’t envisioned being a presenter for a news organisation in her homeland, Solomon Islands. But she was driven by her passion for trying new things and challenging herself.

“Even getting into Journalism School at USP, I did that without my parent’s knowing. My father only learnt about it when I was in my final year of study. He bought a newspaper that featured stories from our USP Journalism Awards Night, and that’s when he learnt that I was doing journalism and that I had gotten an award for it. My journey was on the low, doing what I wanted because my parents had other dreams and plans for me.

“I was five weeks late when I joined the Journalism School at USP. Registrations had closed, and Dr Shailendra Singh, the Journalism Head of School, said there was no space for latecomers, but he insisted that I wanted to pursue journalism. He gave me a chance, but I had to prove I deserved the spot.”

Unlike most university students whose focus is to complete their studies, Chrisnrita explored her entrepreneurial idea of setting up a perfume business, Naesmel Perfume, to meet the demand that existed among students on and off campus.

“My favourite perfume is Red Door, and it is very pricey, but when I was in Fiji, I saw this little roll-on perfume they always sell in Suva, so I thought that this could be affordable to someone like me who when growing up couldn’t afford the costly ones. This could be an alternative to Solomon Islanders who are going through the same experience as me. So, I started buying it in Fiji while I was studying. I’d buy it in large quantities and travel down to Nadi to send it over to Solomon Islands.”

With the assistance of her mother, her voice of reason, Chrisnrita’s small idea of just making a profit for her spending morphed into a self-sustaining business that has been in operation for seven years.

“As a young student navigating USP, I remember wanting different things. So, I started the business to earn for myself, but I didn’t think of it as a business when it started. It was only for profit, and that’s it. Eventually, with the help of my mom, who always gave me lectures on how a business operates and the need for it to be sustainable, I was able to identify the gaps that existed in this market and explore it. My targeted customers were mainly young people, and it paid off.

“I did some research and finally found the supplier. I didn’t have to buy anymore from Fiji and just dealt directly with them as they were based in Europe. After doing some trials, I met them in person. They flew over to meet me, and that’s when the journey took off.”

After graduating from USP in 2018, she returned to Solomon Islands, married, and had her first child. She didn’t go straight into journalism as she was managing her perfume shop.

Having successfully managed her entrepreneurial venture and juggling her freelance career as a journalist from 2018 to 2020, this inspiring Solomon Islander sent an expression of interest to the ABC without expecting much in return.

“You’d think your family would be the ones to encourage you and say you can do it, but mine was the total opposite of that. It was an ambitious dream, I would say. I went through the whole interview process, and I eventually got the freelance role. I did most of my freelancing for the ABC, mainly with the Pacific Beat on a multiplatform level from 2021 to 2022.”

Managing a business while working as a freelance journalist, Chrisnrita faced what she felt was an insurmountable challenge when COVID-19 affected global trade in 2020. The pandemic led to grounded planes, resulting in minimal shipping. This had devastated many small and medium enterprises in the region and the world over.

However, like all other small businesses that survived the turmoil of COVID-19, Chrisnrita leaned into her creativity, assessed the demand from the different communities and provinces in Solomon Islands during the pandemic, and made some tough decisions to ensure her venture would survive.

“The downside of the pandemic was we couldn’t go out and sell our perfume, so we got creative and started selling online, but it wasn’t economical. It was just too much of a hassle. Instead of just selling perfumes, we also started selling food bundles, mainly root crops, because movement was restricted at the time and we were living in zones,” she said.

“The good thing was that all my staff were vaccinated way before the peak of the virus, and we were able to move around. That played a huge advantage for us as a team and for my business. I’d have my staff come over, and instead of preparing perfume, we would prepare potatoes and cabbage, put it in bundles, and sell it on our online platform, and then we did the delivery.”

She explained that these measures saw them through the worst of the COVID-19 pandemic. “We were able to earn some money, and it allowed us to meet our daily needs. Also, our workers had something to earn. We also went out to the provinces to sell perfumes.”

Many businesses made some roles redundant during the pandemic, and the same happened with Chrisnrita’s business. “We lost a few of our employees during this period, and we had to downscale, but of course, those are some of the things we must look at to ensure our business is operational,” she said.
The determined entrepreneur now employs seven staff after letting go of three during the pandemic. Interestingly, Chrisnrita not only managed her business during the pandemic but also worked as a journalist and presenter for Media One in Solomon Islands, informing the citizens about the evolution of the coronavirus around the world and the region, and mainly how it was spreading within their country.

As COVID-19 slowly transitioned into an endemic virus, Chrisnrita and a few of her colleagues decided to start a television company in 2022, now known as Tavuli News.

"I remember getting a call from my colleagues Elizabeth and Gina, and they wanted to talk. It wasn’t long before we started putting pen to paper and finalising some logistics. On the other hand, we had to start with production. I remember the first day of production. I was trying to juggle many things because it wasn’t a usual experience for me. With Media One, it was once a day and with Tavuli News, it was daily, and we weren’t used to that, so we had to organise our day and turn up on time, and most of us were just learning on the job as we go along with this new company.

Though starting a new company was challenging, Chrisnrita and her team went above and beyond to do their best. She said, "We gave our talents, skills, and hours for the love of our job as journalists and for trying to keep people informed. “Money wasn’t an issue for us. We did it because we want this in our country, and we hope it will grow into something big.” As Tavuli News takes off in Solomon Islands, Chrisnrita continues to push herself beyond her comfort zone. She has now become a full-time employee with the ABC after confirming her placement late last year.

“When I received the news, I was speechless and humbled to be given this opportunity. This makes me the only female from Solomon Islands to be part of this big TV network in the Pacific. "Pursuing this new passion of mine is something I am so excited about because we Pacific Islanders are storytellers. We know our culture, and who better to tell our stories from the region than us? Having a wealth of knowledge of the Pacific and being a member of the Pacific community makes it more powerful when Pacific voices share our stories,” she said.

The 30-year-old recalls, “We grew up watching Playschool and Ragae on Saturday and Sunday mornings, and now, with this happening, it will make our Pacific people relate more to our fellow sisters telling our stories through ABC.”

She is now a colleague of a few Pacific journalists who recently joined ABC Pacific to help tell stories from the region and promote Pacific culture, knowledge, and traditions.

“When my parents and family learnt about me getting a full-time job with ABC, my dad said, ‘Wow, you got it.’ I didn’t know whether he meant it as a statement or with a question mark, but that’s just a dad thing to do, at least for him. “The other person I want to acknowledge is my husband because he has been my rock, pushing me to the limit and always encouraging me to pursue my passion,” Chrisnrita added.

Now that she is starting her new career, Chrisnrita advises current and prospective USP students to never give up on their dreams and to continuously pursue new growth opportunities.

"We don’t have fancy equipment or anything of that sort, and with a team of three, we invested our time, skills, and innovation into getting things done one day at a time. On top of that, we weren’t getting paid. We don’t get paid for what we are doing, and even now, we haven’t received a single cent because, for us, it’s about passion for the job.

Accreditation

- The University received accreditation for the Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical & Electronics) and Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) programmes for a three-year period, extending until December 2025. Further accreditation for an additional three years is expected, subject to meeting specific requirements stipulated by Engineering New Zealand.
- The Bachelor of Software Engineering (BSE) and Bachelor of Networks & Security (BNS) programmes received provisional accreditation from 2018 to 2024. The accreditation for these programmes will be extended to 2028, provided that a single condition is satisfactorily resolved by 30 October 2024. This condition requires USP to produce an update to their ICT staffing plan, with particular emphasis on the progress of senior appointments.

Research

- In 2023, 52 STEMP academic staff members contributed 31 journal articles, while 10 contributed seven book chapters and 39 contributed 17 papers to conference proceedings. Overall, STEMP staff produced 20 publications that were ranked A/AT.

Partnerships

In 2023, the University embarked on a series of partnerships to boost research and development, enhance student learning experiences, and promote knowledge exchange with industry and community partners.

- USP signed an MOU with Natural Waters of Viti Limited (NWVL), commonly known as Fiji Water.
- USP and the National Research Council of Italy signed an MOU to promote scientific cooperation through joint research programmes, visits and exchanges of research staff, and other mutually accepted activities.

- USP and the University of New South Wales (UNSW) signed an MOU to collaborate in academic networking, external funding opportunities, knowledge dissemination, and industry engagement.
- USP and Shahrood University of Technology (SUT) signed an MOU to promote cooperation in teaching and research. This includes activities such as joint teaching and research supervision, organisation of joint academic events, exchange and creation of educational materials and resources, joint cultural activities, and staff/student exchange.
- USP and University North (UNIN) signed an MOU to collaborate on joint research, academic meetings, exchange of academic materials and information, special short-term academic programmes, and student exchange.
- USP signed a Letter of Agreement with Natural Waters of Viti Limited to facilitate mutual cooperation in teaching and research between the two organisations. The agreement aims to foster collaboration in areas of mutual interest and includes opportunities for undergraduate and postgraduate research projects.
- USP signed a Letter of Agreement with Capmation South Pacific, LLC to foster mutual cooperation in teaching and research. The agreement focuses on specific areas of cooperation, including the Girls in Engineering Student Chapter, sponsorship of industry projects, and sponsorship of the Medal for Outstanding Graduate in Software Engineering.
- USP partnered with Australian Volunteers International (AVI) to collaborate on various activities, including identifying high-quality candidates to support international partners through capacity development, accessing the internationally experienced talent pool of returned volunteers, and promoting volunteer assignments.
IEEE Humanitarian Technology

- In September 2023, the University collaborated with the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) Humanitarian Technologies Board to implement an eco-friendly solar project. The project aimed to diminish reliance on diesel generators and reduce operational expenses. The “Lighting the Way to Education and Health in a Remote Village School” initiative aimed to uplift a rural Fijian school by introducing a standalone PV solar system and enhancing water and sanitation facilities. This groundbreaking project involved replacing the diesel generator with a solar PV system, which proved to be almost maintenance-free, cost-effective, and environmentally friendly.

Visit from UNSW

- In 2023, the Civil Engineering programme hosted a visit from the University of New South Wales (UNSW). The highlight of the visit was the support shown by UNSW, represented by Professor Nasser Khalili, Head of the School of Civil and Environmental Engineering. During the visit, Professor Khalili spoke with STEMP students, endorsed the programme structure, and expressed interest in hosting STEMP staff at UNSW for guidance on future local development. Additionally, UNSW showed openness to assist in developing short courses for professionals and students seeking to upgrade their skills in related areas.

Achievements from RTI

- The Right to Information (RTI) project organised a series of workshops in Samoa and Lautoka to enhance participants’ understanding and appreciation of RTI. The workshops were attended by a diverse group of individuals, ranging from students to government officials, and offered opportunities for interactive learning experiences and rich dialogues. During these sessions, the project showcased and refined the RTI digital tools developed in its second phase, with support from strategic partnerships with institutions such as USP and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), ensuring the initiative’s effectiveness and reach. This collective effort raised awareness among more than 170 attendees and equipped them with the necessary skills to use RTI platforms, laying a solid foundation for transparency, accountability, and an informed citizenry in the Pacific region.

USP staff named in the World’s Top 2% most-cited scientists list by Stanford University

Stanford University has named three USP staff in the World’s Top 2% most-cited scientists list. Professor Ioannidis of Stanford University published the latest list in October 2023 based on Scopus data.

The three USP staff are Professor Maurizio Cirrincione, the former Head of the School of Information Technology, Engineering, Mathematics and Physics (STEMP); Professor Surendra Prasad, the current Head of the School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS); and Professor Rafiuddin Ahmed, the Deputy Head of the School of Agriculture, Environment, Ocean and Natural Sciences (SAGEONS). They are all members of the World’s Top 2% most-cited scientists list.

February 11 marks the International Day of Women and Girls in Science. It focuses on the vital role of gender equality in science to achieve international development goals, including the UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

This is a remarkable story of resilience from a Pacific woman scientist, Dawnie Daphne Katovai, who broke gender barriers to become a science teacher, ecologist, and researcher around the coastal rainforest in her island home in Papua New Guinea (PNG). She is now pursuing her PhD at The University of the South Pacific (USP), focusing on the topic “The impact of land-use changes on ecological connectivity in coastal forests”, funded by the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUMP) programme.

Tell us briefly about yourself and your academic background.

Hi! I am Dawnie Katovai from Papua New Guinea. I am pursuing my PhD at The University of the South Pacific, which is funded by the USP PEUMP programme. My current study investigates the impact of land-use changes on ecological connectivity in coastal forests in Fiji and Solomon Islands.

I completed my bachelor’s degree at the Pacific Adventist University in Papua New Guinea and my Master of Science at James Cook University in Australia. I am a science teacher/ecologist by profession and am actively involved in coastal rainforest research, something I love doing.

Why did you decide to study/work in the STEMP (Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics, and Physics) field?

I pursued science when I learnt that my late mum was not given study opportunities because she was a female. I promised myself then that I would take up a male-dominated career and prove to myself that women could also succeed.

Growing up in rural areas of Papua New Guinea, I never had a formal education until I was 10 years old. However, my parents made sure I had books to read. Most of the books they gave me were on science. So, I decided to keep to science in high school and eventually graduated from the Pacific Adventist University in PNG and worked as a secondary science teacher. But I wanted more. I wanted to be able to contribute to the knowledge I was teaching in class.

This passion continued to grow as I studied at James Cook University, Cairns, Australia. In fact, having women lecturers who were and still are actively involved in world-class research inspired me to get into research, too. I felt this was one way to contribute to knowledge in the Pacific and honour my mum as well. A decade later, I still love what I do enjoying my ‘classroom’ in the coastal forests and working alongside male colleagues.
Do you have any advice for younger aspiring women and girls entering the field of science?

Resilience, among others, is an important attribute if you are to be successful. Being resilient means being able to continue with your plans/goals despite major disruptions to your plans. COVID-19 tested my limits, but it forced me to stop, regroup my thoughts, and refocus quickly to stay on track with my goals. It can be challenging, but keeping an open mind and exploring options will help you achieve your goals.

Any other comments?

Stigmas towards women still exist. Be brave and persevere through it. You are the only person who can influence your future. Take in those criticisms and turn them into beautiful achievements. You can do it if you’re determined, just like other women in STEM are. We need more female mentors, and you could be the next mentor for the young girls in your community and your country.

I should also add that study opportunities for women and girls in STEM may be scarce in this part of the world. But remember, there are many pathways you can take to achieve your goals in STEM. What matters is you getting there, not how long it takes to get there. I am pursuing a PhD in my forties, I took a longer pathway than others. But I am here now. You may have the opportunity to pursue a PhD in your twenties. What matters is that you’re doing what you love. Women and girls can definitely make a significant contribution to STEM.
POCCA Project

The Pacific Ocean and Climate Crisis Assessment (POCCA) project was launched in 2022. This three-year project is funded by the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs (MFAT) and co-ventured by PaCE-SD and the University of Canterbury’s Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies (UC-MBC). The main objective of this project is to assess the local adaptation and resilience capacity and innovation at the community level. The project also aims to determine how this information can be incorporated into national and regional climate change policies, projects, and strategies.

Around 80 Pacific authors, academics, and researchers who contributed to the POCCA report gathered in Nadi for the 2nd Authors Conference in June. The goal of the conference was to bring together the report’s authors and the respective POCCA project teams from PaCE-SD and UC-MBC to assess the progress of the various chapters of the report. One of the main highlights of the conference was the launch of the POCCA interactive map.

In October, the USP POCCA project team embarked on a two-week staff exchange trip to the Macmillan Brown Centre for Pacific Studies. The main purpose of the staff exchange was to strengthen the partnership and improve the efficient delivery of the main project outputs by advancing the development of the interactive map and identifying ways to streamline information.

RERIPA Project

The RERIPA project focuses on strengthening research and innovation ecosystems in small Pacific countries and building networks of actors and strategies to deal with the impacts of climate change. RERIPA Call 2: Capacity Building for National Climate Change Research in the Pacific seeks to establish a regional research framework, develop new research mechanisms, and collaborate with Pacific governments to formulate new academic and research policies.

In October, a technical workshop was held to present the progress and achievements of the projects selected from Call 1 and Call 2 for proposals. The workshop aimed to bring together all the RERIPA project leads and consortium partners from Calls 1–4 to coordinate together all the RERIPA project leads and for proposals. The workshop also presented the common action for a consolidated network of stakeholders with a shared vision and strategy for research and innovation in the Pacific. The initial steps of the projects selected from Call 3: Living Labs and Call 4 were also presented.

Academic Achievements

In 2023, three PaCE-SD students were awarded the Master of Science in Climate Change. Additionally, 31 students were awarded the Postgraduate Diploma in Climate Change, while three students received the Postgraduate Diploma in Islands and Ocean Stewardship.

PaCE-SD Initiatives

PaCE-SD undertook several initiatives in 2023. One of these initiatives was the PaCE-SD Student Association’s outreach programme, which conducted three clean-up campaigns along the Suva foreshore and areas near the University and organised a mangrove planting exercise on Mosquito Island.

The staff and students of PaCE-SD participated in the USP Open Day event, where they shared their knowledge and experiences on climate change and adaptation with prospective students, undergraduate students, and the public. A workshop was also conducted to help PaCE-SD students better understand the basics of proposal writing and presentation skills.

PaCE-SD received an invitation to participate in the National Disaster Awareness Week. The week-long event included high-level panel discussions, model displays, engagements with the public, and a disaster awareness simulation exercise.

PaCE-SD Seminar Series

The PaCE-SD Seminar Series was a popular event held at the University in 2023. These seminars aimed to promote scientific research and dialogue. They provided a platform for graduate students, local and visiting scientists, and professionals to share their research and ideas with a diverse audience. By the end of the year, 10 seminars had been successfully conducted.

Moleni’s research aims to support early warning system for tropical cyclones

Growing up in the Pacific, one understands there is not always sun, sand, and pristine beaches all year round. The Pacific Islands often face several tropical cyclones every year, which are becoming more intense with time.

Moleni Tuuhoaki, who is enrolled in the Master of Science in Climate Change programme at USP, is focusing his research on tropical cyclone-induced coastal inundation forecast and warning system for Tonga.

His study investigated the impact of different surface temperature patterns on the frequency and location of tropical cyclone genesis in the South Pacific region. The research shows that prominent El Niño–Southern Oscillation patterns, such as Modoki El Niño and Eastern Pacific El Niño, significantly impact tropical cyclone genesis frequency and location. These findings contribute to a better understanding of the variability of tropical cyclone genesis and its relationship with sea surface temperature configurations in the Southwest Pacific region.

The results of Moleni’s study may support the early warning system in the Southwest Pacific region by improving seasonal outlooks and quantifying the level of tropical cyclone-related risks for vulnerable Pacific Island communities.

Moleni believes that supporting communities with this kind of research not only gives knowledge to his fellow academic colleagues but also allows students to contribute to the fight against climate change and, in turn, helps people be better prepared for natural disasters.

“The future work may be considered to improve the understanding of tropical cyclone genesis in a larger-scale environment. In addition, including other variables in the analysis, such as thermocline depth, sea level pressure, and vorticity, may enhance our understanding of how the distribution of sea surface temperature interacts with other tropical cyclone-genesis drivers. It is anticipated that increasing the number of clusters would lessen the least quantisation error (errors between the centroids and the means) and may provide more accurate results,” Moleni said.

He also shared that recent studies have shown an eastward shift in tropical cyclone frequency from the Coral Sea and eastern coast of Australia to the central Pacific in the Southwest Pacific over the period 1980–2018, which may be attributed to anthropogenic climate change. The approach in the present study can be applied to the same period in these recent studies to investigate whether tropical cyclone frequency density distribution and area of maximum tropical cyclone activities in each cluster support the increase in tropical cyclone frequency in the central Pacific and the reduction in the Coral Seas and eastern coast of Australia.
Quality of Learning Outcomes
In 2023, Pacific TAFE introduced a range of new courses and programmes under the College of Foundation Studies and the College of Continuing Vocational Education and Training (CVET).

New foundation courses:
- Foundation Communication & Media
- Foundation Entrepreneurship
- Foundation in Climate

New CVET programmes:
- Advanced Diploma of Resilience (Level 6)
- Certificate IV in Entrepreneurship and New Business Venture
- Diploma of Resilience (Level 5)
- Certificate III in Individual Support (Aging, Disability, Home and Community)

The CVET programmes have been extensively revised to ensure that all courses are up-to-date and relevant to industry best practices, regulations, and laws.

Revised CVET programmes:
- Certificate IV in Accounting
- Diploma of Accounting (Level 5)
- Certificate IV in Information Technology Support (Level 4)
- Certificate IV in Fisheries
- Diploma of Fisheries Investigation and Prosecution (Level 5)
- Certificate IV in Human Resource Management (Level 4)
- Diploma of Human Resource Management (Level 5)
- Diploma of Fisheries Investigation & Prosecution (Level 5)
- Diploma of Business Administration (Level 5)

Accreditation and recognition of qualifications:
- Small Business Association of Australia (SBAA): Certificate III in Entrepreneurship and New Business Venture
- Australian Children’s Education & Care Quality Authority (ACECQA): Diploma of Early Childhood Care and Education (Level 5)
- Certificate III in Early Childhood Care and Education

Pacific TAFE renewed its accreditation as a Registered Training Organisation (RTO) with the Australian Skills Quality Authority (ASQA) for another 10 years.

USP achieved a significant milestone by securing the top rank on THE-ICE i-graduate International Student Satisfaction Global Index 2023 in two categories: ‘Recommendation’ and ‘Employability’. This achievement was made possible through a joint effort by the Pacific TAFE and the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management.

Quality of Teaching
Pacific TAFE conducted several workshops for teaching staff on innovative activities in teaching. These included:
- New programme development
- Embedding of rubrics on Moodle
- Online conversion of Foundation Arts Programme
- International Skills Training - Trainer and Assessor
- Qualifications Development

Student Learning and Support
The Pacific TAFE reception area at Statham Campus in Fiji was remodelled to provide a welcoming and spacious facility for student services.

- Micro-qualification trainings were conducted in Kiribati, Samoa, and Tuvalu as part of the Pacific-European Union Marine Partnership (PEUIMP) programme. These trainings specifically aimed to help locals maintain seafood safety and quality and teach them how to establish and operate small seafood businesses. The trainings were funded by the European Union and the Government of Sweden.

Partnerships
Pacific TAFE embarked on new partnerships to further develop its curriculum and expand its programmes in the region.
- A partnership with the ADB Independent Evaluation Department to develop a capacity-building programme for monitoring, evaluating, and learning of development projects in the Pacific region.
- USP signed an MOU with the Government of Kiribati’s Ministry of Fisheries and Marine Resources Development to deliver Certificate IV in Project Management to 20 students at the Kiribati Campus.
- USP signed an MOU with the Kiribati Public Utilities Board to deliver Certificate IV in Project Management to 15 participants.
- A Letter of Agreement was signed between USP and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to support the development and delivery of capacity-building short courses as agreed upon under KRA1 and KRA6 of the EU Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) project, which is managed by PIFS.
- A partnership agreement was signed between USP and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to host the Pacific Incident Management System (PaciMS) and the Emergency Operations Centre (EOC) Awareness online modules on the USP Moodle platform.
- A Letter of Agreement was signed between USP and the Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat (PIFS) to provide the design, development, and delivery of capacity-building short courses as agreed upon under KRA1 and KRA6 of the EU Pacific Adaptation to Climate Change and Resilience Building (PACRES) project, which is managed by PIFS.

Pathways
Pathways were established from Certificate IV and Diploma Level 5 to Bachelor programmes in IT with credit transfer.
- Pathways were established from Certificate IV and Diploma Level 5 in Business Administration and Human Resource Management to Bachelor programmes in Human Resources and Management with credit transfer.
PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Cook Islands

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

Male 8%  Female 92%

12 EFTS in Cook Islands

Cook Islands Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

Has Scholarship No Scholarship

Cook Islands Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

Undergraduate 11 Sub-Degree 2

Cook Islands Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

1,195 174 10 6,038

Top 9 Programmes in 2023

1 Bachelor of Education (Primary) 33%
2 Bachelor of Arts 17%
3 Bachelor of Commerce 8%
4 Certificate of Justice 8%
5 Bachelor of Laws 8%
6 General Certificate of Education (Undergrad) 8%
7 Bachelor of Commerce (Professional Accounting) 8%
8 Bachelor of Commerce (Hotel Management) 8%
9 Other 8%

Educational Experience Satisfaction Rate 75%
Graduate Employment Rate 73%
Pass Rate 60.8%
PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Fiji

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

Male 41%  Female 59%

6083 EFTS in Fiji

Fiji Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

Has Scholarship No Scholarship

Fiji Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

Undergraduate

Postgraduate (thesis)

Postgraduate (coursework)

Sub-Degree

Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Commerce (Professional Accounting) 27%
2. Bachelor of Science 8%
3. Bachelor of Arts 6%
4. Bachelor of Science 6%
5. Bachelor of Arts 4%
6. Bachelor of Arts 4%
7. Bachelor of Commerce (Honours) 3%
8. Bachelor of Engineering (Civil/Electrical) 3%
9. Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical/Electronic) 3%
10. Bachelor of Commerce (Professional Accounting) 2%

Kiribati Nationals EFTS by Gender

Male 33%  Female 67%

Kiribati Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

Kiribati Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

Has Scholarship  No Scholarship

PA 1 - Country Overview
USP Students from Kiribati

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

295 EFTS in Kiribati

751 Kiribati EFTS in Fiji

USP Students from Kiribati

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

Male 33%  Female 67%

Kiribati Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

Has Scholarship  No Scholarship

Kiribati Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

Undergraduate  Postgraduate (coursework)  Postgraduate (thesis)

Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Commerce (29%)
2. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Science) (9%)
3. Bachelor of Science (11%)
4. Bachelor of Arts (11%)
5. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) (6%)
6. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) (2%)
7. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) (3%)
8. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) (3%)
9. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) (9%)
10. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) (2%)

PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from the Marshall Islands

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

Male 35%, Female 65%

Marshall Islands Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>EFTS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>71</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>57</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Top 9 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Laws - 26%
2. Graduate Certificate in School Leadership - 22%
3. Bachelor of Arts - 13%
4. Bachelor of Commerce - 9%
5. Bachelor of Arts/Bachelor of Laws - 4%
6. Bachelor of Arts (Marine Management) - 4%
7. Postgraduate Diploma in Climate Change - 4%
8. Master of Education - 4%
9. Bachelor of Science (Environmental Science) - 4%

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Scholarship 2019–2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Has Scholarship</th>
<th>No Scholarship</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2019</td>
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<td>6</td>
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<td>2022</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Marshall Islands Nationals EFTS by Gender 2023


The Marshall Islands EFTS in Fiji

Has Scholarship 59.3%
Mode of Study: 48% Face to Face, 52% Distance
PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Nauru

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

- Male: 47%
- Female: 53%

EFTS in Nauru: 16

Nauru Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

- Has Scholarship
- No Scholarship

Nauru Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

- Undergraduate: 18
- Sub-Degree: 15
- Postgraduate (coursework): 1

Educational Experience Satisfaction Rate: 67%
Pass Rate: 61.8%
Graduate Employment Rate: 100%

Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Arts: 21%
2. Bachelor of Science: 16%
3. Bachelor of Arts (Environmental Management): 11%
4. Bachelor of Arts (Business Management): 11%
5. Bachelor of Commerce: 5%
6. Bachelor of Science: 5%
7. Bachelor of Arts (Business Administration): 5%
8. Bachelor of Commerce: 5%
9. Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical): 5%
10. Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical): 5%

PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Niue

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

- Male: 0%
- Female: 100%

Niue Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

- Has Scholarship
- No Scholarship

Niue Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

- Undergraduate: 77.2% Pass Rate
- Mode of Study: 20% Face to Face, 80% Distance

Niue Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Samoa

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

- Male: 32%
- Female: 68%

162 EFTS in Samoa

1 Samoa EFTS in Vanuatu
70 Samoa EFTS in Fiji

Samoa Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

Has Scholarship | No Scholarship
---|---
2019 | 200
2020 | 203
2021 | 243
2022 | 241
2023 | 229

Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Laws: 18%
2. Bachelor of Arts: 18%
3. Bachelor of Engineering: Civil: 10%
4. Bachelor of Business Administration: Management: 8%
5. Bachelor of Science: 6%
6. Bachelor of Science: 6%
7. Bachelor of Science: 4%
8. Master of Business Administration: 3%
9. Bachelor of Engineering: Software: 3%
10. Bachelor of Software Engineering: 3%

PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Solomon Islands

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

Male 51%  Female 49%

728 EFTS in Solomon Islands

Solomon Islands Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

Tracks by Level of Study

- Undergraduate: 1424
- Sub-Degree: 892
- Postgraduate (coursework): 56
- Postgraduate (thesis): 13

Tracks by Mode of Study

- Face to Face: 7%
- Distance: 93%

Total EFTS: 1344

2014  1324  1380  1441  1566  1382  1392  1355  1074  1001

PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Tokelau

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

- Male: 20%
- Female: 80%

Tokelau Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

- Has Scholarship
- No Scholarship

Tokelau Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

- Postgraduate (thesis): 1
- Undergraduate: 9
- Sub-Degree: 13

64.3% Pass Rate

Tokelau Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

Mode of Study

- Face to Face: 20%
- Distance: 80%

Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Arts
2. Bachelor of Science
3. Bachelor of Commerce
4. Bachelor of Information Technology
5. Bachelor of Education
6. Bachelor of Information Security
7. Bachelor of Agriculture
8. Bachelor of Information Security
9. Bachelor of Science
10. Bachelor of Business Management

Source: USP Council Meeting data as at 27/11/2023
**PA 1 - Country Overview**

**USP Students from Tonga**

**Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender**

- Male: 31%
- Female: 69%

**433 EFTS in Tonga**

**237 Tonga EFTS in Fiji**

**Tonga Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023**

- Has Scholarship
- No Scholarship

**Tonga Nationals EFTS By Level of Study**

- Undergraduate: 628
- Postgraduate (coursework): 46
- Postgraduate (thesis): 11
- Sub-Degree: 297

**Mode of Study**

- Face to Face: 28%
- Distance: 72%

**Pass Rate**

- 71.9%

**Educational Experience Satisfaction Rate**

- 82%

**Graduate Employment Rate**

- 95%

**Top 10 Programmes in 2023**

1. Bachelor of Commerce
2. Bachelor of Science
3. Bachelor of Arts
4. Bachelor of Law
5. Bachelor of Education (Primary)
6. Bachelor of Engineering Civil
7. Bachelor of Agriculture
8. Bachelor of Agriculture
9. Bachelor of Agriculture
10. Bachelor of Agriculture

**Source:** USP Council Meeting data as at 27/11/2023.
PA 1 - Country Overview

USP Students from Tuvalu

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

Male 32%
Female 68%

28 EFTS in Tuvalu

144 Tuvalu EFTS in Fiji

Tuvalu Nationals EFTS by Scholarship 2019–2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scholarship Status</th>
<th>2019</th>
<th>2020</th>
<th>2021</th>
<th>2022</th>
<th>2023</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
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<td>187</td>
<td>154</td>
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<td>116</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>89</td>
<td>106</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Tuvalu Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

- Undergraduate: 153
- Postgraduate (coursework): 14
- Postgraduate (thesis): 2

Mode of Study

- Face to Face: 41%
- Distance: 59%

Educational Experience Satisfaction Rate: 61.5%
Graduate Employment Rate: 80%
USP Students from Tuvalu 2014–2023

PA 1 - Country Overview
USP Students from Vanuatu

Equivalent Full-Time Students (EFTS) by Gender

- Male: 43%
- Female: 57%

824 EFTS in Vanuatu

Vanuatu Nationals EFTS 2014–2023

Vanuatu Nationals EFTS By Scholarship 2019–2023

Vanuatu Nationals EFTS By Level of Study

- Undergraduate: 1092
- Sub-Degree: 416
- Postgraduate (coursework): 78
- Postgraduate (thesis): 19

Mode of Study
- Face to Face: 30%
- Distance: 70%

Educational Experience Satisfaction Rate: 89%
Graduate Employment Rate: 67%
Pass Rate: 63.2%

Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Commerce: 26%
2. Bachelor of Science: 11%
3. Bachelor of Arts: 10%
4. Bachelor of Laws: 7%
5. BA (Hons) in Education: 7%
6. Bachelor of Agriculture: 7%
7. Bachelor of Engineering Civil: 3%
8. Bachelor of Environmental Management: 3%
9. Bachelor of Education Primary: 3%
10. Bachelor of Science Environmental: 2%

Introduction

In 2023, the Research Office made significant progress towards achieving its Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) set out in the Strategic Plan 2022–2024. The research, innovation, and postgraduate activities effectively met the needs of member countries, contributing to knowledge exchange at both regional and international levels. Several projects were completed under the Strategic Research Themes (SRT), yielding tangible research outcomes.

Activities for the EU-funded RERIPA project, which aims to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems to address the impacts of climate change, were managed efficiently alongside other externally funded projects. Financial support for postgraduate research in agriculture, oceans, and climate nexus fields continued to be robust through the ACIAR and N-POC scholarship initiatives. In late 2023, 15 PhD students and five master’s students were recruited by the ACIAR and N-POC programmes to commence their studies in Semester 1, 2024. Additionally, 15 students were awarded fully funded scholarships by the Association of Commonwealth Universities to pursue marine science research.

The internal scholarships offered by USP, including the Pacific Scholarship for Excellence in Research & Innovation, the Pacific Regional Sports Research Scholarship, and the Research Tuition Only Scholarship, were successfully managed. In 2023, 269 students were enrolled in Master’s by Thesis programmes, while 146 students were enrolled in PhD programmes.
The Sustainable Coastal and Oceania Research Institute (SCORI) is a pioneering project in the Pacific funded by the Government of India and based at USP’s Laucala Campus in Suva. It was inaugurated during the Third Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC III) in Port Moresby in May 2023. Leaders from 13 Pacific Island Countries attended the launch, which marked a significant milestone in regional research collaboration.

Despite financial constraints and staff turnover, research output remained strong, with 296 publications in 2023. While there was a slight decrease from the previous year, the team is actively working to address these challenges and is optimistic about future progress.

Research Outputs

In 2023, the University continued to produce top-quality research results. The Scopus data recorded a research output of 296, representing a slight decrease from 312 in 2022. A total of 270 publications were produced, including books, book chapters, journal articles, and conference proceedings. Journal articles were the most frequently published type, making up 70.7% of all research products. Of the remaining publications, 13.7% were conference proceedings, 12.6% were book chapters, and 3.0% were books.

Strategic Research Themes

Seven research projects were completed, while 11 others are ongoing. Publications were produced for both completed and ongoing projects.

Postgraduate Externally Funded Scholarships

OCPP Scholarships

In 2023, the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU) and the Centre for Environment, Fisheries and Aquaculture Science (CEFAS) continued their Ocean Country Partnership Programme (OCPP) Scholarships. They selected 13 students from Vanuatu and Solomon Islands to pursue fully funded Master’s by Thesis and PhD programmes in marine science. The UK’s Blue Planet Fund provided funding for the scholarship programme.

NPOC and ACIAR

The Graduate School has been responsible for coordinating the postgraduate scholarship programmes supported by the Australian Centre for International Agricultural Research (ACIAR), the ORC-PACIFIC Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC), and the Pacific Adoption of Waste to Energy Solutions (PAWES). The selection procedures for the candidates commencing in 2024 have been completed.

In January 2024, an induction programme for new and continuing N-POC scholars was held. The programme included presentations by the Ambassador of Norway to Australia, New Zealand and the South Pacific, Her Excellency Anne Grete Riise; the USP Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia; the USP Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Dr Giulio Paunga; and the N-POC Coordinator, Professor Edvard Hviding.

The new ACIAR scholars were officially welcomed on 22 February at USP. Representatives from USP, the Fiji National University (FNU), ACIAR, and the University of the Sunshine Coast attended the welcome event. The PAWES scholars, which include four master’s candidates, arrived at the Laucala Campus on 26 February and will be officially welcomed on 7 March. Representatives from USP and the Pacific Community (SPC), which will represent the European Union (EU), will attend the welcome event, along with other partners.

The Graduate School has renewed USP’s membership to the Australia Council of Graduate Research Inc (ACGR). In 2023, the University participated in a four-day workshop with ACIAR and FNU colleagues to explore the redesign of the ACIAR PASS-CR scholarship programme. Senior academics from the University of New South Wales also visited USP to discuss a collaboration to implement Project Halo, funded by Swire Group. Additionally, negotiations were made with Epigeum to run a pilot programme of training modules for PhD scholars and early-career academic supervisors. Progress was also made on drafting the Implementation Plan for the new US-funded Rising Leaders scholarship programme.

Internally, the Graduate School improved the oral defence procedure for PhD scholars, set up a dedicated office space, and designed a webpage outline.

Other Scholarships

In 2023, the Research Office was responsible for 55 research students. These students were funded by several internally funded schemes, such as the Pacific Scholarship for Excellence in Research & Innovation, the Pacific Regional Sports Research Scholarship, and the Tuition Only Research Scholarship.
Impact of USP’s Research & Innovation

In 2023, the University undertook several significant research-related activities and initiatives. These included:

Research Projects

- **RERIPA**: This project aims to strengthen research and innovation ecosystems to address the impacts of climate changes in small Pacific countries. The project launched three calls for proposals, inviting researchers to conduct activities such as mapping and diagnosing research and innovation ecosystems, facilitating networking, and building research and innovation strategies. It also aims to build capacity in innovation and valorisation and establish Living Labs, which are multi-disciplinary regional public/private consortia that will address climate change impacts in the Pacific. RERIPA is funded by the EU.

- **ClimateU**: This project aims to transform universities for a changing climate. It is funded by the University of London.

- **PaCWoM+ 3**: This project focuses on supporting decentralised rural water supply in the Pacific Islands through formal and informal networks that will support Pacific Rural Water Committee engagement with water resources management for climate-resilient WASH outcomes. It is funded by Griffith University.

- **SWAP Fiji Marine Litter Pilot Project**: The project is funded by the Secretariat of the Pacific Regional Environment Programme (SPREP).

- **Urban Island**: Histories of Dispossession and Belonging in Suva. The project is funded by the University of Waikato.

- **Pacific Digital Democracy Project**: The project is being implemented in Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and the Federated States of Micronesia. It is funded by the EU and managed by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

- **NERE NAHAL Project**: This project aims to strengthen ciguatera poisoning detection tools to reduce human health risks, build resilience to climate change, and enhance international trade for economic prosperity. It is funded by the Association of Francophone Universities (AUF).

- **Citizen-state engagement in the Solomon Islands**: Learning from Pockets of Prosperity. The project is funded by the University of Birmingham.

- **An MOU between USP and SPREP for the Fiji Marine Litter Pilot Project, which is part of the Committing to Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific (SWAP) Project.**

- **Two MOUs between USP and the French National Research Institute for Development (IRD) for RERIPA. Call 3 Living Labs project outputs. The two projects under this initiative are: “Climate change and the future of coastal communities: Transformation of sociality, livelihoods and lifestyle in the South Pacific (CHANCES-PACIFIC)” and “Climate change adaptation innovation for coral reefs in support of community-based conservation.”**

- **Two MOUs between USP and the Francophone University Agency (AUF) for the NERE NAHAL project. The two projects under this initiative are: “Bridging the taxonomic gap to preserve the biodiversity of subsistence coastal invertebrates and seaweeds in Fiji” and “Project seafood safety: strengthening ciguatera poisoning detection tools to reduce human health risks, build resilience to climate change and enhance international trade for economic prosperity”.**

- **An MOU between USP and SPREP for the Fiji Marine Litter Pilot Project, which is part of the Committing to Sustainable Waste Actions in the Pacific (SWAP) Project.**

Innovations at USP

The Fiji Innovation Hub facilitated three workshops for USP staff and students, funded by the joint USP-UNDP Pacific Regional Innovation Network (PRIN) project. The workshops focused on the research seminar series, R-software training, and KoboToolbox training for USP staff.

Memorandums of Understanding (MOUs)

- **Climate Transition Grant-Fiji (CTG-F)**

- **International Planned Parenthood Federation (IPPF)**: An operational gender transformational assessment project

- **UNICEF**: Collaboration in capacity-building, training, and consultancy opportunities

- **Research Triangle Institute (RTI)**

- **Pacific Catastrophe Risk Insurance Company (PCRIC)**: Research collaboration

- **An MOU between USP and the Deep Space Exploration Laboratory in cooperation with the International Lunar Research Station (ILRS).**

- **An MOU between USP and the National Centre for Coastal Research (NCCR), Ministry of Earth Sciences, Government of India to establish the Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) at the Laucala Campus.**

- **A Collaborative Research Agreement between USP and the University of Melbourne on ACIAR.**

- **A subcontract between USP and Griffith University for a project that aims to support decentralised rural water supply in the Pacific Islands by establishing formal and informal networks to support Pacific Rural Water Committees with water resources management for climate-resilient WASH outcomes.**

Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI)

The Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) was officially launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, during the Third Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation (FIPIC III) in Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea in May 2023. The Institute, which is the first of its kind in the Pacific, will be based at the Laucala Campus and will be funded by the Government of India. The launch was attended by leaders from the 12 USP member countries and was held jointly by USP and the High Commission of India.
Under the PRIN project, a new projector for the Tonga Innovation Hub and stationery for the Fiji Innovation Hub were purchased. Research students and aspiring entrepreneurs continued to use the Innovation Hubs for their projects and workshops.

Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN)

The Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network comprises 15 member universities from Pacific countries and territories, with USP and the University of New Caledonia serving as co-chairs. In 2023, the network marked its 10th anniversary and the following activities were carried out during the year.

- A delegation from USP visited the University of New Caledonia. The USP delegation comprised Vice-Chancellor Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Education Professor Jito Vanualailai, Deputy Vice-Chancellor Regional Campuses and Global Engagement Dr Giulio Paunga, Director of PaCE-SD Professor Elisabeth Holland, and PIURN Coordinator Ms Mathilde Souchon. During the visit, the two institutions signed an MOU to reaffirm their support for PIURN and to strengthen their collaboration.
- USP hosted the PIURN Board Meeting in April 2023. A significant outcome of the meeting was the renaming of PIURN from “Pacific Islands Universities Research Network” to “Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network”.
- The 5th PIURN Conference took place at the USP Cook Islands Campus in July 2023. The conference brought together about 250 delegates from 12 Pacific Island countries and territories, as well as France, Germany, Japan, and the United States of America. The conference explored the theme “Exploring this Sea of Islands”, which was inspired by the words of the late Professor Epeli Hau’ofa, a highly respected Pacific scholar. The three-day conference featured 170 academic papers and 36 sessions on various topics, including Oceania worldviews, the status of women, climate risks and transformations, health challenges, and education in the Pacific.

Family Farming, Lifestyle and Health Project (FALAH)

The University of New Caledonia (UNC) was awarded the FALAH Project under the Marie Sklodowska-Curie Actions: Horizon 2020 Research and Innovation Staff Exchange (RISE) programme, funded by the European Commission. The project brought together 14 institutions from the Pacific region and Europe, including PIURN member universities such as USP, Solomon Islands National University, and National University of Vanuatu. During the year, UNC organised workshops for its members, facilitated an attachment for a senior researcher from the French National Centre for Scientific Research to USP in April, and enabled two USP PhD students to spend a month at UNC in July as part of their secondment.

Support for Research Students

In Semester 1 of 2023, the Research Office hosted a series of Zoom sessions to help new postgraduate students prepare their research proposals. Additionally, in mid-2023, the Research Office called for applications from research students for a research seminar series. This series was designed to support research students in their academic and professional development by offering them a platform to present and discuss their research, learn about various research methodologies, and gain valuable insights from experienced researchers. The first research seminar series presenters were students who had been selected to present their research at the 5th PIURN Conference held at the Cook Islands Campus.
2023 HIGHLIGHTS

RESEARCH, INNOVATION AND PARTNERSHIPS

New 10-year partnership between USP and New Zealand grounded in the value of Pacific regionalism

USP and Aotearoa New Zealand have embarked on a ten-year partnership to support the long-term success of the University. The partnership, known as the ‘Aotearoa New Zealand and The University of the South Pacific Framework 2023–2033’, underlines the need for a shared Pacific future. For the first five years of this partnership, Aotearoa New Zealand will contribute NZ$38.5m to support USP’s long-term planning, innovation, and stability.

USP launches revolutionary AQUA Cube for clean drinking water

USP marked a historic moment with the launch of the AQUA Cube, a state-of-the-art water treatment system designed for human consumption, research, and development. Developed in collaboration with Technische Universität Berlin, the cost-effective, compact, and mobile water treatment plant offers a sustainable solution to water-related challenges.

N-POC concludes the year with another successful research support activity

The Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC) team at USP hosted another successful research support activity in December 2023. The event brought together about 25 participants from across the University’s different Schools and Centres, including current N-POC PhD candidates and other USP master’s and PhD candidates.

Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme launches first PhD cohort

Ten candidates from across the Pacific have been awarded PhD scholarships under the Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC). The PhD programme is fully funded by Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) successfully launched at USP

The Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) was officially launched by the Prime Minister of India, Shri Narendra Modi, during the Third Summit of the Forum for India-Pacific Islands Cooperation in Port Moresby in May 2023. The project is the first of its kind in the Pacific region and is funded by the Government of India. The Institute will be based at the USP Laucala Campus, serving as a focal point for research and development in the Pacific.

USP and UNC deepen and strengthen their 20-year collaboration

In January 2023, USP and the University of New Caledonia (UNC) signed a new MOU to further enhance quality education and research. This agreement builds on a 20-year collaboration between the two universities. The senior management teams of both institutions met to discuss initiatives that would strengthen postgraduate education. Key areas of cooperation were identified, including the strategic development of joint research activities, academic publications, and PhD thesis supervision.

USP Journalism signs milestone MOUs with NBC, PINA, and Fiji Times Ltd

The USP Journalism Programme signed three historic MOUs with local and regional media partners. The MOUs aim to enhance collaboration in areas such as upskilling and training for students, joint workshops, seminars, and related media activities. Additionally, the agreements provide opportunities for research, staff exchanges, publication of the student training newspaper Wansolwara, and internships.

USP launches revolutionary AQUA Cube for clean drinking water

USP marked a historic moment with the launch of the AQUA Cube, a state-of-the-art water treatment system designed for human consumption, research, and development. Developed in collaboration with Technische Universität Berlin, the cost-effective, compact, and mobile water treatment plant offers a sustainable solution to water-related challenges.

N-POC concludes the year with another successful research support activity

The Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC) team at USP hosted another successful research support activity in December 2023. The event brought together about 25 participants from across the University’s different Schools and Centres, including current N-POC PhD candidates and other USP master’s and PhD candidates. The activity focused on research data analysis, including qualitative and quantitative methods.

Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme launches first PhD cohort

Ten candidates from across the Pacific have been awarded PhD scholarships under the Norway-Pacific Ocean-Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC). The PhD programme is fully funded by Norway’s Ministry of Foreign Affairs through the Norwegian Agency for Development Cooperation (NORAD).

Sustainable Coastal and Ocean Research Institute (SCORI) successfully launched at USP

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Introduction

In 2023, the Regional Campuses and Global Engagement team focused on enhancing the vitality of students and alumni and promoting a diverse, culturally enriching student environment that strengthened the global attractiveness of the University. The team strived to build strong connections with member governments, local stakeholders, and communities. They also increased alumni partnerships to support the campuses and students. The International Office delivered exchange programmes that promoted an equitable and engaging student experience across regional campuses.

The University remodelled various functions of its operations to improve efficiency and student experience. Significant infrastructure projects were completed in 2023, including the new Solomon Islands Campus and the newly renovated Savelio’i Centre in Samoa, funded by the Japanese Government. The International Office also funded inter-campus mobility for students from Laucala Campus; two students went to Samoa Campus and one to Emalus Campus for a semester of study.

The Cook Islands Campus successfully hosted the 5th Conference of the Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN) in July. The conference was co-chaired by the University of New Caledonia (UNC) and had over 200 participants.

The Regional Campuses and Global Engagement team continues to play a fundamental role in advancing and shaping Pacific futures as they collaboratively respond to national educational needs, foster community involvement, and encourage philanthropic contributions.
2023 HIGHLIGHTS

REGIONAL CAMPUSES AND GLOBAL ENGAGEMENT

USP remains the bedrock for regionalism

USP Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Pal Ahluwalia spoke at the Ministerial Banquet in Auckland in March 2023, highlighting the importance of USP as a bedrock for regionalism. He also emphasised USP’s success in producing graduates who have filled critical roles and become leaders across all sectors in their respective countries. He concluded his speech by noting that USP was responsive, resilient, and best positioned to claim leadership in areas that no other organisation had the regional mandate,

110 students graduate from JENESYS Programme

The 2022 Japan-East Asia Exchange for Students and Youth (JENESYS) Programme, in collaboration with USP, successfully concluded in March 2023 with the graduation of 110 participants who travelled to Japan for a cultural experience. The JENESYS 2022 Programme also included an Alumni Follow-up Programme, which included a two-week Japanese language class, the Japan and the Pacific Celebration Expo, and the Online Students’ Conference.

USP law students succeed in taking climate change to the world’s highest court

An initiative that began as an extracurricular exercise in a USP law class in 2023 succeeded in making an extraordinary journey to the United Nations General Assembly and resulted in the International Court of Justice (ICJ) determining legal issues of climate change for the first time. In March 2023, the United Nations General Assembly adopted a resolution requesting the ICJ to issue an advisory opinion on the obligations of states with respect to climate change, human rights, and intergenerational equity. The idea was first conceived by a group of USP students during a ‘learning by doing’ exercise for their International Environmental Law course.

Innovative Digital Right to Information tools launched

USP and UNDP launched the innovative Digital Right to Information (RTI) solutions designed by the USP School of Information Technology. Engineering, Mathematics and Physics (STEMP) - RTI team in July 2023. The RTI solutions were designed for Pacific Island countries to streamline information accessibility and retrieval. An RTI’s course was also showcased, cementing the team’s effort to create awareness and advocacy of RTI.

New ARM System sets a solid foundation for strengthening USP’s alumni space

USP Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Pal Ahluwalia launched the Alumni Relationship Management System (ARM) in February 2023. The online portal is designed to strengthen USP’s alumni networking space. The Alumni Office team can use the system to connect with alumni across the region and around the world and create target groups based on interests and demographics. They can also design communication and activities accordingly. USP has over 58,000 alumni and they are encouraged to register on the portal.

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Regional Campuses Update

Cook Islands

USP and the Cook Islands Voyaging Society signed a Letter of Agreement to form a partnership focused on the ocean-climate nexus. The partnership aims to implement community-based marine sustainable development training through the PEUMP programme.

The Cook Islands Campus hosted the 5th Conference of the Pacific Islands Universities Regional Network (PIURN) in July 2023. USP and UNC co-chaired the conference, which attracted 200 participants from 14 countries. The conference established the uniqueness of the state of research in the Pacific and the profusion of knowledge, traditional and scientific practices.

In July, the Campus hosted a Festschrift (commemorative) to honour USP alumni and scholar Dr Marjorie Crocombe. The ANU Press published the Festschrift.

Testimonial

Kia Orana, my name is Mere Frances Thomson. I am 28 years old and am a proud Aitutakian, Scottish, Hawaiian Cook Islander. I also have strong links to other islands and countries, such as New Zealand, Moana, and more. This year, in July 2023, I completed a Bachelor of Education in Primary Teaching with The University of the South Pacific.

I started my studies towards a bachelor’s degree in 2016, but I became more serious about it in 2017 when I joined the Concurrent Teacher Training Programme with the Ministry of Education. Reflecting on the reason, it came down to my age. I was much younger at the time and lacked the mindset to commit to studies in a serious and mature capacity. It is now 2023, a long time, I tell you.

Interestingly, I had no inspiration at first to pursue a Bachelor of Education, I just wanted to work and make money, but when I was awarded a certificate of completion with the Ministry of Education, it pushed me to pursue my studies more seriously. I then began my journey of teaching and part-time studies.

The support from my family has been wonderful, the USP team, special mentions to Tai Parima and Debi Futter-Puati (our Campus Director) who advised, directed, encouraged, and motivated me throughout my study journey, I appreciate you all. A real learning curve for me is the importance of perseverance.

In 2022, I made a spontaneous decision to complete my Bachelor’s degree sooner. Teaching was great, but I needed to complete my degree. I went into full-time study mode through the Ministry of Education and completed the final bulk of my degree, a total of 10 papers. I completed the final two papers in Semester 1 of 2023.

I am forever grateful to attain my qualification from USP as an enabler for progress.
From stranded to empowered: Ioanna’s journey to transforming Kiribati’s coastal communities

Ioanna is 65 years old and the Director of the Catholic Women’s League for the Diocese of Tarawa and Nauru, locally known as Teitoiningaina. In this role, she actively works with about 33,000 I-Kiribati women, most of whom rely on marine resources for their livelihoods and contribute significantly to government revenue.

Fast-forward almost three years later, Ioanna now actively imparts the knowledge she gained from these trainings, which has positively impacted her community in several ways:

Empowering women in her community: Ioanna’s commitment extends beyond her achievements. She actively shares the knowledge and skills she has acquired with the Kiribati Catholic Women’s Association, which empowers women who may be unemployed, lack proficiency in English, or have limited access to formal education.

Strengthening seafood safety practices: Ioanna has shared her knowledge and expertise with her community, enabling them to maintain high-quality standards for fish from ‘the hook to table’. Proper handling and storage of fish ensures its quality, which is essential for good health and marketability.

Sharing business skills and resources: Ioanna learnt about the resources available for starting a business and how to access them. She gained insights into crafting a solid business plan and effective marketing strategies, with a particular emphasis on the impact of social media, such as Facebook, on marketing seafood products.

Encouraging economic empowerment: Through Ioanna’s guidance and training, women within the association have found employment and established various businesses, including catering, sewing, and handicrafts. These initiatives have not only improved their livelihoods but also contributed to the economic well-being of the community.

Promoting nutritional awareness: Women in the association are now more nutritionally aware, ensuring proper nutrition and food safety handling for both customers and their own families. This increased awareness benefits the community’s overall health and well-being.

In summary, the saying by Brigham Young, “You educate a man; you educate a man. You educate a generation,” rings true. Ioanna’s personal well-being and marketability also contributed to the economic well-being of the community.

The first batch of students successfully completed the training in September 2023, which focused on establishing and operating a small seafood business. This training was funded by the European Union and the Government of Sweden to enhance seafood safety and quality. These trainings were aimed at empowering women who may be unemployed, lack proficiency in English, or have limited access to formal education.

During the peak of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, Ioanna Taraia found herself stranded in Fiji. Despite the challenging circumstances, she enrolled in and completed two vital training programmes. This was during a pivotal moment, as Pacific communities and families increasingly relied on the ocean for sustenance and income.

Ioanna is a trailblazer. She is the first I-Kiribati woman in the Pacific region. As she navigates through her role as the Director of the Catholic Women’s League and her community work, Ioanna is an inspiration to many, showing that with determination and resilience, one can make a significant impact on their community and the world.

The two campuses organised cultural activities, offering staff, students, and alumni opportunities to participate in inspiring and meaningful events that provided insight into students’ cultural needs, identity, and well-being. Girtim Day, Eid, and Ratu Sukuna Day were celebrated on both campuses.

During the semester breaks, staff from the two campuses visited schools across Fiji to promote the programmes offered by the University. These outreach efforts helped the University improve its marketing and public relations by establishing direct connections with schools and communities. USP cultivated a positive presence beyond its physical campuses by introducing prospective students to the diverse array of programmes offered through interactive sessions and engaging dialogues.
**Students at Lautoka Campus**

Lautoka Campus EFTS in 2023 vs 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>1264</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>704</td>
<td>560</td>
<td>1264</td>
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**Tejesvi Patel takes second place in the Falling Walls New Zealand Competition**

Growing up in a family where his father was a teacher and his mother a nurse, Tejesvi Patel always knew he wanted to be in the science field. Today, he is working towards completing his Master of Science.

Since his primary school days, Tejesvi has loved science and aspired to become a scientist and create new things. He carried this dream into high school, and upon joining USP, he enrolled in foundation studies in science. His dream of becoming a scientist was slowly becoming a reality.

Seven years later, Tejesvi is working towards completing his Master of Science in Chemistry in polymer engineering under the supervision of Associate Professor David Rohlin. He recently won second place at the prestigious Falling Walls New Zealand Competition.

Tejesvi represented USP at the competition, where masters’, PhD, and post-doctoral candidates presented their research in under three minutes. Tejesvi won second place after presenting his breakthrough research on creating a biodegradable topical patch to treat skin infections.

"There is a substantial increase in microbial and fungal skin infections worldwide, which is due to rising global temperatures and the constant misuse of medication," he shared.

"Generally, fungal skin infections follow microbial build-up on wound sites due to the reflex action of scratching, and this act impedes the natural healing process; it slows healing or escalates it."

**HIGHLIGHTS**

**IRU signs new partnership agreement with USP**

The Innovative Research Universities (IRU) affirmed its commitment to strengthening two-way mobility and collaboration with partners in Pacific Island nations with the signing of a Memorandum of Understanding with USP.

**Staff exchange strengthens POCCA project deliverables**

As part of the Pacific Ocean and Climate Crisis Assessment (POCCA) project agreement, USP staff from the Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PaCE-SD) participated in a two-week exchange programme at the Macaulay Brown Centre for Pacific Studies at the University of Canterbury, New Zealand.

The POCCA project is a pioneering endeavour to assess the local adaptation and resilience capacity, weaving together scientific, cultural, and traditional knowledge and innovative research on climate change.
Kiribati

The Kiribati Campus successfully secured sponsorship for student fees through the Corja-Stiftung Foundation in Germany. The Foundation sponsored 100 students enrolled in the foundation and degree programmes. In July, the Pacific Ocean and Climate Crisis Assessment (POCCA) project team visited the Campus to conduct community consultations on climate change.

Dr Takuia Uakeia
Campus Director

Kiribati Campus EFTS in 2023 vs 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Total EFTS</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2022</td>
<td>308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2023</td>
<td>298</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Mode of Study

- Face to face: 0%
- Distance: 100%

Student Gender

- Male: 33%
- Female: 67%

Student Load

- Full-time: 19%
- Part-time: 81%

Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Commerce (33%)
2. Bachelor of Arts (17%)
3. Bachelor of Science (11%)
4. Bachelor of Laws (8%)
5. Bachelor of Science (6%)
6. Bachelor of Science (5%)
7. Bachelor of Science (2%)
8. Bachelor of Science (2%)
9. Bachelor of Science (1%)
10. Bachelor of Science (1%)

Marshall Islands

The Marshall Islands Campus partnered with the US Embassy to establish a public information and activity centre as part of its public engagement initiative. The graduation ceremony was held at the Campus in June, with 110 students successfully completing their studies. The event was officiated by the Vice-Chancellor and President, the Pro-Chancellor, and the Marshall Islands Minister for Education.

Mr Setoki Qalubau
Acting Campus Director

HIGHLIGHTS

USP RMI Campus Open Day returns after two years

The Marshall Islands Campus hosted the USP Open Day after a lapse of two years due to COVID-19 restrictions. USP Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Pal Ahluwalia said the Open Day was one of the major annual events in the University’s calendar, showing its commitment to enhancing and improving tertiary education in the region. The event attracted more than 200 high school students, who came to learn about career pathways and programmes on offer.

Testimonial

Ron Sidal
MARSHALL ISLANDS

Studying at one of USP’s remote campuses in the Republic of Marshall Islands (RMI) is a testament to the strength of the University’s digital reach, ensuring we stayed connected with other students across all USP member countries.

I enjoyed my study at USP RMI because it taught me to be resourceful, manage my time wisely, and explore the culture.

Graduating with my Master of Education from an internationally recognised university (USP) enables me to climb the corporate ladder and align my needs to further progress.

USP’s flexible mode of studies enabled me to progress my academic aspirations despite the consequences posed by the COVID-19 pandemic that affected a lot of students in other institutes that don’t have the privilege of online learning.
During my time at USP, I discovered the immense flexibility offered by their Pacific TAFE courses, particularly beneficial for part-time students like myself. It was a wise decision to resume my studies last year, and I am proud to say that the support system at Pacific TAFE has expanded to embrace students of diverse ages, backgrounds, and genders. This inclusivity has enriched my experience and contributed to my personal growth and success.

I have learnt several strategies that have proven effective in my academic pursuits. I gained a sense of accomplishment by completing and submitting assignments on time and performing well on tests. Moreover, I have discovered the importance of organisation, attending classes regularly, seeking clarification through questions, and devising a study plan tailored to my needs. The Campus has become more student-friendly and adaptable, with round-the-clock accessibility, a more comprehensive cohort range, and flexible course offerings.

Additionally, the University has actively engaged with the community, encouraging those who have dropped out to consider continuing their education by enrolling in bridging courses offered by USP.

I have realised the significance of planning my schedule and staying organised. Effective communication with my family and employer has been crucial in successfully managing my academic and personal commitments. Throughout this journey, my family, work colleagues, and my study group have been a constant source of motivation, propelling me to pursue knowledge. It is essential to remember who you’re doing it for, and always put God in every pathway you take.

As I conclude this chapter of my life and celebrate my achievements, I would like to extend my heartfelt congratulations to my fellow graduates. Let us remember the power of our experiences, for they serve as our teachers, guides, and driving forces, propelling us toward a brighter future. May we always remain committed to pursuing knowledge and embracing new challenges with enthusiasm and determination.

USP provided me with an opportunity to study from the comfort of my home, Niue, while still being able to continue working for the Government and providing for my family. Out of the many things I got to experience as a USP student, time management was the highlight.

One of the vital aspects of studying at USP is that I like how courses nowadays are made available to everyone online. It’s a game changer, especially for people with young families like me. There’s no need to uplift your family and move to another country to further your studies. This was very convenient for a working father and husband like me.

However, getting to experience university life reminded me of my experience in secondary school. Education will always be there. All you need is the support and determination to push you through all the barriers.

An inspiring message for others who wish to do the same programmes. Eleven years after secondary school, I finally got my first qualification. It is never too late to proceed with further studies. Take every opportunity you get and learn as much as possible. Remember who you’re doing it for, and always put God in every pathway you take.

I would like to thank the University and my family for their continuous support throughout my journey at USP.

Testimonial

“Tirah Jeremia

NAURU

Ms Felicity

Canon

Acting Campus Director

Testimonial

“Daniel Makaia

NIUE

Ms Jay Gataua

Campus Director

Testimonial

Nauru

A Memorandum of Understanding was signed between Nauru Ocean Resource Inc. (NORI) and the Nauru Campus to provide a grant for the second phase of its project. The project aimed to fund community programmes in impact areas such as youth education, ocean health and environment, and women’s empowerment.

The graduation ceremony was held at the Campus in June, where 117 students graduated across various disciplines. Over 100 students visited the Nauru Campus for USP Open Day in September 2023. During the event, the students engaged with the University’s community of staff and students and learnt about career paths and programmes offered. Nauru’s Minister for Education and Training, Honourable Richard-Hyde Mank, served as the chief guest at the event and commended USP for its efforts to expose students to the wide range of career paths available to them.

Ms Jay Gataua

Campus Director

Nauru Campus hosts over 100 students during USP Open Day

Over 100 students visited the Nauru Campus for USP Open Day in September 2023. During the event, the students engaged with the University’s community of staff and students and learnt about career paths and programmes offered. Nauru’s Minister for Education and Training, Honourable Richard-Hyde Mank, served as the chief guest at the event and commended USP for its efforts to expose students to the wide range of career paths available to them.

A team comprising members from Bournemouth University (UK) and the University of the Highlands & Islands (Scotland) visited Niue in May 2023 to undertake initial scoping work for a major project on cultural heritage mapping. During their visit, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) was signed between USP and Bournemouth University. The MOA provided a basis for both institutions to explore potential future collaboration in research, knowledge exchange, student exchange, and partnership arrangements.

The Campus collaborated with the Niue USP Alumni Chapter to host its annual panel discussions during the 49th Constitution Day celebrations. This initiative was commended by the Niue Government, students, and community members for providing a platform for interesting and thought-provoking discussions.

Ms Jay Gataua

Campus Director

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Ms Jay Gataua

Campus Director

Niue
Samoa

The University of Otago and its Alumni Chapter in Samoa (LA O SAMOA) offered 10,000 Samoan tala for fee assistance to Samoan students enrolled at the Samoa Campus in 2023. The Government of Japan also provided grant funding to upgrade the Sava’i Centre complex. The funding was used to improve the facilities and services provided at the Saleloga Public Library and the Sava’i Centre, including stable and reliable internet service.

In April, the Samoa Campus held its graduation ceremony, where 101 students graduated across various disciplines. The Campus also partnered with SPREP and SPC to commemorate Samoa’s 60th Independence Anniversary with various activities.

The first year of the engineering programme was launched at the Samoa Campus in Semester 1, 2023. This was in response to a request from the local industry through the Samoan Government and the Institute of Professional Engineers Samoa. Additionally, a collaboration between USP, the University of Melbourne, the Samoa Ministry of Agriculture and Fisheries, the Scientific Research Organisation of Samoa, and the Samoa Farmers Association resulted in the launch of the CASI/SAI Sustainable Agriculture Project. The second cohort of WINTEC/USP Samoa Campus Cocoa Training also took place in 2023.

Seul champions education, empowering young people through her work.

“It could be the nurturing nature of women that draws them to the profession of education.”

Nelson Mandela best encapsulates the power of education as “the most influential tool one can have to change the world.”

Inspired by the educators in her family, Seul Gee Samuelu, the Student Administrative Services (SAS) Coordinator at the USP Samoa Campus, ventured into a career that would enable her to help people in any capacity she could.

“It kind of runs in my blood, so it is either to teach or to administer or for whatever reason, I seem to be drawn to where education is. I enjoy empowering young people to be better versions of themselves.”

As the SAS Coordinator, Seul takes pride in executing administrative work, assisting students from the beginning of their enrolment in their respective fields of study and ensuring they cross the finish line to graduate.

After completing her undergraduate study in New Zealand, she pursued postgraduate study at USP, balancing work and her academic aspirations.

“As a student, it has always been USP’s flexibility to accommodate working students that got me through. Facilitators had the understanding and empathy that it is not as easy as it seems to study, work, and be responsible for other human beings.”

Determined to succeed, Seul noted that failure is never an option.

“There will be times when we do fail, but what is important is being able to collect ourselves when we are down and then get back up. I feel the first step is always hard when we fail, but hope helps us to keep moving forward. That is the key.”

“It is always important that we lead by example for our children. We cannot expect them to succeed when we encounter difficulties and we surrender.”

Seul highlighted that education is the most exciting aspect of progression and growth for women. It is a significant tool for women’s empowerment and human resource development.

“In Samoa, our parents continually remind us that no one fights with their fists anymore; nowadays, they fight with their pencils. The sharper the pencil, the brighter the mind, and the better off the person.

“Women should continue to fight with their pencils through education, sharpen them, and be better at whatever they choose to do. They should continue to break glass ceilings. Recently, for the first time, the National University of Samoa appointed a female as its Vice Chancellor, so there are so many exciting moments where Pacific women everywhere are making that difference.”

Seul added that the training she had attained from USP had strengthened her view on gender equality. “I have always strongly felt that way about women and that we should always empower each other in everything we do,” she said.

She was raised by strong women who taught her to learn and grow from the struggles they faced during their early years.

“They wanted to ensure that we always have God at the forefront of whatever we did. They wanted to ensure we worked hard for what we achieved. They wanted to ensure that we could do what our brothers do and perhaps even better and whatever accomplishments we acquired, that the glory was never of our own but that of the Lord who provides.”

Seul said that over the years she noticed that most young people in Samoa left school for a meagre-naged job because they had not been provided with better opportunities.

“From the rural village I am from, many young girls leave school due to teenage pregnancy or lack of financial support for education, or their families find them measly jobs, so they leave school. They don’t care what the pay is as long as they bring in some form of income.”

She developed a strong interest in advocating for the provision of continuing education to underprivileged people.

“I discourage my extended family members who want their children to leave school for work and try and find opportunities.

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“I discourage my extended family members who want their children to leave school for work and try and find opportunities.

Seul continues to encourage young people to find their passion and to make something great of it. “Why settle for a life less than the one you were meant for?” she said.

“Always try to overcome barriers that are set to prevent advancement. Failure is inevitable; learn from these failures! Focus on what matters to you and not others. Always celebrate small successes no matter what form. Do things purposefully.”
Samoa Campus celebrates achievements of new graduates

The Samoa Campus graduation ceremony was held in April 2023, where 101 students were awarded degrees, diplomas, and certificates.

USP Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Regional Campuses and Global Engagement) Dr Giulio Masasso Tu’ikolongahau Paunga congratulated the graduates during the ceremony. "This achievement is for the students to celebrate, but it is an achievement that was made possible through the support and sacrifice of each of your families."

Dr Paunga also highlighted that the graduates had contributed to the legacy of the regional university, which was built on the foundation laid by their predecessors.

Thousands of students take advantage of USP Samoa Campus Open Day

The Samoa Campus was buzzing with excitement as thousands of students arrived in Aituoa for the USP Open Day in August 2023. The students had the opportunity to learn about the programmes on offer and tour the state-of-the-art learning facilities and support services available to students at the University.

USP Savai’i Centre gets stable and reliable access to the internet

The USP Savai’i Centre has been upgraded with a more stable and reliable internet service.

Savai’i Campus Director Dr Fanafi Aiono-La Tagatasi said, “The internet speed and internet connection will improve teaching and learning for everybody, not only for those who are teaching from the Laucalua Campus in Fiji but also for those receiving the information here in Samoa and especially at our Savai’i Centre."

“Because our Savai’i Centre does not have the same support services available both in people and equipment compared to our Samoa Campus in Apia, having a better internet connection in Savai’i will improve everybody’s experience of teaching and learning. I think it will improve USP’s aim to have the same experience of quality education for students, whether you are studying at Savai’i Centre or the Laucalua Campus,” Dr Fanafi added.

Opening of refurbished USP Savai’i Centre and Library

The USP Savai’i Centre in Samoa officially opened its doors to the refurbished facility in December 2023. The renovation work was funded by the Government of Japan through the Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).

Solomon Islands

The Solomon Islands Campus graduation ceremony was held in September, where 468 students graduated. Of these graduates, 54% were female. Additionally, five students who completed their master’s studies, four by coursework and one by thesis, were recognised during the ceremony.

The Campus collaborated with the Solomon Islands USP Alumni Chapter to host a meet-and-greet alumni evening in September. The event was the first of its kind in many years and provided a platform for robust alumni networking. The event also enabled the Campus to create a community for USP’s globally diverse alumni, with the recent launch of the University’s Alumni Relationship Management System (ARMS).

Students at Solomon Island Campus

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student Gender</th>
<th>Male</th>
<th>Female</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>49%</td>
<td>51%</td>
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Top 10 Programmes in 2023

1. Bachelor of Commerce 37%
2. Bachelor of Arts 19%
3. Bachelor of Science 9%
4. Bachelor of Law 4%
5. Bachelor of Business Administration 4%
6. Bachelor of Business/ Bachelor of Arts 3%
7. Bachelor of Science 2%
8. Bachelor of Education 2%
9. Bachelor of Business 2%
10. Bachelor of Business/ Bachelor of Arts 2%
Tokelau
The Webex telephone system is planned to be installed at the Campus in 2024.

Ms Elaine Lameta
Campus Director

HIGHLIGHTS

USP commends graduates for displaying resilience and hard work
Over 460 students graduated at the USP Solomon Islands Campus graduation ceremony in September 2023. Of the graduates, 54% cent were females. During the ceremony, USP Deputy Vice-Chancellor Dr. Giulio Massasso Tu'ikolongahau Paunga congratulated the graduates and reminded them, “As you step out of USP and into the workforce, never lose sight of the mindset that led you to take your place at today’s graduation ceremony.”

Expanded state-of-the-art USP campus in Solomon Islands to support student aspirations
USP’s expanded campus in Honiara, Solomon Islands, will be fitted with modern technology, including high-speed internet, state-of-the-art learning and teaching facilities, and energy-efficient lighting. The campus will also have full disability access for students.

The project, which is funded through a US$15.4m ADB concessional loan and an ADB-administered grant from the Clean Energy Fund, promises to provide better access to higher education for local and regional students.

USP hosts successful networking event for Solomon Islands alumni
The USP Solomon Islands Campus and Alumni Office hosted a networking event for its alumni in Honiara in September 2023. The Kolosap Ivining event aimed to gather USP alumni, re-engage the network, and celebrate alumni achievements in Solomon Islands.

Testimonial

Hela overcomes COVID challenges to attain her bachelor’s degree
Hela Tauhehe Teao nearly threw in the towel during her academic journey but managed to find support from her family and the USP staff to complete her degree in Crop Science.

“I had two biology courses I needed to complete, and it was a struggle when COVID hit. I had to go back home to Tokelau. I was supposed to finish my degree in 2021. So, it took me two years. It was a real struggle to go on,” Hela said.

She added, “Back home in Tokelau, there are not many resources and we had no labs, making it one of my toughest journeys. I was blessed that the coordinator of the two biology courses allowed me to complete them online; this made the difference and helped me get to my graduation day here in Samoa.”

Like many Pacific Islanders, Hela grew up in a big family that supported her every step of the way.

“I grew up an only child, but I am blessed to be in such a loving family. I come from a poor family, and my dad was a fisherman. I saw how hard things were and knew I needed to do this for me and my family. They helped me through a lot, even in choosing the university I would attend, USP.”

“I chose USP because it was part of the Pacific, and I quickly learnt how diverse the institution is when I joined. I came to USP Samoa Campus and met many people from different cultures,” she added.

Hela hopes her story will inspire young people in Tokelau, Samoa, and throughout the Pacific to persevere despite their circumstances.

“I hope my story can reach another young person in my home country and that they will be encouraged to join USP and know that they too can make it in Tokelau, Samoa, or any other USP campuses they wish to study at.”
A team of five students and two staff members (Team KAU TO'A) represented USP at the FIRST Global Challenge 2022, a robotic competition held in Geneva, Switzerland. The team competed with 180 countries and delivered an impressive performance, winning a silver medal. The Tonga Campus also took top honours at Tonga’s Computer Emergency Response Team Competition (CERT Tonga), which was organised during Cyber Resilience Week.

The USP Student Council meeting was held in June at the Tonga Campus. The Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Pal Ahluwalia, and student leaders from all 14 campuses attended the meeting.

For the first time, the Tonga Campus offered the Professional Diploma in Legal Practice (PDLP), and a cohort of 11 law graduates successfully completed the diploma in early 2023. The second cohort consisted of 10 students.

The Tonga Campus graduation ceremony was held in October 2023. It was a proud moment for 175 students who walked across the stage to collect their qualifications, marking a significant milestone in their academic journey.
Tuvalu

The PACREF team, led by the Deputy Head of School for Pacific Arts, Communication and Education, conducted in-country workshops at the Tuvalu and Marshall Islands campuses in 2023. The Tuvalu Campus graduation ceremony was held in May, where 62 students graduated across various disciplines. The Vice-Chancellor and President and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Regional Campuses and Global Engagement) also attended the graduation ceremony. While there, they met the Tuvalu Minister of Finance, CEO of Education, and the Governor General of Tuvalu.

Dr Olikoni Tanaki
Campus Director

Vanuatu (Emalus)

In early 2023, the Emalus Campus and all four Centres were closed for two weeks due to the impact of two tropical cyclones.

In April, during her tenure as the Crown Princess, Queen Mary of Denmark and her delegation visited the Campus to discuss various topics related to Denmark and the Pacific with students and staff. Queen Mary commended the law students for their contribution to ensuring the adoption of a resolution related to climate change at the recent United Nations General Assembly. The Emalus Campus graduation ceremony took place in May, where 291 students graduated.

Mr Ruben Markward
Campus Director

Testimonial

Loise Luuni Tinila

Generally, things for working students are not easy, especially when managing work, family, and studies simultaneously. I always had to go that extra mile to make it happen. For me, teamwork was vital. With USP, I was able to build connections and make new friends who are more like family now.

Sharing ideas allowed me to explore opportunities. Knowing that I can make a difference in life by learning new skills and being able to provide for my family at the same time. The support system for every student plays a very vital role when it comes to balancing life.

Some of the study tips for me were making a study schedule and working smart instead of working hard. I owe this achievement to the Almighty God for bestowing me with knowledge and wisdom to accomplish my MBA. Secondly, my supportive parents for looking after my kids when I had to study, my husband for always accompanying me to the USP campus so I could study till daylight, and my kids for inspiring me every day and giving me hope for the future. Lastly, I thank my extended family and the cohort for their warm friendship.

The guiding principles for my success were setting my priorities, staying focused, and persevering to achieve my goals.

My words of encouragement for prospective students are that you can achieve anything through sacrifice, perseverance, and hard work. At USP, you will find new opportunities that will help you grow. The University of the South Pacific has nurtured me in a way that I am proud to say I am ready to take on this world of challenges. I thank the academic staff and peers at USP Tuvalu Campus for guiding me through my years of study.
Can you tell us about your time at USP?

I have been with The University of the South Pacific in different capacities since 1993. This year marks my 30th year as a member of the USP family. Working for the institution has been my first job since I graduated. I started as a foundation course tutor at the Emalus Campus, and I did that for several years. Then, I studied for a postgraduate diploma and then a master's. Those two qualifications enabled me to apply for other positions within the University. I transferred to the Laucala Campus in 2006 as an Instructional Designer with the Centre for Flexible Learning and have been in Suva ever since. I resigned as an Instructional Designer and took a few months off, but I couldn’t enjoy my little break from the University. So, I returned as a Student Learning Specialist in 2018. My time at USP, from being a student to now being a staff member, has been a continuous learning experience in various aspects, which I cherish so much.

Was there anyone you met at USP who had an impact on you?

Yes, most certainly. When I was with the Centre for Flexible Learning, we had different directors, but this one director had an impact on me because she focused on the strengths of each staff member within our department and would push us to reach our potential. She would push us beyond what we thought was our limit at times, and I grew in ways I could not have imagined at the time. Under her leadership, I realised my abilities and what I was capable of, which influenced me and my colleagues to always do our best.

What has been the highlight of your career?

Upon attaining my qualifications from USP, I realised the vast opportunities that were available to me. One of the most memorable highlights is being recognised as a USP graduate, and that adds weight when pursuing employment opportunities in the region. That made me take pride in being a USP graduate and in our regional institute. I’m grateful to be a part of this community.

What is your favourite aspect of your current role?

I love helping students because what we’re doing is helping them with academic skills, such as being able to manage their time and their studies. Just by giving them hints and advice, we’re equipping them with the skills needed to get through a semester successfully. Another thing I love about my current occupation is introducing new students to university life and what they should expect. At the Laucala Campus, we run a workshop where we get to run some activities to allow regional students in Fiji for the first time to acclimatise and learn their way around the main campus and also get them familiarised with the layout of Suva City, the capital of Fiji. Most of them are leaving their families and entering a new country for the first time, which is a complete culture shock for the majority. Not only is it the country, but the university also because this is the biggest of all the campuses. This programme takes them through academic skills and learning about Fiji as well.

What advice would you give graduates wanting to pursue a similar profession?

My advice would be to keep the learning spirit alive because we’re always learning, and no matter what you graduated from, there’s always a lot to learn in the world. For me, humility, the learning spirit, and the drive to always better myself are things that keep me going. Through continuous learning, I am improving myself, which will eventually allow me to better serve my community and country. Never stop learning. The other advice is to be yourself, manage your time wisely, and always stay on top of your schoolwork.

Use a phrase to describe USP.

It is the learning hub for academic excellence that shapes the leaders of our beloved Pacific.
Introduction

Priority Area 4 of the USP Strategic Plan 2022–2024 highlights the significance of regional cooperation. The main objective of this priority area is to strengthen strategic partnerships through effective regional and international engagement. USP is actively involved in the region through the Council of Regional Organisations (CROP), which consists of the heads of eight intergovernmental regional organisations in the Pacific.

Through the CROP mechanism, USP leads the ICT Working Group and the Human Resource Development (HRD) Working Group. The University also participates in other Working Groups such as the Sustainable Development Working Group, Marine Sector Working Group, Working Arm on Resilience Development (WARD), Pacific Energy Oversight Group (PEOG), and Gender Working Group. These efforts underpin the University’s commitment to the Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’ vision for the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent. The Blue Pacific strategy has seven thematic areas at its core, which USP has strong technical expertise to support. USP is currently fully engaged in implementing the strategy, along with other CROP agencies.

Regional Cooperation, Integration, and International Partnerships

Regional Cooperation and Integration

- In 2023, USP continued to actively engage with the CROP agencies in line with its mandate to promote regional cooperation and integration. USP, alongside other CROP agencies such as PIFS, SPREP, FFA, SPC, SPTO, and others, played a key role in advancing the Regional Collective Actions (RCAs) for the Pacific region. This effort was guided by the 2050 Blue Pacific Strategy’s implementation plan and the Pacific Partnerships for Prosperity (P3P) initiatives, which were adopted and endorsed at the 52nd Pacific Island Leaders Meeting.

- Throughout 2023, USP actively supported the CROP ICT WG and CROP HRD Human Resource Development (HRD) WG as the Chair.

- The CROP HRD Working Group focused on the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) as its key activity to enhance human resource development in the region. They collaborated with several stakeholders, donors, and development partners. As a member of the Local Education Group (LEG), the CROP HRD Working Group supported efforts to strengthen the processes of the Global Partnership for Education (GPE). Furthermore, they were requested to provide support to the GPE’s Education Sector Program Implementation Grant (ESPIG) for an eight-month funding extension for Phase 1 of the PacREF programme, extending it until the end of 2024.

- The University actively participated in several regional ministerial meetings held in 2023, including the Pacific Islands Forum Women Leaders Meeting, the Forum Economic Ministers Meeting, and the Forum Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting, in addition to supporting and participating in Forum Officials Committees and Sub-Committees. The Vice-Chancellor and President of the University led a delegation to the 52nd Pacific Island Leaders Meeting held in the Cook Islands in November 2023. During this meeting, USP held bilateral meetings with various parties at its Cook Islands Campus, including with Norway’s
Facilitation Unit.
the recommendations proposed by the PacREF November 2022 and the strategies to address
Mid-Term Review (MTR) conducted in October–
discussed the outcomes of the PHES Steering
Committee meeting that was held in November 2022, specifically regarding the CPEM
programme and presentations.

USP participated in the Multi-Stakeholder
Expert Group (MSEG) discussions for the
People-Centred Development (PCD) focus
area under the 2050 Strategy for the Blue
Pacific Continent. The University undertook
the revision of the goals and outcomes related
to education. One of the PCD goals was to
provide quality, accessible, affordable, and
inclusive education at all levels. The outcomes
for the PCD focus area included accelerating
the implementation and monitoring of existing
and successor regional initiatives, including
the Pacific Regional Education Framework
(PacREF).

The MTR Report was presented to the Pacific
Heads of Education Systems (PHES) and the
Conference of Pacific Education Ministers
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discussed the outcomes of the PHES Steering
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programme and presentations.

The first CROP HRD Working Group meeting
was held in February 2023. The Working Group
discussed the recommendations of the PacREF
Mid-Term Review (MTR) conducted in October–November 2022 and the strategies to address
the recommendations proposed by the PacREF Facilitation Unit.

International Partnerships

In 2023, USP continued to actively engage with
countries outside the Pacific region and with
development agencies. These engagements were in addition to ongoing projects and
programmes, such as the Norway-Pacific Ocean
Climate Scholarship Programme (N-POC),
PacREF, and others. USP also signed MOUs with several universities.

As part of the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific
Continent, the CROP ICT Working Group
partnered with the Pacific Community (SPC)
to co-lead the Technology and Connectivity
thematic area of the Multi-Sector Expert Group
(MSEG). They are responsible for drafting and
finalising the goals, outcomes, and regional
actions for this thematic area, which is one of
the seven interconnected thematic areas of the
2050 Strategy. These actions will be included in
the implementation plan and the RCAs for 2024.

The CROP ICT Working Group was invited
to collaborate with the PNG Department of
Information and Communication Technology
to plan and organise the Pacific ICT Ministerial
Meeting 2023. The event was held in August in
Port Moresby, Papua New Guinea.

The CROP ICT Working Group partnered
with SPC to organise the Pacific Cyber Safety
Symposium, which was held in Suva in
September. The symposium’s main objective
was to address online safety concerns such as
cyberbullying, child protection, and technology-
facilitated gender-based violence. In late 2023,
USP continued to work closely with several
partners in the region to understand the
region’s cyber security needs. Consultations
were also held to address the outcomes of the
Pacific ICT Ministerial Meeting of 2023.

The University achieved a significant milestone
by directly collaborating with the United States
(US) for the first time. This collaboration was
announced by US President Joe Biden during
the first US-Pacific Islands Forum Leaders’
Summit held in September 2022. As part of this
collaboration, the State Department’s Bureau
of Oceans and International Environmental
and Scientific Affairs (OES) awarded a grant of
US$5m to USP. This grant will be used
to establish a Resilience and Adaptation
Fellowship for Rising Pacific Leaders, which
aims to support future leaders in the Pacific
region.

The programme aims to train the next
generation of Pacific climate leaders in
partnership with leading US universities.
It will provide an opportunity for young
professionals from the Pacific region to study
at US institutions that specialise in research on
climate-related issues such as natural resource
economics and management, resilient food
systems, renewable energy development, water
security, and waste management.

Partnering with premier US universities
will foster knowledge sharing, strengthen
professional networks, build capacity, and
deepen the relationship between the US
and countries across the Pacific region.
The programme will help develop a new generation of
Pacific leaders who can skillfully advocate for
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CROP ICT Working Group

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Development Assistance

- The 2023 Indicative Aid Budget as at 31 December stood at FJ$73,418,580. This figure included financial assistance received by the University from donors to support various projects and programmes, such as education, research, innovation, student mobility, capacity building, and general partnerships. Moreover, the University received core funding from traditional development partners, Australia and New Zealand, which helped it carry out operational activities during the year. The University executed 98 Agreements in 2023, with the total value of the Agreements and the 63 MOUs amounting to FJ$373m, while the remainder were non-financial.

- In 2023, the University entered a significant partnership with the US Government. This partnership involved granting US$5m to USP to establish a new Resilience and Adaptation Fellowship for Rising Pacific Leaders. This collaboration aimed to strengthen the University’s capacity to tackle climate-related and environmental challenges in the Pacific and make it a centre of excellence.

Aotearoa New Zealand and USP Partnership Agreement

- In April 2023, USP and Aotearoa New Zealand, through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (MFAT), signed a 10-year partnership agreement that will run until 2033. This agreement was divided into two five-year funding arrangements, with the first five-year period allocated NZ$38.5m. In October, a USP delegation visited Wellington to meet MFAT officials to jointly develop the agreement’s framework and monitor its implementation. The recommendations made by the JOM team will be considered while planning for 2024.

- The 9th meeting of the USP-Australia Partnership Group took place in August 2023 at the Laucala Campus. In October, the Mid-Term Review of the Partnership Agreement was conducted at the Lautoka Campus. In November, high-level consultations between USP and Australia were held in Canberra, where the progress and other aspects of the partnership agreements were discussed. During this visit, the USP delegation also paid a courtesy call to Honourable Pat Conroy, the Minister for International Development and the Pacific and Minister for Defence Industry.

In November 2023, USP held its first trilateral dialogue in Suva since the COVID-19 pandemic. The dialogue included officials from USP, led by the Vice-Chancellor and President, and officials from Aotearoa New Zealand and Australia.

Pacific Regional Education Framework

- In 2023, the inaugural Conference of Pacific Education Ministers (CPEM) was held by the Pacific Regional Education Framework (PacREF) programme. The CPEM is the main oversight body of the programme and was co-hosted by USP through the PacREF Facilitating Unit (PFU) and the New Zealand Government at the Aotea Centre in Auckland. All Forum member countries attended the conference, most of whom were represented at the ministerial level. The conference provided progress reports of the programme and sought guidance on its future directions. The Ministers were pleased to receive reports from key agencies on diverse matters, such as the PacREF Mid-Term Review, monitoring and evaluation, inclusive education, early childhood education, the Status of Pacific Education Report 2022, and linkages to the 2050 Strategy for the Blue Pacific Continent.

- After the CPEM was completed, the PFU was responsible for implementing the CPEM outcomes, particularly the strategies to implement the Mid-Term Review’s recommendations that the CPEM had approved. To integrate PacREF into each country’s national education sector plans, the PFU organised a workshop for country focal points. The workshop aimed to develop communication strategies to increase awareness about the programme and enhance country ownership and leadership in its implementation.

- The PacREF Facilitating Unit conducted its second Joint Oversight Mission (JOM) between October and December. During the mission, the team consulted with partners to gather their views and opinions on the programme’s implementation and its challenges. The JOM team also visited Volau, Kiribati, and Fiji as part of the consultations. The recommendations made by the JOM team will be considered while planning for 2024.

- The PacREF Facilitating Unit, in consultation with the country focal points and the Steering Committee, agreed to request the Global Partnership for Education for a no-cost extension of 12 months to the current funding arrangements to continue the programme. This extension will end the period of Phase 1 funding to April 2025.
Introduction

The University is committed to fostering a culture of good governance and intelligent use of resources to enhance the learning and teaching experience, promote research and innovation, and achieve workplace excellence.

In 2023, USP made significant investments in physical and virtual resources while ensuring ethical practices and good governance were at the forefront of all operations. The IT Services team worked diligently to upgrade the University’s network and systems, strengthen cybersecurity, and introduce new applications and services to support learning, research, and administrative services. In addition, the University successfully completed several infrastructure projects, including building a new campus in Solomon Islands and refurbishing the Savai‘i Centre and Salelologa Public Library in Samoa.

The Marketing and Communications team also played a pivotal role in increasing USP’s global visibility and brand awareness through the “Our People, Our Stories” campaign and other initiatives. Moreover, the University formed strategic partnerships to enhance its reputation and provide engagement opportunities for students and staff.

Furthermore, the University developed plans and strategies to address critical human resource issues such as job evaluations, workload reviews, staff retention, and underrepresentation of women in management roles. The University prioritised building better employee relations by working collaboratively with staff unions.

The University also undertook various initiatives to optimise its resource use, resulting in substantial cost savings and efficient service delivery. These initiatives included consolidating the Estates operations and automating time-consuming processes, such as accommodation bookings and admissions data entry.

Going forward, good governance will remain the foundation of USP’s efforts to achieve its strategic objectives and maintain its long-term viability and reputation.

Human Resources

Recruitment

- In 2023, several key appointments were made at the University, including the Chief Operating Officer and the Interim Executive Director of People and Workforce Strategy.
- A measured approach was taken towards filling vacant positions in 2023. Priority was given to critical academic and professional positions necessary for the University’s business continuity. A position control exercise was conducted, which involved extracting the entire position data for all active positions. Intensive consultations were held with Schools and Sections to determine actual vacant positions.

Staff pay increases

- The University awarded a 4% pay increase to all its employees, which was paid out in two parts: 2% in December 2022 and the remaining 2% in January 2023. In August 2023, the University also awarded all eligible employees increments or cash bonuses.

Employee Relations

- In 2023, the University management and staff unions initiated collaborative efforts to address staff-related concerns.
- Notable progress include the successful implementation of five-year contracts for teaching assistants and the reintroduction of regular job evaluations. Negotiations were also undertaken with staff in Solomon Islands and Samoa for their new collective agreement and the National Union of Workers, which represents a smaller group of administrative and support staff in Fiji.
HR Systems and Reporting
The Human Resources (HR) department continued reviewing key processes to streamline operations and improve service delivery. A medical portal was introduced to facilitate the management of the employee medical insurance scheme, allowing employees convenient access to services.

Council Governance
In 2023, the University continued to work towards embedding good governance practices in its operations by reviewing and socialising policies. The Governance & Nominations Committee and the Remuneration & People Committee met during the year to discuss governance issues within their respective areas of responsibility.

Chancellorship
The Council appointed the Governor General of Solomon Islands, Sir David Okete Vunagi, as the 30th Chancellor of the University for a one-year term from 1 July 2023 to 30 June 2024. He succeeds the 29th Chancellor and Head of State of the Independent State of Samoa, His Highness Afioga Tuimalealiifano Vaaletoa Sualauvi II, whose term ended on 30 June 2023.

The University Council
The 95th and 96th Ordinary Council Meetings were held on 18-19 May and 27-28 November 2023, respectively. These meetings were conducted in person and virtually at the Laucala Campus in Suva, Fiji. During these meetings, the Council noted the Fiji Government’s commitment to consolidate its support for USP. The Council also approved the 2024 Budget, the 2024 Annual Plan, and the 2024 Financial Plan.

During the 96th Ordinary Council Meeting, the Council approved the reappointment of Emeritus Professor Pat Walsh as Deputy Pro-Chancellor and Deputy Chair of Council and Professor Pal Ahluwalia as Vice-Chancellor and President.

In 2023, the Council held meetings of its core committees, including the Executive, Audit & Risk, Finance & Resources, Governance & Nominations, and Remuneration & People committees. Additionally, the Senate and its committees, including the Academic Programmes Committee (APC), Teaching & Quality Committee (TQC), and University Research Committee (URC), met to discuss academic matters in teaching, learning, and research.

USP hosts courtesy visit from Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
USP received a courtesy visit from the Prime Minister of the Cook Islands, Honourable Mark Brown, and his delegation in August 2023.

During the visit, the Prime Minister expressed his interest in developing a close partnership with USP as part of their initiatives, including the implementation of the 2050 strategy. The two parties discussed potential areas of collaboration, including ocean stewardship, research on deep-sea minerals, ownership of stories, and developing a strong ICT network.

Prime Minister Brown also commended USP for providing high-level qualifications like the MBA programme at the Naitauba Campus and said he looked forward to the introduction of more programmes.

Queen Mary of Denmark visits Emalus Campus
In April 2023, during her tenure as Crown Princess, Queen Mary of Denmark and her delegation paid a visit to the USP Emalus Campus in Vanuatu. During the visit, they engaged in a stimulating discussion with the students and staff on several topics that were significant to both Denmark and the Pacific region.

The aim of the visit was to enhance Denmark’s engagement in the global climate agenda and to gain insights into the challenges that Vanuatu faces regarding climate security and other climate-related challenges.

USP Council holds 96th meeting
The USP Council reappointed Professor Pal Ahluwalia as Vice-Chancellor and President during its 96th meeting session. The Council noted reports on the University’s activities, finances, and challenges. It approved the Proposed Annual Plan and Financial Plan for 2024 and adopted the Audited Financial Statements for the half-year ended 30 June 2023. The Council also approved a report by the University Senate and instituted new programmes in Pacfic TAFE. Additionally, the Council endorsed a scoping study proposal to establish a Pacific Centre of Excellence for Deep Ocean Science.

USP Vice-Chancellor and President welcomed emotional Thanksgiving service
USP hosted a Thanksgiving service as the first semester of 2023 got underway. The service was held to welcome back USP Vice-Chancellor and President Professor Pal Ahluwalia to Laucala Campus.

It was a joyous event filled with songs of praise and thanksgiving, attended by various dignitaries, including the Prime Minister of Fiji, Honourable Silevu Rabuka, the Deputy Prime Minister, Honourable Professor Sileria KWW, and other Government Ministers and Assistant Ministers.

USP sponsors courtesy visit from Prime Minister of the Cook Islands
In April 2023, during her tenure as Crown Princess, Queen Mary of Denmark and her delegation paid a visit to the USP Emalus Campus in Vanuatu. During the visit, they engaged in a stimulating discussion with the students and staff on several topics that were significant to both Denmark and the Pacific region.

The aim of the visit was to enhance Denmark’s engagement in the global climate agenda and to gain insights into the challenges that Vanuatu faces regarding climate security and other climate-related challenges.

Solomon Islands Governor General installed as the 30th Chancellor of the University
The Governor General of Solomon Islands, Honourable Sir David Aku Vunagi, was officially installed as the 30th Chancellor of USP during the Laucala Campus graduation ceremony held in August 2023. He will hold the position for a term of one year from 1 September 2023 to 31 August 2024.

In his remarks following the installation, Honourable Vunagi said it was an honour to be appointed Chancellor and he looked forward to visiting USP’s regional campuses. “I pledged to continue upholding and maintaining the integrity of the role as was done by the previous 29 Chancellors before me. I pledge to give my support and do whatever I can to help with the University’s operations,” he added.
Assurance and Compliance

The University operates in a diverse and dynamic higher education environment across 12 jurisdictions. It is accountable to its 12 member Pacific countries and two major donor partners for the efficient and effective use of its resources. The University is committed to embedding a robust risk management and compliance culture that will make it agile and responsive to changes in the higher education landscape. It sees risks as opportunities to improve and uses innovation as a solution to create efficiency and effectiveness.

In 2023, the Assurance and Compliance Section provided independent and objective assurance services to assist the University in enhancing the effectiveness of its governance processes, risk management, and compliance processes and meeting its obligations. It also led the coordination of the University’s second and third lines of defence roles and oversaw the monitoring, escalation, and reporting of risks that operated outside the University’s risk appetites through management-level risk committees. These committees are structured as follows:

- USP Risk Executive Committee
  - Tier 1: Institutional Level
- Risk Management Committee
  - Tier 2: Divisional Level (Education, Research & Innovation, Operations, Regional Campuses & Global Engagement, Tier 3: Schools, Regional Campuses (Campus level), Enablement Functions, Institutes, etc.)

The Council also reviewed the University’s Risk Appetite Statements, Institutional Risk Profile, and Register in 2023 and acknowledged the updated report on the Internal Audit Action Plan.

To ensure the efficient and effective use of the University’s resources, the Director Assurance and Compliance oversaw the management of various aspects, including the Risk Management Framework, compliance with the University’s obligations, the fraud control environment, and the internal audit programme on behalf of the Council and its Audit & Risk Committee.

Financial Sustainability

- In 2023, the University continued to set its financial targets based on industry benchmarks widely used in Australia and New Zealand. These targets were reviewed and approved by the Council in November 2023. The financial targets included several financial ratios that measured the University’s ability to generate operating surpluses, meet its obligations on time by generating sufficient cash, maintain adequate cash reserves, and establish a strong financial position. The ratios were divided into two categories: viability ratios, which measured the University’s ability to meet short-term obligations, and sustainability ratios, which measured the University’s long-term survival.

- Over the past seven years, the University’s viability ratios have been quite variable, indicating a high level of short-term financial risk, mainly due to the significant impact of external factors on the University’s financials. However, the financial liquidity ratios have remained above the benchmark, indicating the University’s ability to meet its short-term cash obligations and borrowing commitments. The financial sustainability ratios have been stable, which indicates the University’s strong financial position.

- The COVID-19 pandemic caused significant operational and economic disruptions, which are expected to have a lasting impact over the next three years. This impact will predominantly affect tuition fee revenue and the timing of receipts from member countries and students. The University is closely monitoring emerging operational and tactical risks to ensure sustainability. These measures are part of the 2024 Annual Plan, which aims to increase the University’s cash reserve target and set aside reserves for specific purposes to cover exposures to financial risks. The University is confident it has sufficient resources to continue operating for the foreseeable future.

Information, Communication, and Technology

Projects and Activities

- In 2023, the New Zealand Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade (NMFAT) provided funding for the USPNet Infrastructure Upgrade Project, which focused on upgrading the network and systems layer of the USPNet. The goal was to introduce the latest SD-WAN networking technology to all USP campuses. Throughout the year, IT Services staff visited regional campuses to install and commission new equipment. Along with the technical installations, IT Services staff carried out training and awareness activities to familiarise users with the applications and services deployed across the new network, such as the Webex technology, which combines voice, video, and messaging services.

- Early in the year, USP’s upstream internet link via Australia’s Academic Research Network (AARNet) was upgraded to a capacity of 5Gbps, which is twice its previous capacity. The upgrade included an improved resiliency design that involved a backup path via New Zealand, Hawaii, and North America to the direct Australia route. With the higher capacity and increased resiliency, the University can expect better connectivity for teaching, learning, and research.

IT Services also successfully commissioned a trial Starlink service for the Nauru Campus, which was part of technical trials facilitated by the Nauru Government. This is part of the University’s ongoing efforts to work with technology vendors and regional Governments to explore better ICT connectivity options for regional campuses. Starlink uses low-orbit satellites to deliver high-speed and affordable internet to users all over the world.

- Vanuatu was affected by two tropical cyclones (TC) in early 2023, TC Judy in January and TC Kevin in February. These cyclones caused severe damage to the ICT infrastructure at Emalus Campus, including the main campus connectivity via the USP link and the backup USPNet satellite antenna. The cabling and wireless connectivity infrastructure throughout the campus was also damaged. Restoring the ICT services was challenging because the extensive physical damage to buildings required structural and electrical repairs before the ICT services restoration work could be safely conducted.

Moodle

- The University uses Moodle as its online learning and teaching platform. To ensure that Moodle remains up-to-date and efficient, it was upgraded to Version 4.1.x. This upgrade has resulted in better operating efficiency, a more user-friendly experience, and enhanced learning and teaching capabilities.
IT Services has been working on automating the processes involved in creating courses on Moodle and enrolling staff and students into their respective courses. This has resulted in a more accurate and seamless start to academic semesters for everyone involved.

Supporting Business Units

IT Services developed a series of applications to support the day-to-day operations of ICT functionality for other key business units and their strategic objectives. These applications include Staff Sick Leave Management System and the Medical Insurance Portal, which have greatly improved HR processing efficiencies in previously resource-intensive activities while significantly reducing the carbon footprint through digitisation. Additionally, the Alumni Relationship Management System (ARMS) has allowed for the integration of USP Alumni into current USP activities, providing an opportunity to enhance the wider USP Community.

In the second half of 2023, IT Services undertook a series of development activities to improve the student registration process in preparation for 2024. The Office of the Chief Operating Officer guided these activities, which included adopting new analytical tools to revamp the forecasting process. The USP website was revamped to provide better clarity and easier access to relevant information for students. A Contact Centre was established to improve coordination and response time for student enquiries related to the admissions process. Finally, groundwork was initiated on the next generation of user software applications and services such as Data Warehouse and Banner Self Service.

Cybersecurity

Cybersecurity has always been at the forefront of ICT at the University. However, due to the ever-increasing level and complexity of cyber threats in the ICT industry, a concerted effort has been made to further strengthen the University’s defences. The IT Services staff attended several cybersecurity conferences and forums, both locally and internationally, and collaborated with external experts from the Network Startup Resource Centre (NSRC) to receive guidance on best practices in this critical area of ICT operations.

As a result of these efforts, key technology strategies have been revised to commit resources for adopting the latest firewall technologies, cloud email security services, and industry-standard cybersecurity frameworks in 2024. With such proactive measures in place, the USP community can be assured that their information and equipment are safeguarded against potential cyber threats.

USP signed an MOU with the USAID Digital Connectivity and Cybersecurity Project (DCCP) as part of its facilitating role in the CROP ICT Working Group. The MOU aims to provide development opportunities for Pacific countries to benefit from programmes and projects that promote meaningful connectivity to all segments of communities, digital policy and regulations, and digital skills and literacy, which will continue until 2028.

In 2023, the Marketing and Communications Division has been instrumental in advancing the USP Strategic Plan 2022–2024 through targeted marketing and public relations (PR) initiatives. In 2023, the environment campaign used a hybrid marketing strategy that included both above-the-line and below-the-line tactics to promote enrolment. A mix of online and offline channels was used to communicate key enrolment information to the University’s target audience. This included creating and sharing organic and boosted content across the University’s social media platforms, targeted advertising on the Meta and Google platforms, and strategic email marketing. Additionally, new initiatives were launched, such as a Viber community channel, awareness sessions for final-year students about postgraduate programmes, and industry visits to companies to expand the University’s outreach and engagement capabilities.

Regional Campuses

The Marketing and Communications team visited Samoa, Tonga, Vanuatu, and Solomon Islands to gather feedback from students, staff, and stakeholders. These visits enabled the team to tailor support and resources to meet the unique dynamics and challenges faced by the regional campuses.

After analysing the operations with the campus directors, the team allocated a significant budget towards regional campus initiatives in 2023. This financial commitment empowered these campuses to implement a range of impactful strategies. To promote the University’s programmes and application processes, copies of the USP Prospectus and information booklet were made available to prospective students.

Outreach Programme

In 2023, the Marketing and Communications team increased its efforts to reach prospective students in secondary schools. This involved targeted visits to 286 secondary schools, a 39% increase from the previous year’s 206 visits.

The team collaborated with regional campus directors to establish a direct link with schools, providing valuable insights into the programmes offered and fostering a sense of connection with the University. These school visits were a crucial touchpoint, creating awareness and igniting interest among prospective students. The visited schools were from member countries such as Fiji, Kiribati, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu, and Vanuatu. The team also conducted workshops with school principals and careers teachers and organised roadshows.

USP formed strategic partnerships to enhance its brand visibility and provide unique engagement opportunities for students. The University collaborated with the Drua Super Rugby team and sponsored the 2023 USP Open Day through Vodafone. These partnerships demonstrate the University’s commitment to holistic student experiences and community integration.

Marketing and USP’s Brand Identity and Regional Character

The Marketing and Communications Division has been instrumental in advancing the USP Strategic Plan 2022–2024 through targeted marketing and public relations (PR) initiatives. In 2023, the environment campaign used a hybrid marketing strategy that included both above-the-line and below-the-line tactics to promote enrolment. A mix of online and offline channels was used to communicate key enrolment information to the University’s target audience. This included creating and sharing organic and boosted content across the University’s social media platforms, targeted advertising on the Meta and Google platforms, and strategic email marketing. Additionally, new initiatives were launched, such as a Viber community channel, awareness sessions for final-year students about postgraduate programmes, and industry visits to companies to expand the University’s outreach and engagement capabilities.

Brand Campaign

The University created the “Our People, Our Stories” brand campaign to connect with its community and demonstrate its commitment to authenticity. The campaign aimed to celebrate personal narratives and their ability to shape perceptions and foster communal pride. It built upon the success of the “Your Ideas Change My World” campaign, which received an impressive 15,600 unique views on its website landing page.

To reach a wider audience, the “Our People, Our Stories” campaign was strategically showcased through various mediums, such as the 2024 Prospectus, campaign-specific landing pages, radio, newspaper, TV advertisements, billboards, and social media platforms. The campaign resonated deeply with the audience, as shown by the 2023 student survey results, which highlighted the influential role of word-of-mouth recommendations in student decision-making processes.

Strategic Partnerships

- USP formed strategic partnerships to enhance its brand visibility and provide unique engagement opportunities for students. The University collaborated with the Drua Super Rugby team and sponsored the 2023 USP Open Day through Vodafone. These partnerships demonstrate the University’s commitment to holistic student experiences and community integration.

In February 2023, the Cook Islands Voyaging Society set new sails with the successful launch of nine traditional canoes which were built in collaboration with the USP Pacific-European Union Martinis Partnership (PEUM) programme through the Te Mana o te Vaka initiative.

Revitalising traditional and sustainable sea transport

“Working together and building these types of canoes is about ensuring our tradition, ensuring an art form that, if we don’t preserve it, we are going to lose it. Because there are very few people doing this now, and by doing this we ensure things continue,” said Dr Evangeline Wong, Vice President of the Cook Islands Voyaging Society.

HIGHLIGHTS

Semester Zero helps prospective students

Incoming students can participate in the Semester Zero online orientation programme to become familiar with USP and its activities.

Revitalising traditional and sustainable sea transport

In February 2023, the Cook Islands Voyaging Society set new sails with the successful launch of nine traditional canoes which were built in collaboration with the USP Pacific-European Union Martinis Partnership (PEUM) programme through the Te Mana o te Vaka initiative.
Social Media

- The University’s social media presence significantly grew across all platforms in 2023. The Facebook page gained over 24,000 new followers, a 12.7% increase, and currently has more than 138,000 followers. The page also reached over 2 million accounts.

- The Instagram account gained over 4,000 new followers, and over 1,900 members, and the number is still growing. The Twitter account also gained over 1,500 new followers, with a 16.3% increase in page views.

- Similarly, the TikTok account gained over 3,600 new followers, reached over 201,000 accounts, and engaged with over 25,000 accounts. The Twitter account also gained over 1,500 new followers. Finally, the Viber Community Channel has been an effective tool for communicating with over 1,900 members, and the number is still growing.

Media Engagements

- In 2023, the University produced a total of 210 press releases and human interest stories, which were tailored to specific regional countries and their respective audiences. Of these, 37% were focused on Fiji, 29% were press releases intended for region-wide audiences, 9% covered Samoa, 6% focused on Tonga, and 5% were targeted to Solomon Islands and Vanuatu, respectively, with specific stories also shared to other USP member countries.

- USP received 1,104 media mentions throughout the year, with 28% positive, 19% negative, and the remaining neutral. The Conch magazine published 11 issues with equal representation from each region. The articles in the magazine highlighted some of the challenges faced by the Pacific and how USP students and staff members were addressing them through research.

Estate Information

- In 2023, several significant infrastructure projects were successfully completed.
  - The USP Savai’i Centre and the Saleologa Public Library in Samoa were upgraded, funded by Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GGP).
  - A new campus was built on the King George VI school grounds in Honiara, Solomon Islands, which was funded by the Asian Development Bank.
  - A new student amenities block was constructed on the Kribati Campus.
  - The Main Library lift replacement and ICT Server Room climate control upgrades were carried out at the Laucala Campus.
  - A backup water supply station was installed for the Kripati Campus.
  - The number of OHS inductions, training, and safety drills increased significantly in 2023 compared to 2022 for all key stakeholder groups, including students, staff, and contractors. As a result, the number of reported injuries and lost time injuries decreased in 2023 (36%) compared to the previous year (42%). However, hazard correction rates also decreased during the same period (45% in 2023 compared to 75% in 2022) due to the challenges noted earlier.

- The USP Savai’i Centre and the Saleologa Public Library in Samoa were upgraded, funded by Japan’s Grant Assistance for Grassroots Human Security Projects (GWP).

- A new campus was built on the King George VI school grounds in Honiara, Solomon Islands, which was funded by the Asian Development Bank.

- The recruitment of essential personnel to improve service delivery and efficiency.

- All indicators related to Occupational Health & Safety (OHS) showed positive progress in 2023 compared to the previous year.

- However, some notable increases in deferred maintenance liabilities were recorded during the year, especially for the Samoa and Vanuatu campuses. The deferred maintenance estimates were revised upwards after the Estates and Infrastructure team was able to conduct building condition inspections in 2023 after the travel restrictions were lifted.

- The number of OHS inductions, training, and safety drills increased significantly in 2023 compared to 2022 for all key stakeholder groups, including students, staff, and contractors. As a result, the number of reported injuries and lost time injuries decreased in 2023 (36%) compared to the previous year (42%). However, hazard correction rates also decreased during the same period (45% in 2023 compared to 75% in 2022) due to the challenges noted earlier.

- The University’s performance indicators for other estates also deteriorated during the year, including building condition ratings, compliance certifications, and the closure rates of job requests. At the end of the business year, there were over 665 unresolved estate work requests for academic estates out of a total of 4,458 requests for the year. Similarly, there were 1,282 unresolved commercial estate work requests out of the 3,182 logged for the year. Many campuses had to defer some or all of their planned/cyclic/scheduled maintenance programmes, which resulted in significant underspending of annual recurrent maintenance funding across almost all campuses. The deferred maintenance projects were also delayed, with less than 1% of approved funding being committed by the end of 2023.

- Despite these setbacks, there was a significant reduction in campus closure days. The total number of days dropped to 15 from the 189 recorded in 2022. There were 12 campus closure days recorded at the Vanuatu campuses due to two cyclones earlier in the year, with the balance recorded at the Fiji campuses.
Construction and Upgrading Projects

- The University has finally begun to rebuild the former Communications Building, which was destroyed by fire in 2018, after four years of negotiations with its insurers. The lead architectural and engineering consultants were engaged in December 2023, and the design process is planned to commence in February 2024. The construction is expected to be completed by the end of 2025.

- The newly built Solomon Islands Campus is equipped with a 650kVA Solar PV system, a rainwater harvesting system, a backup emergency generator network, and modern accessibility features, making it the most technologically advanced campus. The project to make the campus operational in line with USP’s broader consolidation and optimisation exercise commences in 2024, along with the installation of campus furniture and ICT equipment.

Commercial Activities

The Commercial Operations team continued to play a vital role in supporting students and academic sections to achieve the University’s strategic goals.

Sustainability and Relevance

- As a self-funded section of the University, Commercial Operations has remained financially sustainable and relevant. It has made significant financial contributions through efficient resource use and cost savings while supporting academia.

Consolidation

- In 2023, the University merged the Commercial Estates team with the Estates and Infrastructure team to optimise the use of resources. This merger resulted in significant cost savings and allowed commercial managers to focus on the core operations of enhancing customer service and revenue growth.

- Following the successful centralisation of stationery to the Book Centre, several other items were centralised to the Book Centre to maximise cost savings and increase the profit margin. This led to significant cost savings, including reduced transaction, payroll, and storage costs, and resulted in economies of scale.

Innovation

- The online accommodation booking system was launched in November 2023 to replace the manual process, achieving transparency, accountability, and payroll savings. The system received 1,439 applications, both from the region and internationally, while only 1,073 rooms were available to let.

Collaboration

- The Commercial Operations team successfully collaborated with the Marketing and Communications Division to improve the visibility of its products and services. They expanded their offerings to include high-quality memorabilia products and produced advertisement material. Sections of Commercial Operations also worked closely with the Estates and infrastructure team to renovate the commercial facilities.

Commercial Services

Book Centre

The USP Book Centre continued to provide essential services to the University community, including textbooks, course materials, and stationery needs. Additionally, over 200 staff were assisted in meeting their back-to-school and back-to-university needs through the Staff Assistance Scheme.

Fitness Centre

The USP Fitness Centre has been catering to the health and sporting needs of the University’s community, especially the students and staff.

Student Accommodation

In 2023, several major renovation projects were carried out in the halls of residence to improve the accommodation standards. During semester breaks, the halls of residence continued to be leased, contributing significantly to the University’s revenue.

Housing and Lodges

In 2023, the lodges were revamped and partially upgraded to accommodate short-term rental. Houses in Solent Place were repurposed to accommodate research, master’s, and postgraduate students.

Print Shop

The USP Print Shop continued to provide course material printing services to all 14 campuses at a significantly reduced cost.
The key highlights for the 2023 financial year are depicted in the chart below.

### Income

The University recorded total income of $213.0m, which was 3% higher than 2022. This was driven mostly by the grant from Fiji and receipts from insurance settlement. These offset the significant drop in fee revenue due to reduced student enrolment. Fiji restored its grant from August 2023 ($14m) and also paid $18m towards its grant arrears. Development assistance revenue increased driven by additional support from Australia for specific projects.

Student enrolment dropped by 11% for University programmes, while enrolments in Pacific TAFE increased by 6%.

Income from tuition fees continues to be the largest source of revenue for the University. Tuition fees income decreased to 30.2% in 2023 from 46.8% in 2022, while development assistance decreased to 22.8% in 2023 from 29.1% in 2022. Government contributions (20.8%) and all other incomes (26.2%) make the other funding sources during the year.

### Major Movements in Income and Expenses

- **Incurred in government contribution income**: $32.5m
- **Increase in development assistance income**: $2.6m
- **Decrease in student tuition fees income**: $9.9m
- **Increase in commercial income**: $0.5m
- **Increase in other income**: $24.0m
- **Increase in stall costs**: $0.8m
- **Increase in operating costs**: $6.8m
- **Decrease in receivable provision**: $3.0m

### Major Movements in Assets and Liabilities

- **Decrease in cash & equivalents**: $8.0m
- **Increase in trade and other receivables**: $15.4m
- **Increase in property, plant, and equipment**: $8.0m
- **Decrease in work-in-progress**: $15.9m
- **Decrease in creditors and accruals**: $2.0m
- **Increase in development assistance liability**: $4.6m
- **Increase in borrowing**: $11.6m (excluding fair value valuation)

### Expenditure

Total expenditure (including other comprehensive expenses) was $154.7m compared to $152.8m in 2022. Staff costs increased by 1% during the year and remains the largest component of expenditure; it comprises 47.1% of total expenditure compared to 46.6% in 2022. Operating costs increased by 11.4% during the year and comprised 42.9% of total expenditure compared to 43.1% in 2022. The remaining costs are for depreciation and amortisation and comprise 10.0% of expenditure.

Staff costs increased by $0.8m or 1.1% to $72.7m, largely due to salary adjustments and increments. Operating costs increased by $7m as retained spending was released during the year.

### Cash Flow and Financing

The University generated $55.7m in net cash flow from operating activities, compared to $30.6m in 2022. Overall, the cash and cash equivalents position showed a net decrease of $8.0m, compared to a net increase of $17.3m achieved in 2022. The decrease in liquid cash balance was driven by an increase in long-term investments of cash during the year.

The cash reserve at the end of the year was adequate to operate the University for 20 weeks above the required period of 12 weeks. The higher cash reserve was due to slower spending on maintenance of its physical assets.

### Financial Position

The University’s net assets totalled $263.8m, an increase of $58.4m from 2022 or 28%. The increase was driven by growth in assets of 17% offset by increase in 4% in liabilities. The increase in assets was driven by additional cash received from grant and insurance proceeds, while the increase in liabilities was due to further drawdown of the ADB loan for the Solomon Islands Campus.

### Conclusion and Future Outlook

Despite the economic challenges, the University’s financial position remains positive. It is implementing a number of tactical responses to address the decline in its core revenue and to reduce the escalation in costs. The University continues to monitor these risks on a continuous basis to ensure its financial sustainability.

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Executive Director Finance

Kolnio Boila

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### Graph 1: Incomes 2019–2023

- **Government Grants**
- **Development Assistance**
- **Tuition Fees**
- **Others**

### Graph 2: Expenditures 2019–2023

- **Pay**
- **Non Pay**
- **Provisions**

Conclusion and Future Outlook

Despite the economic challenges, the University’s financial position remains positive. It is implementing a number of tactical responses to address the decline in its core revenue and to reduce the escalation in costs. The University continues to monitor these risks on a continuous basis to ensure its financial sustainability.

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Executive Director Finance

Kolnio Boila

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**STATEMENT BY APPOINTED OFFICERS**

In our opinion the accompanying Financial Statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of The University of the South Pacific as at 31 December 2023 and of its financial performance, its changes in funds and reserves and its cash flows for the year then ended.

We are not aware of any circumstances that would render any particulars included in the Financial Statements misleading or inaccurate.

Professor Pasi Akhwarlia  
Vice Chancellor & President

Mrs. Saoleilili Maeva  
Natacha Betham-Vaai  
Chair - Finance and Resources Committee

Mr. Kolini Boila  
Executive Director Finance
Independent Auditors’ Report

To the Council of the University of the South Pacific

Report on the Audit of the Financial Statements

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of The University of the South Pacific (“the University”), which comprise the statement of financial position as at 31 December 2023, the statements of profit or loss and other comprehensive income, changes in funds and reserves and cash flows for the year then ended, and notes, comprising material accounting policies and other explanatory information.

In our opinion, the accompanying financial statements give a true and fair view of the financial position of the University as at 31 December 2023, and of its financial performance and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with IFRS Accounting Standards as issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (IFRS Accounting Standards).

Basis for Opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (ISAs). Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditors’ Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements section of our report. We are independent of the University in accordance with International Ethics Standards Board for Accountants International Code of Ethics for Professional Accountants (including International Independence Standards) (IESBA Code) and the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in Fiji and we have fulfilled our other ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements and the IESBA Code. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Other Information

Management is responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Statement by Appointed Officers but does not include the financial statements and our auditor’s report thereon.

Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact. We have nothing to report in this regard.

Responsibilities of Management and Those Charged with Governance for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation of financial statements that give a true and fair view in accordance with IFRS Accounting Standards, and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, management is responsible for assessing the University’s ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless management either intends to liquidate the University or to cease operations, or has no realistic alternative but to do so.

Those charged with governance are responsible for overseeing the University’s financial reporting process.

Auditor’s Responsibilities for the Audit of the Financial Statements

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditors’ report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

As part of an audit in accordance with ISAs, we exercise professional judgment and maintain professional skepticism throughout the audit. We also:

- Identify and assess the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error, design and perform audit procedures responsive to those risks, and obtain audit evidence that is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.
- The risk of not detecting a material misstatement resulting from fraud is higher than for one resulting from error, as fraud may involve collaboration, forgery, intentional omissions, misrepresentations, or the override of internal control.
- Obtain an understanding of internal control relevant to the audit in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the University’s internal control.
- Evaluate the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates and related disclosures made by management.
- Conclude on the appropriateness of management’s use of the going concern basis of accounting and, based on the audit evidence obtained, whether a material uncertainty exists related to events or conditions that may cast significant doubt on the University’s ability to continue as a going concern. If we conclude that a material uncertainty exists, we are required to draw attention in our auditors’ report to the related disclosures in the financial statements or, if such disclosures are inadequate, to modify our opinion. Our conclusions are based on the audit evidence obtained up to the date of our auditors’ report.
- However, future events or conditions may cause the University to cease to continue as a going concern.
# THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

## STATEMENT OF PROFIT OR LOSS AND OTHER COMPREHENSIVE INCOME

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

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<tr>
<td><strong>Revenue and income</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Government contributions</td>
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<td>Student tuition fees</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>74,155,889</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>46,049,847</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial income</td>
<td>7(a)</td>
<td>10,758,838</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy income</td>
<td>7(b)</td>
<td>2,542,935</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8,253,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred income - donated assets</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>3,925,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest income</td>
<td></td>
<td>799,512</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealised exchange gain</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reversal of impairment loss on trade and other receivables</td>
<td>3(i)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total revenue and income</strong></td>
<td>212,968,479</td>
<td>158,301,325</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Expenses</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personnel costs</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>71,925,089</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Operating expenses</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>59,407,289</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest expense</td>
<td></td>
<td>955,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>17,18,19(a)</td>
<td>13,806,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impairment loss on trade and other receivables</td>
<td>3(i)</td>
<td>5,454,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write down / (impairment reversal) of inventories</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>277,850</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Unrealised exchange loss</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Realised exchange loss</td>
<td></td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Loss on disposal of property, plant and equipment</td>
<td>708</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total expenses</strong></td>
<td>154,339,334</td>
<td>152,844,222</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Surplus for the year</strong></td>
<td>58,629,145</td>
<td>5,457,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Other comprehensive income</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item that will be reclassified subsequently to profit or loss:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Foreign currency translation reserve</td>
<td>(272,470)</td>
<td>(1,412,989)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total comprehensive income for the year</strong></td>
<td>58,356,675</td>
<td>4,044,114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accompanying notes from pages 141 to 185 form an integral part of these financial statements.
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION
AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>102,351,840</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Investment in financial assets</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>75,776,352</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade and other receivables</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>24,100,640</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inventories</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1,779,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Prepayments</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>3,602,692</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>207,611,193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-current assets</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Property, plant and equipment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>242,718,303</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Right-of-use assets</td>
<td>19(a)</td>
<td>2,912,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intangible assets</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>507,699</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>246,138,386</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total assets</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>453,749,579</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creditors and accruals</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>20,191,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance (projects) unexpended</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>41,202,800</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease liabilities</td>
<td>19(b)</td>
<td>1,581,297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,102,178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred income – donated assets</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>3,953,034</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>1,401,425</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>70,431,949</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-current liabilities</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provisions</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>2,544,637</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deferred income – donated assets</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>88,232,162</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lease liabilities</td>
<td>19(b)</td>
<td>1,494,190</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>27,238,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>119,509,604</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total liabilities</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>189,941,353</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net assets</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>263,808,226</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Represented by:
Funds and reserves |        |
| Other contributed equity | 26(a) | 26,953,839 | 26,944,762 |
| Endowment capital | 15(c) | 5,845,976  | 5,815,444  |
| Retained earnings | 239,410,896 | 180,781,751 |
| Foreign currency translation reserve | (8,402,485) | 8,130,015 |

The accompanying notes from pages 141 to 181 form an integral part of these financial statements.
THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Operating activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Development assistance</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Government contributions</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest received</td>
<td>2,105,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Student tuition fees</td>
<td>67,445,471</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Trading activities</td>
<td>14,120,130</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other receipts</td>
<td>27,615,031</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Staff expenses</td>
<td>(73,869,969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other operating expenses</td>
<td>(68,139,709)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Interest paid</td>
<td>(936,054)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net cash provided by operating activities</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Investing activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment for property, plant and equipment – General</td>
<td>(7,910,300)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Payment for property, plant and equipment – Projects</td>
<td>(1,021,787)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>(Investment in) short term deposits</td>
<td>(52,302,725)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net cash used in investing activities</td>
<td>(61,234,812)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Financing activities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Principal repayments of borrowings</td>
<td>(685,802)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Repayment of principal lease liabilities</td>
<td>(1,828,820)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net cash used in financing activities</td>
<td>(2,514,622)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents</td>
<td>(8,039,287)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents at beginning of year</td>
<td>110,391,127</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Cash and cash equivalents at end of year</td>
<td>102,351,840</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The accompanying notes from pages 141 to 181 form an integral part of these financial statements.

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

1. REPORTING ENTITY
The University of the South Pacific was established by Royal Charter of the University in 1970. It is a non-profit educational institution providing higher education to member regional countries, with its main operations domiciled in Fiji. The registered office is at Laucala Campus, Suva, Fiji.

The University is the provider of tertiary education in the Pacific region and an international centre of excellence for teaching, research and consulting on all aspects of Pacific life.

These financial statements were authorised for issue by the Finance and Resource Committee on 15 April 2024.

2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES
The summary of significant accounting policies adopted in the preparation of the financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to the periods presented unless otherwise stated.

(a) Reporting period
The financial statements are reported for the twelve months from 1 January to 31 December 2023.

(b) Basis of measurement
The financial statements are prepared on the basis of historical costs and do not take into account changing money values or current valuation of non-current assets.

The concepts of accrual method and going concern basis of accounting are applied. The Finance and Resources Committee and officers of the University are of the opinion that the basis for preparation of the accounts is appropriate and that the University will be able to continue its normal operations in the next 12 months. The Committee and the officers resolved that the classification and carrying amounts of assets and liabilities included in these accounts are appropriate.

The University has not early adopted any standards, interpretations or amendments that have been issued that are not yet effective.

(c) Functional and presentation currency
The financial statements are presented in Fiji dollars which is the University’s functional currency and rounded to the nearest dollar. Foreign currency amounts in respect of all overseas regional campuses of the University have been converted to Fiji dollars based on note 2(j)(i).

(d) Statement of compliance
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards (“IFRS”) and their interpretations issued by the International Accounting Standards Board (“IASB”).

(e) New standards adopted by the University
There are no new or amended standards or interpretations that have been released and not yet adopted that are expected to have a significant impact on the University.
### Revenue recognition (continued)

Revenue is measured based on the consideration specified in a contract with a customer. The University recognises revenue when it transfers control over a product or service to a customer. Revenue is presented net of value added tax, rebates and discounts.

Revenue is recognised in the financial statements for the major activities as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Revenue type</th>
<th>Nature, timing of satisfaction of performance obligations and significant payment terms (if any)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government contributions</td>
<td>The University treats operating grants received from government contributions as revenue in the year of receipt or when entitlement to the grant is established. Government grants in respect of capital expenditure are recognised initially as deferred revenue when there is reasonable assurance that it will be received and the University will comply with the conditions associated with the grant. It is then recognised in profit or loss as income on a systematic basis over the useful life of the acquired asset. Revenue is measured at the transaction prices (government grants) agreed under the government grants agreements.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student tuition fees</td>
<td>This consists of tuition fees for various courses offered by the University. The fees are dependent on the type of the courses and the level of study. The University recognises student tuition fees as income over the course of a semester during which tuition services are provided. Revenue is measured at the transaction prices as per University fees manual. Payment term is 30 days.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development assistance

Development assistance received for recurrent funding is recognised on the due date while development assistance received with specific end purposes is recognised as revenue when the conditions attached to the assistance have been met and performance obligation is satisfied. Until those conditions are met, receipt of development assistance funds in advance is accounted for as deferred revenue and recognised as a liability.

Revenue is measured at the transaction prices (grant) agreed under the development assistance agreements.

Commercial activities

Commercial activities represents revenue from book centre, computer shop, residential rentals, fitness centre, bar and ITC car park rentals.

Revenue from commercial operations is recognised at the point of sale for goods, or as the service is performed. Services provided relate to student accommodation and is recognised over the period of the Semester as time passes. An invoice is raised once the sale is completed or services rendered. Revenue is measured at the transaction prices as per the invoice. Payment term is 30 days.

Consultancy

Consultancy revenue is recognised as the output activity specified in the agreement is met. Consultancy services represent revenue earned from provision of professional services and project consultancy by summarised professionals for other organisations.

Revenue is measured at the transaction prices agreed under the consultancy agreement. Payment term is 30 days.

Other income

Other income represents income earned from lab hires, reprint of transcripts, reprint of ID cards and other similar services.

Other income is recognised on receipt except where a department of the University has arranged for a University invoice to be raised to a third party; the revenue associated with these invoices is recognised when the goods/services have been provided.

Revenue is measured at the transaction prices as per University fees manual. Payment term is 30 days.

Rental income

Rental income from operating leases is recognised as the services (rentals) are provided on a straight line basis over the lease term when they fall due and represents income earned from renting out the various properties held by the University, and is stated net of value added tax.

Revenue is measured at the transaction price agreed under the lease agreement. Payment term is 30 days.

Interest income

Interest income represents interest income earned on the term deposits based on the maturity and the interest rate and is recognised as income as it is accrued.

Liabilities also includes fees received in advance for tuition fees to be applied upon next enrolment or overpayments of tuition fees to be refunded.
2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(j) Financial Instruments (continued)

Financial assets (continued)

(ii) Recognition and measurement (continued)

- its contractual terms give rise on specified dates to cash flows that are solely payments of principal and interest on the principal amount outstanding.

Financial assets are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method. The amortised cost is reduced by any impairment losses. Interest income, gains/(losses) arising from derecognition, foreign exchange gains/(losses) and impairment losses are summarised in profit or loss.

(iii) Impairment of financial assets

The University recognises loss allowances for expected credit losses (ECLs) on financial assets measured at amortised cost.

The University measures loss allowances at an amount equal to lifetime ECL, except for cash and cash equivalents and investment financial assets for which credit risk (i.e. the risk of default occurring over the expected life of the financial instrument) has not increased significantly since initial recognition are measured as 12-month ECL.

Loss allowances for trade and other receivables are always measured at an amount equal to lifetime ECL.

When determining whether the credit risk of a financial asset has increased significantly since initial recognition and when estimating ECL, the University considers reasonable and supportable information that is relevant and available without undue cost or effort. This includes both quantitative and qualitative information and analysis, based on the University’s historical experience and informed credit assessment and including forward-looking information.

The University assumes that the credit risk on a financial asset has increased significantly if it is more than 30 days past due.

The University considers a financial asset to be in default when:

- the borrower is unlikely to pay its credit obligations to the University in full, without recourse by the University to actions such as realising security (if any is held); or
- the financial asset is more than 90 days past due.

The University considers a financial instrument to have low credit risk when its credit risk rating is equivalent to the globally understood definition of ‘investment grade’. The University considers this to be B3 or higher per rating agency Moody’s or BBB – or higher per rating agency Standard & Poor’s.

Lifetime ECLs are the ECLs that result from all possible default events over the expected life of a financial instrument; 12-month ECLs are the portion of ECLs that result from default events that are possible within the 12 months after the reporting date (or a shorter period if the expected life of the instrument is less than 12 months).

The maximum period considered when estimating ECLs is the maximum contractual period over which the University is exposed to credit risk.
2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(j)  Financial Instruments (continued)

Financial assets (continued)

(iii) Impairment of financial assets (continued)

Measurement of ECLs

ECLs are a probability-weighted estimate of credit losses. They are measured as follows:

- financial assets that are not credit-impaired at the reporting date: as the present value of all cash shortfalls (i.e. the difference between the cash flows due to the entity in accordance with the contract and the cash flows that the University expects to receive);
- financial assets that are credit-impaired at the reporting date: as the difference between the gross carrying amount and the present value of estimated future cash flows.

ECLs are discounted at the effective interest rate of the financial asset.

At balance date, the University assesses whether financial assets carried at amortised cost are credit-impaired. A financial asset is ‘credit-impaired’ when one or more events that have a detrimental impact on the estimated future cash flows of the financial asset have occurred.

Evidence that a financial asset is credit-impaired includes the following observable data:

- the borrower is unlikely to pay its credit obligations to the University in full, without recourse by the University to actions such as realising security (if any is held); or
- the financial asset is more than 90 days past due.

Loss allowances for ECL for financial assets measured at amortised cost are presented in the statement of financial position as a deduction from the gross carrying amount of the assets. The related impairment provision (reversal of impairment provision) is presented in a separate line item in the profit or loss.

The gross carrying amount of a financial asset is written off (either partially or in full) to the extent that there is no realistic prospect of recovery. This is generally the case when the University determines that the debtor does not have assets or sources of income that could generate sufficient cash flows to repay the amounts subject to the write-off. However, financial assets that are written off could still be subject to enforcement activities in order to comply with the University’s procedures for recovery of amounts due.

Financial liabilities

(i)  Classification and subsequent measurement

Financial liabilities are classified as subsequently measured at amortised costs, except for:

- Financial liabilities arising from the transfer of financial assets which did not qualify for de-recognition, whereby a financial liability is summarised for the consideration received for the transfer. In subsequent periods, the University summarised any expense incurred on the financial liability; and
- Financial guarantee contracts and loan commitments

(ii)  Financial guarantee contracts and loan commitments

Financial guarantee contracts and loan commitments are measured at fair value at the reporting date. In subsequent periods, the fair values of financial guarantee contracts are re-measured at fair value at each reporting date.

(j)  Financial Instruments (continued)

(ii)  Financial guarantee contracts and loan commitments

Financial guarantee contracts and loan commitments are measured at fair value at the reporting date. In subsequent periods, the fair values of financial guarantee contracts are re-measured at fair value at each reporting date.

(k)  Statement of cash flows

The following are the definitions of the terms used in the statement of cash flows:

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand, deposits held with banks, deposits held at call with banks, other short-term deposits with original terms of three months or less and are subject to an insignificant risk of change in value, and bank overdrafts.

(i)  Operating activities

Operating activities include all transactions and other events that are not investing or financing activities.

(ii)  Investing activities

Investing activities are those relating to the acquisition, holding and disposal of property, plant and equipment and investments. Investments can include securities not falling within the definition of cash and cash equivalents.

(iii)  Financing activities

Financing activities are those that result in changes in the size and composition of the capital structure. This includes both equity and debt not falling within the definition of cash and cash equivalents.

(l)  Short term deposits

Term deposits with fixed or determinable payments and fixed maturities of more than three months up to twelve months are classified short term deposits. After initial measurement, these assets are measured at amortised cost. Interest earned from these assets is recognised on an accrual basis.
2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(m) Trade and other receivables

Trade receivables are recognised initially at fair value and subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method, less allowance for impairment losses.

(n) Inventories

Inventories are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value. Cost is determined on the first-in, first-out basis of valuation. Only inventories which are purchased and controlled centrally have been reported within the financial statements. Consumables purchased by the University for Departmental Use and held under the control of individual departments have been expensed in profit or loss at the time of purchase.

(o) Property, plant and equipment

The policy of the University is not to revalue its property, plant and equipment. In view of the specialised nature and wide geographical distribution of much of the University’s property and equipment, it is considered that the costs of any revaluation to reflect current values would outweigh the benefits to the users of these financial statements.

Items of property, plant and equipment, costing $2,000 or more are recognised as assets except for computers and air conditioners which are capitalised if valued at $1,000 or more. Items of property, plant and equipment costing less than $2,000 and computers and air conditioners less than $1,000 are expensed directly to profit or loss.

(i) Depreciation

Property, plant and equipment, including buildings are recorded at cost and depreciated on a straight line basis over their estimated useful lives commencing from the time the asset is held and ready for use. The estimated useful lives are as follows:

- Used motor vehicles and vessels 5 years.
- New motor vehicles 10 years.
- Buildings 50 years.
- Equipment, furniture and fittings 10 years.
- Freehold land is not depreciated.

The depreciation applicable to donated assets is offset by a transfer from deferred income to profit or loss.

(ii) Deferred income

Property, plant and equipment acquired with the aid of specific grants are capitalised and depreciated in accordance with the above policy, with the related grant being credited to deferred income as a liability and released to profit or loss over the expected useful economic life of the related property, plant and equipment.

(p) Intangible assets

IT software

IT software which is purchased, developed, or implemented is recorded at historical cost and is amortised over its estimated useful life as follows:

- Computer software 5 years

(q) Impairment of non-financial assets

The carrying amounts of the University’s non-financial assets, other than inventories, are reviewed at each reporting date to determine whether there is any indication of impairment. If any such indication exists, then the asset’s recoverable amount is estimated.

The recoverable amount of an asset or cash-generating unit is the greater of its value in use and its fair value less costs to sell. In assessing value in use, the estimated future cash flows are discounted to their present value using a pre-tax discount rate that reflects current market assessments of the time value of money and the risks specific to the asset. For the purpose of impairment testing, assets that cannot be tested individually are grouped together into the smallest group of assets that generates cash inflows from continuing use that are largely independent of the cash inflows of other assets or groups of assets (the “cash-generating unit, or CGU”).

An impairment loss is recognised if the carrying amount of an asset or its CGU exceeds its estimated recoverable amount. Impairment losses are recognised in profit or loss. Impairment losses recognised in respect of CGUs are allocated first to reduce the carrying amount of any goodwill allocated to the units, and then to reduce the carrying amounts of the other assets in the unit (group of units) on a pro rata basis.

(r) Trade creditors and accruals

Liabilities for trade payables and other amounts are carried at amortised cost (inclusive of VAT/CST where applicable) which is the fair value of the consideration to be paid in the future for goods and services received whether or not billed to the University. The University’s repayment term in respect of its creditors is 30 days.
2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(s) Employee benefits

(i) Short term benefits

Provision is made for employee entitlements in respect of salaries and wages, annual leave, severance allowance and superannuation where the University has a legal or contractual obligation and is calculated as the amount unpaid as at reporting date at future expected pay rates. All employee benefit related provisions, except for severance allowance of selected senior managers, are classified as a current liability. Accrued leave is expected to be utilised in the following period.

(ii) Superannuation benefits

The University contributes to a number of defined contribution superannuation schemes. Contributions are made by employees and by the University as a percentage of salary or specified amounts as required by relevant agreements. The cost to the University is charged as an expense to profit or loss. The University's obligation is limited to these contributions.

(iii) Termination benefits

Termination benefits are employee benefits that are payable as a result of an employee’s decision to accept voluntary redundancy in exchange for those benefits. This is recognised as an expense in profit or loss as the obligation arises.

(t) Leases

As a lessee (continued)

The University recognises a right-of-use asset and a lease liability at the lease commencement date. The right-of-use asset is initially measured at cost, which comprises the initial amount of the lease liability adjusted for any lease payments made at or before the commencement date, plus any initial direct costs incurred and an estimate of costs to dismantle and remove the underlying asset or to restore the underlying asset or the site on which it is located, less any lease incentives received.

The right-of-use asset is subsequently depreciated using the straight-line method from the commencement date to the earlier of the end of the useful life of the right-of-use asset or the end of the lease term. The estimated useful lives of right-of-use assets are determined on the same basis as those of property, plant and equipment. In addition, the right-of-use asset is periodically reduced by impairment losses, if any, and adjusted for certain re-measurements of the lease liability.

The lease liability is initially measured at the present value of the lease payments that are not paid at the commencement date, discounted using the interest rate implicit in the lease or, if that rate cannot be readily determined, the University’s incremental borrowing rate. Generally, the University uses its incremental borrowing rate as at 31 December 2023. The incremental borrowing rate is the rate of interest that the University would have to pay to borrow over a similar term, and with a similar security, the funds necessary to obtain an asset of similar value to the right-of-use asset in a similar economic environment.

As a lessor

When the University acts as a lessor, it determines at lease inception whether each lease is a finance lease or an operating lease.
2. SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES (continued)

(t) Leases (continued)

As a lessor (continued)

To classify each lease, the University makes an overall assessment of whether the lease transfers substantially all of the risks and rewards incidental to ownership of the underlying asset. If this is the case, then the lease is a finance lease; if not, then it is an operating lease.

As part of this assessment, the University considers certain indicators such as whether the lease is for the major part of the economic life of the asset.

If an arrangement contains lease and non-lease components, the University applies IFRS 15 to allocate the consideration in the contract.

Lease income from operating leases where the University is a lessor is recognised in rental income on a straight line basis over the lease term. The respective leased assets are included in the statement of financial position based on their nature.

(u) Borrowings

The University classifies non-derivative financial liabilities into borrowings. Such financial liabilities are recognised initially at fair value less any directly attributable transaction costs. Subsequent to initial recognition, these financial liabilities are measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Other financial liabilities comprise loans and borrowings, bank overdrafts, and trade and other payables.

Finance costs comprise interest expense on borrowings. Borrowing costs that are not directly attributable to the acquisition, construction or production of a qualifying asset are recognised in profit or loss using the effective interest method.

(v) Endowment funds

The University has established endowment funds for specific purposes. The capital amount of such funds is maintained at its original nominal value. The revenue generated through the investment of the capital is used in accordance with any conditions imposed by the Council, deed, gift or by the terms of the endowments or bequests. Endowment funds are transferred to profit or loss only when it is no longer required for the purpose for which the fund was originally established.

(w) Income tax

The University is exempt from income tax in accordance with the provision of Section 17 of the Fiji Income Tax Act.

(x) Value Added Tax (VAT)/Goods and Services Tax (GST)

Revenue, expenses and assets are recognised net of the amount of associated VAT/GST, unless VAT/GST incurred is not recoverable from the tax authority. In this case, it is recognised as part of the cost of acquisition of the asset or part of the expense.

Receivables and payables are stated inclusive of the amount of VAT/GST, receivable or payable. The net amount of VAT/GST recoverable from, or payable to, the Tax Authority is included in other receivables or payables in the statement of financial position.

Amounts charged to the provision account are written off when there is no expectation of recovery.
3. FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)

(i) Credit risk (continued)

To measure the expected credit losses, receivables have been grouped based on shared risk characteristics and the days past due. The University uses the ‘net flow rate’ model based on the probability of receivables following the movement of cash outstanding from payment status of current through all delinquency buckets until write off. Loss rates are based on historical credit losses experienced within this year. These rates are then adjusted to reflect current and forward-looking information based on macroeconomic factors and the University’s internal evaluation of receivables over their expected lives.

Trade receivables in relation to contributions due from governments have been assessed individually, and any impairment loss is deemed immaterial due to short term nature and historical lack of default from respective governments.

The following table provides analysis about the exposure to credit risk and expected credit losses for trade and other receivables except contributions due from governments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31 December 2023</th>
<th>31 December 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected</td>
<td>Gross</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>weighted average</td>
<td>carrying</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>loss rate</td>
<td>amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>a. Trade debtors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 90 days</td>
<td>9%</td>
<td>645,377</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 to 180 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>218,683</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>69,992</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>798,582</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1,732,634</td>
<td>1,145,566</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>b. Student debtors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collective Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 90 days</td>
<td>28%</td>
<td>1,047,035</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 to 180 days</td>
<td>98%</td>
<td>3,890,470</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3,003,962</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>19,804,090</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>27,745,557</td>
<td>26,917,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Add Government Sponsored</td>
<td>3,932,936</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less unidentified deposits</td>
<td>(1,047,778)</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>30,630,715</td>
<td>26,917,628</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. **FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)**
   (i) **Credit risk (continued)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31 December 2023</th>
<th>31 December 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected weighted average loss rate</td>
<td>Gross carrying amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>c. Staff debtors</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 90 days</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,853</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 to 180 days</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>1,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>13,503</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48,238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>67,563</td>
<td>62,725</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

d. **VAT/GST receivable**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31 December 2023</th>
<th>31 December 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected weighted average loss rate</td>
<td>Gross carrying amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 90 days</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>3,591</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 to 180 days</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>9,700</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>48,959</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>3,650,865</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>3,713,115</td>
<td>3,704,674</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
3. FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)

(i) Credit risk (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>31 December 2023</th>
<th>31 December 2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Expected weighted average loss rate</td>
<td>Gross carrying amount</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e. Other debtors</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 90 days</td>
<td>8%</td>
<td>5,232,384</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91 to 180 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>203,997</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>181 to 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>162,389</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 365 days</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>2,097,363</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Individual Assessment</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 to 90 days</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>7,696,113</td>
<td>2,907,912</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(ii) Liquidity Risk

Liquidity risk refers to the risk of financial loss to the University as a result of insufficient funds being available to meet its short and long term liabilities. The University has creditors and accruals which are all short term and hence have been classified as current liabilities in the statement of financial position.

The University manages liquidity risk by maintaining adequate cash and cash equivalent balances and borrowing facilities by continuously monitoring forecast and actual cash flows and matching the maturity profiles of financial assets and liabilities.

Subventions within campuses or from the main Laucala campus to other campuses are carried out in order to maintain sufficient cash balances in all campuses for the funding of day-to-day operations.

The table below summarises the maturity profile of the University’s financial liabilities based on contractual undiscounted payments (principal plus any future interest payments).
3. FINANCIAL RISK MANAGEMENT (continued)

(iii) Market risk

Foreign currency risk
Foreign currency risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial commitment, recognised asset or liability will fluctuate due to changes in foreign currency rates. The University’s foreign currency exchange risk arises primarily from cash and cash equivalents, held-to-maturity financial assets, and trade and other receivables balances denominated in foreign currencies and transactions for receipts and payments settled in foreign currencies or with prices dependent on foreign currencies as well as transactions for regional campuses in various currency denominations.

The University manages this risk by maintaining off-shore bank accounts in its efforts to provide a natural hedge against currency exposures.

The following table demonstrates the sensitivity analysis to a reasonably possible change in the Australian dollar (AUD), New Zealand dollar (NZD), Japanese Yen (JPY), Vanuatu Vatu (VUV) and United States dollar (USD) exchange rates on the University’s surplus, with all other variables held constant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase / (decrease) in foreign exchange rates</th>
<th>Effect on surplus ($)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AUD</td>
<td>NZD</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Dec-23 10%</td>
<td>6,194,525</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>31-Dec-22 10%</td>
<td>4,914,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>(6,194,525)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-10%</td>
<td>(4,914,317)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Interest Rate risk
Interest rate risk refers to the risk that the value of a financial instrument or cash flows associated with the instrument will fluctuate due to changes in market interest rates.

The University’s exposure to the changes in market interest rates relates primarily to the investment of surplus cash into a call or held-to-maturity financial assets as well as through utilisation of bank overdrafts and borrowings.

Investment financial assets are either rolled over at maturity at interest rates applicable on roll-over dates, or converted to operational use if the need arises at the time of maturity. Interest on bank overdrafts is subject to changes in market interest rates. All the borrowings of the University are at fixed rates of interest but are exposed to re-pricing due to fair value movements.

Long-term investments are not feasible due to the nature of operations within the University, therefore, avoiding the risk of a cash flow mismatch or a liquidity shortfall.

Lending Facilities - Debt, Refinancing and Granting Security
The University ensures that its borrowing, private financing and partnership arrangements are negotiated, structured, documented and the maturity profile of the raised monies managed, with a view to obtaining competitive and favourable terms in light of market conditions prevailing at the time.

Prior to entering into or negotiating for any agreement to increase lending facilities (including leases) or re-finance the University’s current borrowing arrangements, approval from the Finance and Resources Committee (FRC) must be obtained.

In raising capital finance, those with delegated authority will take account of:

(i) the University’s powers and rules and, in particular the University’s Charter, Statutes, Regulations and Scheme of Financial Delegations;
(ii) any legal or fiscal statutory restrictions; and
(iii) the terms and covenants of borrowing.

The following table demonstrates the sensitivity analysis to a reasonably possible change in the interest rates on the University’s surplus, with all other variables held constant:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Increase/(Decrease) in interest rates</th>
<th>Effect on Surplus</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Financial Assets 1%</td>
<td>263,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Term deposits -1%</td>
<td>(263,199)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial Liabilities 1%</td>
<td>4,279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Borrowings -1%</td>
<td>(4,279)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Government Contributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cook Islands</td>
<td>$137,106</td>
<td>$161,544</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji</td>
<td>$32,304,167</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kiribati</td>
<td>$1,598,966</td>
<td>$1,424,991</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marshall Islands</td>
<td>$309,070</td>
<td>$302,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nauru</td>
<td>$155,449</td>
<td>$164,339</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Niue</td>
<td>$58,789</td>
<td>$64,392</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Samoa</td>
<td>$1,216,741</td>
<td>$1,299,820</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands</td>
<td>$2,806,442</td>
<td>$3,122,333</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tokelau</td>
<td>$23,353</td>
<td>$34,651</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga</td>
<td>$1,588,599</td>
<td>$1,508,755</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tuvalu</td>
<td>$419,470</td>
<td>$428,250</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vanuatu</td>
<td>$3,670,242</td>
<td>$3,323,862</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$44,288,394</td>
<td>$11,835,709</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total government contributions for student and campus grant totalled $44,288,394 (2022: $11,835,709).

## Student Tuition Fees

### By Category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional students</td>
<td>$49,661,143</td>
<td>$59,808,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International students</td>
<td>$1,389,610</td>
<td>$1,444,905</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$50,850,753</td>
<td>$61,253,303</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### By Sponsor

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sponsor</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Private students</td>
<td>$20,788,021</td>
<td>$33,999,168</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private sponsored</td>
<td>$2,261,496</td>
<td>$5,932,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government sponsored</td>
<td>$37,983,463</td>
<td>$33,867,368</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>USP sponsored</td>
<td>$3,185,734</td>
<td>$357,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$64,218,714</td>
<td>$74,155,889</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Development Assistance

### By Source

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>$27,331,236</td>
<td>$25,029,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>$10,981,421</td>
<td>$9,736,451</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European Union</td>
<td>$2,164,191</td>
<td>$5,115,472</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>$1,188,544</td>
<td>$1,561,952</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other partners</td>
<td>$6,953,702</td>
<td>$4,606,020</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$48,619,094</td>
<td>$46,049,847</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 7(a) Commercial Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book centre and computer shop</td>
<td>4,746,758</td>
<td>4,582,027</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residential/Housing rental Income</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Laucala</td>
<td>5,010,177</td>
<td>4,396,439</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Emalus</td>
<td>141,709</td>
<td>188,927</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Alafua</td>
<td>355,388</td>
<td>337,756</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gymnasium and Community Recreation Centre</td>
<td>795,268</td>
<td>805,240</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental Income</td>
<td>213,602</td>
<td>405,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>45,386</td>
<td>42,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>10,254,032</strong></td>
<td><strong>9,505,149</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>11,308,288</strong></td>
<td><strong>10,758,838</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 7(b) Consultancy Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Professional services and project consultancies</td>
<td>1,857,026</td>
<td>1,979,398</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training and teaching</td>
<td>213,602</td>
<td>405,759</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>45,386</td>
<td>42,690</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,924,973</strong></td>
<td><strong>2,542,935</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 8. Other Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Administration cost recovery</td>
<td>725,775</td>
<td>527,898</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course material and text book sales</td>
<td>150,661</td>
<td>195,697</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Faculty and support units’ income</td>
<td>1,928,436</td>
<td>1,397,067</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS domain name registration</td>
<td>192,221</td>
<td>138,255</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laboratory income</td>
<td>1,571,091</td>
<td>1,331,656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Miscellaneous student activities</td>
<td>966,939</td>
<td>1,037,481</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other income</td>
<td>2,367,750</td>
<td>1,540,478</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Publication sales</td>
<td>206,710</td>
<td>377,434</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remeasurement gain on ADB loan</td>
<td>4,590,367</td>
<td>1,707,207</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance proceeds</td>
<td>19,573,400</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>32,212,590</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,253,173</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 9. Release of Deferred Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation charge for the year</td>
<td>14,014,880</td>
<td>13,806,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: charge on items acquired through normal operating activities</td>
<td>(10,061,846)</td>
<td>(9,881,489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release of deferred revenue liability – depreciation</td>
<td><strong>3,953,034</strong></td>
<td><strong>3,925,422</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 10. Personnel Costs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic and professional staff</td>
<td>47,719,300</td>
<td>48,007,660</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate and junior staff</td>
<td>21,908,611</td>
<td>22,301,877</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for annual leave entitlement</td>
<td>(220,407)</td>
<td>(1,542,558)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>2,841,843</td>
<td>3,158,110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>72,690,161</strong></td>
<td><strong>71,925,089</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Staff numbers (including part-time staff) by category

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic and professional</td>
<td>631</td>
<td>627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intermediate and junior staff</td>
<td>797</td>
<td>814</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Senior management</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>1,438</strong></td>
<td><strong>1,451</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annualised taxable emoluments for staff paid $100,000 or more

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$100,000 - $119,999</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$120,000 - $139,999</td>
<td>33</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$140,000 - $159,999</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$160,000 - $179,999</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$180,000 - $199,999</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 - $219,999</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220,000 - $239,999</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$240,000 - $259,999</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$260,000 - $279,999</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$280,000 - $299,999</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $300,000</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>143</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Other Income

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>32,212,590</strong></td>
<td><strong>8,253,173</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
11. OPERATING EXPENSES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost of sales</td>
<td>$4,186,287</td>
<td>$4,940,736</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and related expenses – University related</td>
<td>$2,556,647</td>
<td>$985,845</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel and related expenses – Projects related</td>
<td>$2,828,590</td>
<td>$1,491,462</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student – research related expenses</td>
<td>$7,096,967</td>
<td>$7,480,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student – support related expenses</td>
<td>$7,096,967</td>
<td>$7,480,825</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grounds and maintenance</td>
<td>$5,609,597</td>
<td>$7,477,628</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Consultancy expenses</td>
<td>$4,466,243</td>
<td>$3,979,679</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Utilities</td>
<td>$4,486,778</td>
<td>$3,994,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Telecommunications</td>
<td>$5,578,803</td>
<td>$4,440,132</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Library books</td>
<td>$2,189,434</td>
<td>$2,422,312</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff recruitment and passages</td>
<td>$622,918</td>
<td>$567,058</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing and stationery</td>
<td>$1,212,434</td>
<td>$399,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance premiums</td>
<td>$3,453,485</td>
<td>$3,177,236</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Computer software and hardware</td>
<td>$3,488,129</td>
<td>$2,962,414</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshop expenses</td>
<td>$859,165</td>
<td>$628,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Advertising</td>
<td>$939,702</td>
<td>$810,547</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hospitality / expenditure on meetings</td>
<td>$678,741</td>
<td>$673,810</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teaching materials</td>
<td>$1,594,521</td>
<td>$1,513,517</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical premiums</td>
<td>$2,649,627</td>
<td>$2,490,157</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rent expense – low value and short term leases</td>
<td>$1,543,010</td>
<td>$1,522,042</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment purchase</td>
<td>$875,232</td>
<td>$861,215</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other items of expenses</td>
<td>$3,717,116</td>
<td>$3,799,737</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freight and courier charges</td>
<td>$564,686</td>
<td>$358,969</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic gown written-off (Refer Note 12)</td>
<td>$1,097,997</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Sub-total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$65,811,166</strong></td>
<td><strong>$59,074,403</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Audit Fees:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>External audit - audit of financial statements</td>
<td>$108,202</td>
<td>$80,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>External audit - audit of projects</td>
<td>$43,762</td>
<td>$26,647</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internal audit - audit</td>
<td>$105,000</td>
<td>$105,000</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Honorarium:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Council</td>
<td>$53,563</td>
<td>$53,671</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audit and Risk Committee</td>
<td>$21,736</td>
<td>$33,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finance and Resource Committee</td>
<td>$37,726</td>
<td>$34,369</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total operating expenses** | **$66,181,155** | **$59,407,289**

12. INVENTORIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at 1 January 2022</td>
<td>$1,514,550</td>
<td>$1,142,308</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchases</td>
<td>$2,342,622</td>
<td>$211,650</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of sales / expensed</td>
<td>($2,445,873)</td>
<td>($139,489)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impairment reversal</td>
<td>$280,996</td>
<td>$9,465</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as at December 2022</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,692,295</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,223,934</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Purchases</td>
<td>$2,599,158</td>
<td>$3,447</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cost of sales / expensed</td>
<td>($2,243,878)</td>
<td>($130,977)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impairment charge</td>
<td>$271,038</td>
<td>$4,980</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write-off*</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>($1,097,997)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Balance as at December 2023</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,776,537</strong></td>
<td><strong>$3,132</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* During the year, the University changed its accounting policy with regard to academic gowns and accordingly, gowns was written-off during the year.

Analysis of value of inventories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total cost of inventories</td>
<td>$2,632,321</td>
<td>$3,506,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: provision for obsolescence</td>
<td>($852,652)</td>
<td>($586,994)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost or valuation at year end</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,779,669</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,920,272</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Analysis of goods and publications:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Book centre – inventory</td>
<td>$903,597</td>
<td>$724,057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Convenience store – Laucala</td>
<td>$66,090</td>
<td>$58,944</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Book centre – goods in transit</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>$173,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ITS goods</td>
<td>$193</td>
<td>$193</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional campuses – books</td>
<td>$513,023</td>
<td>$392,199</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional campuses – course materials</td>
<td>$1,005,080</td>
<td>$780,024</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Education</td>
<td>$80,901</td>
<td>$88,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Research Extension &amp; Training Agriculture</td>
<td>$44,166</td>
<td>$40,815</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost or valuation at year end</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,613,030</strong></td>
<td><strong>$2,257,751</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less: provision for obsolescence</td>
<td>($836,493)</td>
<td>($565,456)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Cost or valuation at year end</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,776,537</strong></td>
<td><strong>$1,692,295</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### TRADE AND OTHER RECEIVABLES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(a)</td>
<td>Government contributions</td>
<td>10,334,145</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(b)</td>
<td>Trade debtors</td>
<td>1,732,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(c)</td>
<td>Student debtors</td>
<td>30,630,715</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(d)</td>
<td>Staff debtors</td>
<td>67,563</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(e)</td>
<td>VAT/GST receivable</td>
<td>3,713,115</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13(f)</td>
<td>Other debtors</td>
<td>12,358,974</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less: allowance for impairment losses

| 3(i) | (34,736,506) | (37,738,540) |
|      | 24,100,640  | 8,697,914   |

#### Trade Debtors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alafua campus</td>
<td>60,715</td>
<td>73,043</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emalus campus and book centre</td>
<td>146,430</td>
<td>87,893</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tonga campus (IOE)</td>
<td>1,650</td>
<td>87,881</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Laucala campus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>- Commercial</td>
<td>109,684</td>
<td>138,396</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Consultancies, Lab Analysis &amp; Venue Hire</td>
<td>1,414,155</td>
<td>4,157,263</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|       | 1,732,634 | 4,544,476 |

Less: allowance for impairment losses

| 3(i) | (1,143,566) | (2,658,343) |
|      | 589,068    | 1,886,133   |

#### Student Debtors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alafua</td>
<td>1,872,039</td>
<td>2,195,217</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emalus</td>
<td>3,813,997</td>
<td>4,472,436</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laucala</td>
<td>15,662,349</td>
<td>15,691,369</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other regional campuses</td>
<td>10,330,108</td>
<td>11,874,490</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less unidentified credits

| 3(i) | (1,047,778) | (6,146,954) |

|       | 30,630,715 | 28,086,554 |

Less: allowance for impairment losses

| 3(i) | (26,917,628) | (27,388,520) |

|       | 3,713,087 | 698,038    |

#### Staff Debtors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Regional campuses</td>
<td>67,563</td>
<td>31,014</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less: allowance for impairment losses

| 3(i) | (62,725) | (21,542) |

|       | 4,838 | 9,472   |

#### VAT/GST receivable

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alafua book centre</td>
<td>1,012,757</td>
<td>950,507</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laucala book centre</td>
<td>2,700,358</td>
<td>2,873,047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Less: allowance for impairment losses

| 3(i) | (3,704,674) | (3,805,072) |

|       | 8,441 | 18,482  |

#### Other debtors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Notes</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance partners (projects)</td>
<td>3,460,176</td>
<td>4,311,066</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance partners (recurrent)</td>
<td>4,662,841</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest receivable</td>
<td>1,280,109</td>
<td>254,630</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other debtors (Bonds and Security Deposits)</td>
<td>2,955,848</td>
<td>1,147,931</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

|       | 12,358,974 | 5,713,627 |

Less: allowance for impairment losses

| 3(i) | (2,907,912) | (3,865,063) |

|       | 9,451,061 | 1,848,564 |
14. **PREPAYMENTS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Laucala campus</td>
<td>3,460,685</td>
<td>3,141,669</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Laucala book centre</td>
<td>21,492</td>
<td>27,048</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other regional campus</td>
<td>120,515</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>3,602,692</td>
<td>3,168,717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Prepayments relates to payments done in advance (usually annually) for services to be provided later, such as staff medical insurance, building insurance and software licenses.

15. **CASH AND CASH EQUIVALENTS AND INVESTMENT IN FINANCIAL ASSETS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Cash and cash equivalents</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current accounts</td>
<td>66,189,585</td>
<td>64,226,634</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term deposits (term deposits 3 months or less)</td>
<td>36,113,928</td>
<td>46,119,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cash on hand and petty cash</td>
<td>48,327</td>
<td>45,111</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>102,351,840</td>
<td>110,391,127</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Investment in financial assets (term deposits between 3 to 12 months)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>75,776,352</td>
<td>23,476,627</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>178,128,192</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15(a) Where held:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In Fiji</td>
<td>65,749,760</td>
<td>33,839,687</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>With other regional banks</td>
<td>50,813,877</td>
<td>59,711,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In other overseas accounts</td>
<td>61,564,555</td>
<td>40,313,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>178,128,192</td>
<td>133,864,754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15(b) The following term deposits are denominated in the following currencies but stated in Fijian dollars:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Currency</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Fijian dollars</td>
<td>31,880,506</td>
<td>4,284,931</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australian dollars</td>
<td>61,945,257</td>
<td>49,119,382</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand dollars</td>
<td>50,813,877</td>
<td>59,711,226</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>United States dollars</td>
<td>4,584,597</td>
<td>4,480,600</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japanese yen</td>
<td>1,853,409</td>
<td>2,798,103</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tongan Pa’anga</td>
<td>15,430</td>
<td>15,189</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>111,890,281</td>
<td>69,593,009</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

15(c) Comprising:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>University fund</td>
<td>131,079,416</td>
<td>91,459,593</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance (projects) unexpended</td>
<td>41,202,800</td>
<td>36,589,717</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Endowment funds</td>
<td>5,845,976</td>
<td>5,815,444</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>178,128,192</td>
<td>133,864,754</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development assistance (projects) and Endowment funds are restricted and are not available for the University’s recurrent expenditure.

16. **Reconciliation of net cash from operating activities to the statement of profit or loss and other comprehensive income**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Surplus for the year</td>
<td>58,629,145</td>
<td>6,385,764</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Adjustments to income and expenditure:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Release of deferred revenue</td>
<td>(3,953,034)</td>
<td>(3,925,422)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation and amortisation</td>
<td>14,014,880</td>
<td>13,806,911</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Impairment on trade and other receivables</td>
<td>(3,002,034)</td>
<td>5,454,450</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Provision for leave entitlement</td>
<td>(220,407)</td>
<td>(1,542,558)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Write down / (impairment reversal) of inventories</td>
<td>266,058</td>
<td>(292,479)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net cash from operating activities before changes in assets and liabilities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>65,734,608</td>
<td>19,886,666</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in inventories:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>874,544</td>
<td>34,000</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in accounts receivable:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(12,400,692)</td>
<td>10,948,975</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in prepayments:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(433,974)</td>
<td>(938,783)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in development assistance (projects):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4,613,083</td>
<td>(5,318,062)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in creditors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(2,404,950)</td>
<td>7,357,631</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Change in foreign currency translation reserve:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(272,470)</td>
<td>(1,412,989)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Net cash provided by operating activities:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55,710,148</td>
<td>30,557,438</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### 17. PROPERTY, PLANT AND EQUIPMENT (continued)

**Work in progress**

Work in progress relates to costs for property-related projects where the project has not been completed. The costs will be transferred into respective asset class once all major items of expenditure, other than the payment of retention monies, have been incurred and the asset is put into service.

**Carrying amount of work in progress projects**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Continuing from prior years</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improve campus infrastructure and developments</td>
<td>976,230</td>
<td>850,859</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IT equipment installation</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>107,296</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lab equipment installation</td>
<td>7,593</td>
<td>83,691</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Solomon Islands Campus</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>15,873,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>983,823</td>
<td>16,915,070</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Reconciliation of fixed assets to related accounts**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Carrying amount of property, plant and equipment</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>242,718,303</td>
<td>234,740,114</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Funded by:**

- Development assistance: 92,185,196
- Other contributed equity: 26,953,840
- Carrying amount of properties acquired directly or through loans:
  - Statham Street campus: 3,102,609
  - Services complex: 63,360
  - Residential block: 520,000
  - Student Accommodation (11th Hall): 6,604,096
  - Kiribati Campus: 6,909,117
  - New Solomon Islands Campus: 31,805,856
- Carrying amount of assets funded from operating activities: 74,574,229

**Carrying amount of work in progress projects:**

- **Continuing from prior years:**
  - Improve campus infrastructure and developments: 976,230
  - IT equipment installation: -
  - Lab equipment installation: 7,593
  - Solomon Islands Campus: -
- **Total:** 983,823

- **Reconciliation of fixed assets to related accounts:**
  - Carrying amount of property, plant and equipment: 242,718,303
  - Funded by:
    - Development assistance: 92,185,196
    - Other contributed equity: 26,953,840
    - Carrying amount of properties acquired directly or through loans:
      - Statham Street campus: 3,102,609
      - Services complex: 63,360
      - Residential block: 520,000
      - Student Accommodation (11th Hall): 6,604,096
      - Kiribati Campus: 6,909,117
      - New Solomon Islands Campus: 31,805,856
    - Carrying amount of assets funded from operating activities: 74,574,229
  - **Total:** 242,718,303

*Represents work-in-progress expensed during the year.*
18. INTANGIBLE ASSETS

Cost
Deemed cost at 1 January 2022 $3,726,499
Additions
Deemed cost at 31 December 2022 $3,726,499
Additions $316,200
Deemed cost at 31 December 2023 $4,042,699

Amortisation and impairment
Accumulated amortisation at 1 January 2022 $2,938,573
Amortisation $337,608
Accumulated amortisation at 31 December 2022 $3,276,181
Amortisation $258,819
Accumulated amortisation at 31 December 2023 $3,535,000

Net carrying amount at 1 January 2022 $787,926
Net carrying amount at 31 December 2022 $450,318
Net carrying amount at 31 December 2023 $507,699

19. LEASES

The University leases land and building for its operations and the term of each land and building lease is between five to ninety-nine years. The University also leases photocopiers and printers with lease terms of up to five years.

Information about leases for which the University is a lessee is presented below.

(a) Right-of-use assets

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Land</td>
<td>$207,214</td>
<td>$188,495</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building</td>
<td>$2,974,286</td>
<td>$2,792,036</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equipment</td>
<td>$333,457</td>
<td>$333,457</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$3,514,957</td>
<td>$3,314,388</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(b) Lease Liabilities

Lease liabilities included in the statement of financial position as of period ended consist of:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>$1,581,297</td>
<td>$1,231,841</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-current</td>
<td>$1,494,190</td>
<td>$2,478,486</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total lease liabilities</td>
<td>$3,075,487</td>
<td>$3,710,327</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statement of comprehensive income shows the following amounts relating to leases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Depreciation charge of right-of-use assets</td>
<td>$1,545,539</td>
<td>$1,260,803</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interest expense (included in interest expense)</td>
<td>$247,523</td>
<td>$248,641</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expense relating to short-term leases (included in operating costs)</td>
<td>$1,543,010</td>
<td>$1,522,042</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The statement of cash flows shows the following amount relating to leases:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Repayment of principal lease liabilities</td>
<td>$1,828,820</td>
<td>$1,480,482</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Maturity analysis – contractual undiscounted cash flows

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Not later than one year</td>
<td>$1,263,176</td>
<td>$1,356,569</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later than one year but not later than five years</td>
<td>$1,969,983</td>
<td>$2,647,778</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Later than five years</td>
<td>$821,221</td>
<td>$666,993</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total undiscounted lease commitments</td>
<td>$4,054,380</td>
<td>$4,671,340</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

20. FINANCING FACILITIES

The University has access to overdraft facilities of $5,000,000 (December 2022: $5,000,000) with various banks across the region for which all conditions precedent has been met. As at 31 December 2023: nil (December 2022: nil) was utilised.

Cash at bank earns interest at floating rates based on daily bank deposit rates. The carrying amount of cash and cash equivalents as at 31 December 2023 is $10,235,840 (December 2022: $10,391,127). Investment financial assets as at 31 December 2023 is $75,776,352 (December 2022: $23,473,627).
21. BORROWINGS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Note</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fiji National Provident Fund Loan (FNPF)</td>
<td>21(ii)</td>
<td>3,328,317</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian Development Bank Loan (ADB)</td>
<td>21(i)</td>
<td>25,311,523</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Disclosed in the statement of financial position as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Current</th>
<th>Non-current</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1,401,425</td>
<td>27,238,415</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>683,468</td>
<td>20,708,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>28,639,840</td>
<td>21,392,206</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

21(i) Asian Development Bank Loan

Balance as at 1 January | 17,669,519 | 12,400,696 |
Proceeds from loans and borrowings | 11,766,646 | 6,769,682 |
Repayment of borrowings | (291,432) | (244,412) |
The effect of changes in foreign exchange rates | 145,558 | 47,979 |
Interest expense | 748,962 | 485,829 |
Interest paid | (748,962) | (485,829) |
Balance at 31 December | 25,311,523 | 17,669,519 |

Balance as at 1 January | 3,722,687 | 4,094,411 |
Repayment of borrowings | (394,370) | (371,724) |
Interest expense | 187,395 | 214,376 |
Interest paid | (187,395) | (214,376) |
Balance at 31 December | 3,328,317 | 3,722,687 |

On 19 June 2012, the University entered into a loan agreement with ADB of SDR 2,336,000 to construct the Kiribati Campus. The loan is to be paid off between December 2020 and May 2046 with the applicable interest rate being 1% during the grace period which expired on 1 December 2020 and 1.5% thereafter. In satisfaction of the conditions to effectiveness of this loan agreement, Republic of Kiribati entered into sovereign guarantee agreement with ADB to guarantee the performance of the University's obligations. As of 31 December 2023, SDR 1,982,107 (December 2022: SDR 2,076,215) had been utilised.

On 3 November 2016, the University entered into another loan agreement with ADB of SDR 10,973,000 to construct the Solomon Islands Campus. The loan is to be paid off between December 2024 and June 2048 with the applicable interest rate being 1% during the grace period due to expire on 1 December 2024 and 1.5% thereafter. As of 31 December 2023, SDR 8,671,992 (December 2022: SDR 4,785,301) had been utilised. The University is in compliance with loan covenants.

21(ii) Fiji National Provident Fund Loan

Balance as at 1 January | 3,722,687 | 4,094,411 |
Repayment of borrowings | (394,370) | (371,724) |
Interest expense | 187,395 | 214,376 |
Interest paid | (187,395) | (214,376) |
Balance at 31 December | 3,328,317 | 3,722,687 |

On 19 June 2012, the University entered into a loan agreement with FNPF to construct the 11th Hall for student accommodation at the Laucala Campus. The loan is to be repaid within 15 years of the first drawdown with the interest rate being fixed at 3.5% for 5 years and increased to 5.5% effective from 31 March 2019. However, upon USP's request, on 8 May 2023, FNPF decreased the interest rate from 5.5% to 5.25% per annum fixed for 2 years from 1 May 2023. FNPF further approved amendment to Clause 6.2 to allow for rates to be reset at 2 year intervals instead of 5 year intervals. The revised interest rates will be valid until 30 April 2025. The University is in compliance with loan covenants. Furthermore, the following is held as securities under this loan agreement:

1. First Registered Mortgage and Variation on Mortgage on Crown Lease Number 13441, Lot 2 on S.1483, Muanivatu (pt of) Suva.
2. Insurance cover over the property described under paragraph 1 above, with the Lender’s interest noted thereon.

22. CREDITORS AND ACCRUALS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other creditors and accruals</td>
<td>2,131,787</td>
<td>7,775,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research funds</td>
<td>6,006,626</td>
<td>6,564,275</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Payroll creditors</td>
<td>2,953,357</td>
<td>2,748,365</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student creditors</td>
<td>216,254</td>
<td>289,772</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student fees received in advance</td>
<td>3,930,562</td>
<td>3,185,306</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trade creditors</td>
<td>4,952,629</td>
<td>1,593,047</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Average balance for the year: $20,191,215 (2022: $22,156,546)
23. DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (PROJECTS) UNEXPENDED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development Assistance</td>
<td>29,322,616</td>
<td>29,598,866</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Research income</td>
<td>12,080,184</td>
<td>6,990,851</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>41,202,800</td>
<td>36,589,717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

23(a) DEVELOPMENT ASSISTANCE (PROJECTS) SOURCES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>9,469,860</td>
<td>8,542,649</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NZ</td>
<td>3,899,238</td>
<td>4,601,345</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>EU</td>
<td>5,400,634</td>
<td>3,313,739</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Japan</td>
<td>2,465,199</td>
<td>6,148,998</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others</td>
<td>19,967,869</td>
<td>13,982,986</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>41,202,800</td>
<td>36,589,717</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development assistance (projects) unexpended funds are from development partners and are appropriated for a variety of purposes ranging from research, scholarship, community outreach and capital developments.

24. PROVISIONS

Current

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Provision for annual leave</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at beginning year</td>
<td>2,322,586</td>
<td>3,865,144</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Movement during the year</td>
<td>(220,407)</td>
<td>(1,542,558)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance at end of year</td>
<td>2,102,178</td>
<td>2,322,586</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annual leave liabilities have been classified as current as there is no unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after reporting date.

25. DEFERRED INCOME – DONATED ASSETS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Balance at beginning year</td>
<td>92,061,203</td>
<td>92,758,675</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Additions during the year</td>
<td>4,033,564</td>
<td>3,227,950</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release during the year – depreciation</td>
<td>(3,953,034)</td>
<td>(3,925,422)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Release during the year – disposals</td>
<td>43,463</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Balance at end of year</td>
<td>92,185,196</td>
<td>92,061,203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(i) Disclosed in the statement of financial position as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Current</td>
<td>3,953,034</td>
<td>3,925,422</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-current</td>
<td>88,232,162</td>
<td>88,135,781</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>92,185,196</td>
<td>92,061,203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

26. CAPITAL AND RESERVES

(a) Other contributed equity

The amount reflects the cost of assets donated by member countries in its capacity as the owners of the University.

(b) Foreign currency translation reserve

This reserve represents the resultant exchange gain/loss arising from the translation of all overseas campus balances on consolidation.

27. COMMITMENTS

In addition to the amounts reported in the financial statements, the University has capital commitments of $16,466,204 as at 31 December 2023 (31 December 2022: $7,468,830) for various projects not yet started and asset purchases for which the items had not been received or paid for. This balance has not been recognised as a liability at balance date.

28. CONTINGENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Contingent liabilities</td>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Energy Fiji Ltd - guarantees given</td>
<td>158,857</td>
<td>158,857</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FRCS - customs bond - guarantees given</td>
<td>31,000</td>
<td>31,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government Tender Board</td>
<td>16,598</td>
<td>16,598</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Infrastructure and Transport - guarantees given</td>
<td>743,963</td>
<td>743,963</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ministry of Fisheries and Forest - guarantees given</td>
<td>151,956</td>
<td>151,956</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT on contributions received from Fijian government (1992–2007) (a)</td>
<td>39,802,087</td>
<td>39,802,087</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VAT on Fijian government contributions (1992–2007)</td>
<td>40,904,461</td>
<td>40,904,461</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Insurance claim for Communication Building Fire (b)</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>8,339,732</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>$40,904,461</td>
<td>$48,141,819</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

(a) Fiji Revenue & Customs Service (FRCS) advised in a letter dated June 2007 that the University may be liable to pay VAT on contributions received from the Government of Fiji since 1992. The University had made an effort in 2009 to close the matter with FRCS, but no reply or any formal assessment has been issued by FRCS since the University’s last communication dated 20 October 2009. Accordingly, no provision for liability has been made in the financial statements.

The University claims government contributions on a VAT exclusive basis. In the event that the tax liability is considered probable, the University would make a claim for the shortfall in payment of contributions and recognise a receivable amount to the value of the potential tax liability.

(b) The Communication Building that was destroyed by fire in November 2018 was insured for $20m. $2m was received by the University in 2021 for operations. The final payout of $19.5m (Refer to Note 8) was received in October 2023 from QBE Insurance (Fiji) Limited.
28. CONTINGENT ASSETS AND LIABILITIES (continued)

Legal claim contingency

There are various legal claims and trade disputes pending against the University as at balance date. The University considers these claims, arising in the normal course of business, to be immaterial and mostly spurious except for cases of defamation that may still continue due to the leak of special BDO audit report in the social media. No amounts have been provided in relation to any of these matters as the University or the solicitors at this stage are unable to estimate related costs or settlement value (if applicable).

29. RELATED PARTIES

The University is controlled by 12 member countries comprising Fiji, Tuvalu, Tonga, Solomon Islands, Samoa, Republic of Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Cook Islands, Vanuatu, Kiribati and Tokelau. Details of grant received, grant receivable and grant received in advance during the period is tabulated.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Government contribution income</td>
<td>44,288,394</td>
<td>11,835,709</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Government contribution receivable</td>
<td>10,334,145</td>
<td>4,237,225</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Key management personnel disclosures

(a) Names of responsible persons and senior management team

The following were responsible persons and the senior management team of the University during the period and as at the date of this report.

All members of the University Council were appointed or elected under the provisions of the University Charter. Council members include University employees who may be ex-official members or elected staff members.

(i) University Council Members

- Hon. Dr Hilda C. Heine, Pro-Chancellor & Chair of Council
- Professor Pat Walsh, Deputy Pro-Chancellor & Deputy Chair of Council and Government Representative, New Zealand
- Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor & President
- Hon. Vaine Mokoroa, Minister for Education, Cook Islands
- Hon. Wilbur Heine, Minister for Education, Sports & Training, Marshall Islands
- Hon. Lionel Aingimea, Special Envoy to USP, Nauru
- Hon. Sonya Talagi, Minister of Social Services responsible for Education, Niue
- Hon. Elehi Kelihiano Kalolo, Minister for Education, Tokelau
- Hon. Lanele Tanangada, Minister for Education & Human Resources Development, Solomon Islands

(j) University Council Members (continued)

- Hon. Alexander Teabo, Minister for Education, Kiribati
- Hon. Bruno Leingkone, Minister for Education & Training, Vanuatu
- Hon. Timi Melei, Minister for Education, Youth and Sports, Tuvalu
- Hon. Siaosi ‘Ofa Ki Vahafolau Sovaleni, Prime Minister and Minister for Education & Training, Tonga
- Hon. Seu‘ula Ioane, Minister for Education, Sports & Culture, Samoa
- Mrs Saoleititi Maeva Natacha Betham-Vaai, Chair of the Finance & Resources Committee and Chief Executive Officer, Ministry of Finance, Samoa
- Hon. Aseri Radrodro, Minister for Education, Fiji
- Ms Selina Kureleca, Permanent Secretary for Education, Fiji
- Mr Shiri Counder, Permanent Secretary for Economy, Fiji
- Ms Fay Yee, Government Representative, Fiji
- Professor Steven Ratuva, Government Representative, Fiji
- Professor Caroline McMillen, Government Representative and Interim Chair of the Audit & Risk Committee, Australia
- Mr Henry Puna, Secretary General, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat
- Professor Elisabeth Holland, Senate Representative
- Professor Sushil Kumar, Senate Representative
- Ms Rosalia Fatiaki, USP Staff Rep
- Ms Tarisi Vacala, USP Staff Rep
- Mr Lepani Naqarase, USPSA, Student Rep
- Mr Ishmael Aitorea, USPSA, Student Rep
- Dr Tarcisius Kabutaulaka, Co-opted member, Solomon Islands
- Mr Semi Tukana, Co-opted member, Fiji
ii) Senior management team

Professor Pal Ahluwalia, Vice-Chancellor and President
Dr Giulio Paunga, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Regional Campuses and Global Engagement)
Professor Jito Vanualailai, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Education)
Professor Gurmeet Singh, Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Vice-President (Research and Innovation), Head of School of Business and Management (SBM)
Mr Walter Fraser, Chief Operating Officer – effective 01 January 2023
Dr Nacanieli Rika, Acting Head of School of Accounting, Finance & Economics (SAFE) – ended 26 September 2023
Dr Rup Singh, Acting Head of School of Accounting, Finance & Economics (SAFE) – effective 27 September 2023
Professor Maurizio Cirrincione, Head of School of Information Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Physics (STEMP) – ended 26 August 2023
Professor Bibhya Sharma, Head of School of Information Technology, Engineering, Mathematics & Physics (STEMP) – effective 3 October 2023
Professor Surendra Prasad, Head of School of Agriculture, Geography, Environment, Ocean & Natural Sciences (SAGEONS)
Associate Professor Sandra Tarte, Acting Head of School of Law and Social Sciences (SoLaSS)
Dr Matthew Hayward, Acting Head of School of Pacific Arts, Communication and Education (SPACE) – effective 21 February 2023

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC
NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS - CONTINUED
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER 2023

29. RELATED PARTIES (continued)
Key management personnel disclosures (continued)

(b) Remuneration of Council Members and Senior Management Team

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual remuneration of Council members</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$10,000 - $19,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$20,000 - $29,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Annual remuneration of Senior Management Team</th>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$120,000 - $139,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$140,000 - $159,999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>-</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$160,000 - $179,999</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$180,000 - $199,999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$200,000 - $219,999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$220,000 - $239,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$240,000 - $259,999</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>$260,000 - $279,999</td>
<td>-</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Above $300,000</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Council members paid by the University are in the form of honorarium only.
The above number of Senior Management Team includes those that have either joined or left the University (or Senior Management Team) during the year and their expected total annual remuneration for the respective period exceeds $100,000.
The University is not aware of any material transactions that may have been conducted with Council members of the University.

(c) Key management personnel compensation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>2023</th>
<th>2022</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$</td>
<td>$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Short term employee benefits</td>
<td>2,726,224</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Post-retirement benefits - superannuation</td>
<td>115,619</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2,841,843</td>
<td>3,158,110</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
30. Breakdown of Recurrent and Project Activities

### 31 December 2023

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recurrent</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance</td>
<td>27,742,520</td>
<td>21,436,218</td>
<td>49,178,738</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff expenses</td>
<td>(70,034,718)</td>
<td>(3,835,251)</td>
<td>(73,869,969)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other operating expenses</td>
<td>(55,061,630)</td>
<td>(13,078,079)</td>
<td>(68,139,709)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### 31 December 2022

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Recurrent</th>
<th>Project</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Development assistance</td>
<td>40,718,215</td>
<td>9,416,187</td>
<td>50,134,402</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staff expenses</td>
<td>(67,080,951)</td>
<td>(3,910,082)</td>
<td>(70,991,033)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other operating expenses</td>
<td>(45,724,300)</td>
<td>(9,338,820)</td>
<td>(55,063,120)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

31. Impact of External Eventualities

The region continues to feel the negative economic impacts of COVID-19 which are affecting the University’s revenues from fees, grants and development assistance. The University has developed and is implementing a number of strategies and tactical approaches to respond to these challenges. These are being factored in its current and future plans and are underpinned by four (4) cross-cutting themes: 1. Consolidation; 2. Innovation; 3. Transformation; and 4. Sustainability.

With the change in Fiji Government from December 2022, the grant to the University has been restored from August 2023, and Fiji has also agreed to pay the grant arrears in instalments.

Furthermore, the Emalus campus and USP centres in Vanuatu were closed from 7 March to 13 March 2023 because of Tropical Cyclones Kevin and Judy. The campus had escaped major damage and was re-opened on 14 March 2023.

Despite the economic challenges, the University’s financial position remains strong and the outlook for 2024 is much more optimistic than the last three years. The University therefore continues to adopt the going concern basis in preparing the financial statements. But in an environment of declining revenue from core business and increasing operational cost, the University remains vigilant given the continuing difficult economic environment within which it is operating.

32. Events Subsequent to Period End

There has not arisen in the interval between the end of the period and the date of this report any item, transaction or event of a material and unusual nature likely to affect significantly the operations of the University, the results of those operations or the state of affairs of the University in subsequent periods.