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USPBeat Magazine

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Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Regional Campuses) Dr Esther Williams (3rd from left), Director of APCICT, Dr Hyeun Suk Rhee (4th from left), Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra (centre) with the workshop participants.

STRENGTHENING ICT CAPACITY FOR PACIFIC YOUTHS

A workshop designed to help educators across the Pacific region deliver Information and Communication Technology for Development (ICTD) content to youths across the Pacific region was held from 12 - 13 March, 2012 at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre in Suva, Fiji.

The two-day workshop was jointly organised by the University of the South Pacific (USP) and the Asian and Pacific Training Centre for Information and Communication Technology for Development (APCICT) - a subsidiary body of the Economic and Social Commission for Asia and the Pacific (ESCAP).

Close to 50 participants from the University's regional campuses in the 12 Pacific Island Countries (PICs) including trainers from Fiji's Continuing Education programme, officers from the Public Service of Fiji, and officials from the Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration participated in the 'Primer Series on ICTD for Youth' workshop.

Speaking at the opening of the workshop, the Director of APCICT, Dr Hyeun Suk Rhee welcomed the participants and said that the experiences and networks developed through this workshop will support ongoing efforts to enhance the capacities of the youths in the Pacific.

She explained that the Primer Series programme was developed to help educators fill the gap in ICTD coverage within higher learning institutions for students from both technical and non-technical backgrounds and can be used in a variety of national contexts.

"It is equally important for youths - our

future leaders - to be well prepared and equipped with the knowledge and skills to leverage ICT for development opportunities in the generations to come," she stated.

Expressing her sincere gratitude to USP, Dr Rhee said that the University has been a strong contributor to APCICT's capacity development in the Pacific, particularly as it relates to youths.

"USP participated in many of the consultative meetings and workshops leading up to the development of the Primer Series, providing much valuable feedback and contributing important insights from the Pacific perspective," she added.

The Primer Series which is part of APCICT's flagship 'Turning Today's Youth into Tomorrow's Leaders Programme', aims to expand coverage of ICT for development content in university curricula and provides a tool to help educators deliver ICTD capacity building education in institutions of higher learning. APCICT and USP will collaborate to implement the content in campuses throughout the Pacific.

"Providing youths in the Pacific region with the ICT knowledge and skills necessary to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future is a top priority for USP. The Primer Series is a valuable resource that will help educators fulfill this important objective," said the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra.

He said USP was an appropriate venue for the workshop as it represents a pocket of excellence in ICTs with the widest capacity and reach in the region in the area of ICTs.

Emphasising the importance of ICTs,

Professor Chandra said that PICs need to take advantage of the opportunities presented by the globalised knowledge society. He described ICT as a tool to help overcome the tyranny of distance and problems of small scale and isolation.

While the Pacific has the capacity to come to terms with new technologies, the Vice-Chancellor pointed out that the region is lagging behind in making use of technologies.

This, Professor Chandra attributed to the lack of significant awareness amongst leaders about the opportunities of ICTs as well as the risks and the costs of inaction and slow action in absorbing and adapting to ICTs.

A partnership agreement between USP and APCICT was also signed during the workshop. Through this new partnership, both organisations plan to lay a new foundation towards enabling PICs to achieve its national development goals through ICTs.

Dr Rhee said that APCICT was pleased to be partnering with USP in its efforts to develop ICTs for development capacities for the Pacific's next generation of leaders.

Like Dr Rhee, Professor Chandra was keen to work with APCICT in the future. He said that the partnership reflects the commitment of both organisations to work in the interest of the people of the Pacific.

During the workshop, participants developed an understanding of the content and conceptual framework of the Primer Series and exchanged experiences and knowledge among the trainers from different institutions.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams presents a gift to the President of the Congress of New Caledonia, H.E. Mr Rock Wamytan, during his visit to USP.

NEW CALEDONIA'S CONGRESS PRESIDENT VISITS USP

The President of the Congress of New Caledonia, His Excellency Mr Rock Wamytan, paid a courtesy call to the University of the South Pacific on 1 March, 2012.

The visit was part of an official trip by H.E. Mr Wamytan and his delegation to Fiji.

During his meeting with the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Williams, H.E. Mr Wamytan expressed his delight at the opportunity to visit the University to explore areas of cooperation between USP and the University of New Caledonia (UNC).

This, according to H.E. Mr Wamytan, will give students from New Caledonia the opportunity to gain exposure and study outside the country. He added that USP, as the premier institution of higher education in the region, was an ideal choice as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) already exists between the two universities.

"We want to utilise the opportunities available in the region," he said.

Welcoming H.E. Mr Wamytan, to the Laucala Campus Suva, Dr Williams stated that the University was delighted by his visit.

In her response, Dr Williams assured H.E. Mr Wamytan that the existing MOU can be expanded to incorporate other areas of interest.

Dr Williams said that USP could offer courses through Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) mode for interested students in New Caledonia. She further elaborated that this can be done with bilingual students who speak and understand both English and French languages.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor highlighted the University's plans to build USP centres in other countries in the region that are not USP member countries. She added that in the future, New Caledonia can be considered as a possible venue.

H.E. Mr Wamytan was enthusiastic about the possibility of research and staff and student exchange partnerships between USP and UNC. He agreed to work with USP to make contact with the relevant authorities in New Caledonia to explore mutual areas of interest and to find the best way to utilise the opportunities made available by USP.

H.E. Mr Wamytan returned to New Caledonia on March 3.

REGIONAL CAMPUS DIRECTORS' FORUM



The heads of regional campuses of the University of the South Pacific gathered at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre in Suva for their annual meeting from 13 - 16 March, 2012.

The four-day forum saw discussions on major themes like learning and teaching; outreach and community engagement; and administration.

The Directors of the 14 regional campuses located in 12 Pacific Island Countries, senior University staff members and the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra were welcomed by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams.

Dr Williams chaired the discussions which largely focused on the new developments that will be taking place at the University over the next couple of years.

In his opening address, Professor Chandra said that one of the main areas highlighted in the University's new Strategic Plan is the further development of regional campuses.

This will look at the model of managing regional campuses and how to further empower Directors of regional campuses within the set accountabilities and frameworks, the Vice-Chancellor explained.

Professor Chandra urged the Directors of the regional campuses to take more accountability in knowing about their campuses.

He emphasised the need to strengthen linkages with societies in which these campuses operate and added that the campuses should be better able to respond to the needs of governments of member countries.

The Directors were encouraged by Professor Chandra to improve in the area of reporting to countries in a way that demonstrates quality and value.

"We do a lot of important things but we do not report it. We need to build a culture of continuous feedback and improvement," he stated.

During the meeting, a review of the recommended actions and an update on the outcomes of the 2011 forum was presented. This was followed by a detailed discussion on the academic plans of the regional campuses.



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams with the Directors and staff of USP's regional campuses.



USP TEAM VISITS CHINA

Standing: left – right): Lecturer at USPCI, Ms Li Haiyan, BUPT Director of the International Office, Mr Fang Dongbo, USP Director of Information Technology Services, Mr Kisione Finau, USP Dean of FALE, Dr Akanisi Kedrayate, Local Director of USPCI, Ms Sin Joan Yee, Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra, BUPT Vice-President, Professor Ren Xiaomin, BUPT Dean of the School of Humanities, Professor Li Yuxiao, USP Director of Research, Dr Jito Vanualailai, USP Head of the School of Language, Arts and Media, Professor Sudesh Mishra, Chairman of the School of Humanities Board, Mr Hu Qibin and the Chinese Director of the USPCI, Professor Li Denggui.

A delegation from the University of the South Pacific led by the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra, successfully completed a visit to China from 25 February to 2 March 2012.

During the week-long visit, the delegation met with representatives from the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT); Hanban - the Confucius Institute Headquarters; and the China Agricultural University (CAU).

The eight-member USP team included the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, Law and Education, Dr Akanisi Kedrayate; Head of the School of Language, Arts and Media, Professor Sudesh Mishra; Director of Research, Dr Jito Vanualailai; Director of Information Technology Services, Mr Kisione Finau; Chinese Director of the USP Confucius Institute (USPCI), Professor Li Denggui; Local Director of USPCI, Ms Sin Joan Yee; lecturer at USPCI, Ms Li Haiyan; and Mrs Dharma Chandra.

On 26 February, the delegation was formally welcomed by the Chairman of the BUPT University Board, Mr Wang Yajie to the University. The team was given a tour of the campus.

This was followed by the first meeting between the Board of Advisors of USPCI. The visit to BUPT was to formalise the establishment of the Confucius Institute at USP and to explore further areas of cooperation.

During the meeting, Professor Ren Xiaomin, the Vice-President of BUPT, expressed his University's support in making USPCI "the best Confucius Institute in the world."

Similar views were shared by Professor Chandra who said that USPCI was extremely important for USP. He was pleased with its

establishment and especially with the strong response from the community for the learning and teaching of the Chinese language.

Professor Chandra also met the BUPT President, Professor Fang Binxing who reiterated BUPT's strong support for USPCI.

He said that BUPT is pleased to enter into other areas of cooperation such as scientific research cooperation, staff and student exchanges and summer camps with USP.

Professor Fang Binxing said that BUPT's graduates boast the top employment rate among Chinese universities and most of them are employed by famous IT companies at home and abroad.

Professor Chandra thanked Professor Fang Binxing for BUPT's generosity and pledged to promote co-operation between the two institutions.

BUPT and USP also agreed to further collaborate in areas of research such as networking and database creations and to facilitate staff and student exchange programmes.

BUPT has offered two full-expense scholarships to USP from next year, and further three tuition-only scholarships as a concrete gesture of goodwill and cooperation.

A similar meeting was held with Hanban officials at the Confucius Institute Headquarters on 27 February where Professor Chandra made a video presentation on USP and the inauguration of the first conversational Mandarin course.

He said that the response to the first conversational Mandarin course was very good.

The Director-General of Hanban, Madam Xu Lin, assured the University delegation that

Hanban would do its best to support USPCI and will find more teachers if they are needed. She also promised to remit the establishment grant and the 2012 grant soon.

It was proposed during the meeting that the Chinese Government fund a building at USP for the Confucius Institute. The idea was supported by Madam Xu who agreed to initiate the negotiations. She also made available two scholarships for the training of local Mandarin teachers for USPCI.

On their visit to the China Agricultural University (CAU), the USP team met with CAU's Vice-President, Professor Wang Tao.

CAU has partnerships with more than 300 universities in the USA and Europe. Founded in 1905, CAU ranks amongst the top 20 universities in China.

Professor Chandra expressed his intention to explore areas of collaboration with CAU which was supported by Professor Wang.

Professor Wang noted that the visit was the first step in building up a friendship and looked forward to building up an understanding that will lead to a Memorandum of Understanding between the two universities in the future.

During the trip, the USP team also paid a visit to the Fiji Embassy in Beijing.

Commenting on the trip to China, Professor Chandra said that BUPT had exceptionally good arrangements made for the visit and he was very pleased with BUPT's genuine desire to collaborate with USP.

"We have much to learn from a fine university like BUPT. All members of the delegation were very impressed by BUPT's standing, the quality of its learning environment and infrastructure and by the efficiency of their staff," said Professor Chandra.

LAUNCH OF WORLD DEVELOPMENT REPORT 2012 ON GENDER EQUALITY & DEVELOPMENT

(Left): The Minister Counsellor of AusAID, Mr John Davidson at the launch.

(Right): World Bank representatives, Ms Katie Patrick, Ms Ana Maria Munoz Boudet and Mr Andrew Mason with Dr Priya Chatter.

Gender equality can increase productivity, improve development outcomes for the future generations, and make institutions more representative—it is a core development objective and is the right thing to do.

These were the sentiments shared by leading World Bank experts during the launch of the 'World Development Report 2012 on Gender Equality and Development' and the 'East Asia Pacific Gender Companion Study' at the University of the South Pacific's Laucala Campus on 27 March.

The launch was held in partnership between the Faculty of Arts, Law and Education (FALE), the World Bank and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID). The publication was officially launched by the Minister Counsellor of AusAID, Mr John Davidson.

Key findings from both the studies were presented by Ms Ana Maria Munoz Boudet, Gender Specialist and core team member of the WDR 2012, Mr Andrew Mason, lead economist and Regional Gender Coordinator for World Bank's East Asia and Pacific Region, and Dr Priya Chatter, Gender Studies Coordinator at USP and the lead researcher for Fiji based fieldwork informing WDR 2012.

The new report highlights that improvements in gender equality have been made across East Asia and the Pacific, but disparities still remain among a number of important areas. The report also states that promoting gender equality, in economic opportunities and in voice in society promotes better development outcomes, including higher productivity, increased growth and higher poverty reduction.

In his address, Mr Davidson pointed out that the Australian Government is committed to remain firm, consistent and a practical supporter towards gender equality.

He said that the report and companion piece present an analysis of gender equality issues, progress to date, and recommend priorities for domestic policy action to close gender gaps in the region.

"The work of the World Bank and analytical reports such as the WDR 2012 provide the evidence base and policy recommendations to guide our work in this critical area of development."

"AusAID played a large part in funding the report and commends the work done by the World Bank and USP for hosting the launch of the WDR 2012," the Minister Counsellor added.

The Associate Dean of FALE, Dr Bruce Yeates in his opening remarks, stated that the launch of the World Bank's WDR 2012 was hugely significant given its focus on gender equality and women's empowerment.

"This year, the theme of the World Bank's flagship publication is gender equality and the report presents global findings on the role of gender equality in development in general and economic development in particular," Dr Yeates said.

He outlined that the evidence in the WDR 2012 shows that improvements in opportunities for women and girls will not happen automatically with economic growth and that strong and targeted public action is critical.

He added that the report offers how greater gender equality can boost productivity and make a country more prosperous.

The report also highlights four priority areas for policy action in going forward which are; reducing female mortality and closing education gaps where they remain; improving access to economic opportunities for women; increasing women's voice and agency in the household and society; and limiting the reproduction of gender in equality across

generation.

As the leading regional institution in the Pacific, USP envisions to be fulfilling three of the priority areas through making education accessible to girls and women in the Pacific region, Dr Yeates elaborated.

"The WDR 2012 can have a significant impact on development thinking and practice at the national, regional and international levels and must be translated into a concrete implementation plan that results in meaningful development outcomes for women and girls," he stated.

Dr Chatter head of the Fiji based research for the WDR 2012, presented on the findings of qualitative assessment in Fiji.

She shared that the WDR 2012 was an important contribution in the study of gender, development and gender justice by pulling together new and existing evidence.

Dr Chatter highlighted that across six communities in the study gender gap in education is not large, but still affected by traditional gender norms on mobility of girls in rural settings.

In concluding, Dr Chatter said that "eradication of inequality will require shifts in power relationships, social norms and values, rather than simply institutional fixes such as new laws and regulations.

She added that the Gender Studies programme USP helps solidify intellectual support for important shifts in "smart" development thinking towards gender equality in the Pacific.

A panel discussion on the theme "Towards Gender Equality in the Pacific" was also held following the launch with representatives from the UN Women, AusAID and Fiji Women's Rights Movement (FWRM) as panellists.

ALUMNI PROFILE | SHOBNA CHANEL



What is your home country?

Fiji.

What programme did you graduate in and in which year?

MBA - 2011.

Who is your favorite lecturer and why?

Tough question, hard to pick who was the favorite because I enjoyed all my lecturers and their different styles and techniques of teaching.

What was your most memorable moment as a student?

My graduation day of course!

What is your funniest moment as a student?

When my accounting lecturer, Mesake Nawari asked me a question on my first day in class. I guessed the answer and it was correct. He probably thought I was a wiz in that subject (I definitely wasn't – he found this out later).

What was your greatest achievement while studying at USP?

Being able to successfully manage my time with a full time job at

Immigration New Zealand, teaching dance and an intensive MBA programme.

How do you think USP helped you in your career?

It has provided me with one of the best MBA programs in the region which is internationally recognised and accredited. USP also has a very high caliber of lecturers. I have gained new skills from highly qualified professionals which has taken me to another level in my career. I am also able to apply the knowledge gained from my studies to my current role as Technical Advisor with INZ.

What inspires you and why?

Hard working, independent, honest and good human beings inspire me the most as people with these qualities encourage my career/personal development as good role models.

After graduating from USP, what has been your greatest achievement?

I am able to apply and impart the knowledge that I have gained from my studies to the practical affairs of my current role. It has empowered me to deliver my tasks more confidently and efficiently.

Your advice to current and future USP students?

Work hard and keep on working hard! Education is something that can never be snatched from you. You will definitely reap the benefits later. Treat your university life as a challenge!



Ms Rosalyn Morgan, AusAID's Senior Program Manager, Regional Education addresses ARDS students during the welcome meeting.



The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra with the Acting Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, Ms Judith Robinson and the Counsellor, Regional AusAID, Ms Romaine Kwesius.

UNIVERSITY FAREWELLS AUSTRALIAN DIPLOMATS

A dinner function was held by the University of the South Pacific to farewell the Acting Australian High Commissioner to Fiji, Ms Judith Robinson and the Counsellor, Regional AusAID, Ms Romaine Kwesius.

The farewell dinner was hosted by the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra at his residence on 23 March, 2012.

Speaking at the farewell, Professor Chandra said that the function was to honour and thank Ms Robinson and Ms Kwesius for their support towards the University.

He said that during Ms Robinson's term in Fiji, the University received unprecedented support.

"We can celebrate our friendship and ever since the University had been established, both Australia and New Zealand have been core development partners and that support has never wavered despite the many challenges we have had in the past," he added.

Highlighting the strong relationship shared by USP and Australia, the Vice-Chancellor explained that this was a "cutting edge partnership" in the sense that the partnership has moved away from project support to very significant core support for the University's budget and support for its Strategic Plan.

Similar views were shared by Ms Robinson, who said that Australia and USP have had very close working relationship.

This, she described as one of the most important working relationships in Fiji.

"Australia has been absolutely certain all along that USP is the premier tertiary institution in the Pacific and is tremendously important for the region. It is the best University in the region because USP provides an opportunity for people in the Pacific to learn together and to do certain things in a regional way," she added.

Ms Robinson also highlighted that USP is a demonstration of regional integration and cooperation.

Professor Chandra wished Ms Robinson and Ms Kwesius well in their future endeavors.

WELCOME MEETING OF AUSTRALIAN REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT SCHOLARSHIPS STUDENTS

New and existing students of the University of the South Pacific studying on Australian Regional Development Scholarships (ARDS) were welcomed for the 2012 academic year at the University.

Around 200 students gathered for the event hosted by the University's Regional Scholarship Team (RST) at the AusAID Lecture Theatre located at the Laucala Campus in Suva on 8 March, 2012.

The RST office was established as a result of a contract which was signed between USP and the Australian Agency for International Development (AusAID) to provide services to students from the University's 12 member countries who study under the ARDS funding.

Speaking to ARDS students, the Director of Development, Marketing and Communications, Mr Jaindra Karan welcomed the students to the new academic year and thanked the continuing students for their efforts and good results last year.

Mr Karan, who is responsible for the RST office, reminded students of their purpose of coming to USP which is to achieve success. He urged them to work hard to achieve quality grades in their studies.

"USP is committed to providing an academic environment in which students are encouraged to reach high-levels of intellectual achievement and fully realise and utilise their potentials," he highlighted.

Mr Karan acknowledged the support of the Government of Australia and AusAID towards USP and in particular for providing scholarships to students in the region.

He pointed out that USP provides a lot of academic and other support services that students need to take advantage of and encouraged students to stay in touch with the RST office and to consult the RST staff for any issues relating to their studies or support.

AusAID representative, Ms Rosalyn Morgan shared similar views. She reiterated to students that they are at USP to study and get a qualification.

"We see in you the potential to do very well and eventually to go back and help in the development of your countries," she said.

While it is important to enjoy university life, Ms Morgan, AusAID's Senior Program Manager for Regional Education, advised students that it is important they learn to balance their studies with other extracurricular activities.

"Whatever you put in, you will get out. Nothing can be achieved without putting an effort," she added.

Ms Morgan thanked the efforts put in by the RST office towards assisting ARDS students and acknowledged the long and special relationship shared by USP and Australia.

RST staff briefed ARDS students on important matters pertaining to their studies at USP and wished them well in their studies.

Mr Laiasia Wainikesa, the Student Counsellor from the Counselling Centre at USP gave advice to students on general matters concerning stress and anxiety, relationship difficulties, changes in environment, managing time and responsible sexual behaviour.

The vote of thanks was given by the ARDS student representative, Mr John Havea. Mr Havea who hails from Tonga, is a final year student at USP. On behalf of the students, he thanked AusAID for providing scholarships and also acknowledged the support provided by USP through the RST office. He concluded by encouraging his fellow students to use the opportunity given to them and work hard to achieve good results.

Resident Representative of JICA to Fiji, Mr Shumon Yoshiara hands over the new equipments to the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams. *(Insert photo):* Part of the donation were five outboard engines for research vessels.



JICA HANDS OVER NEW EQUIPMENT FOR MARINE STUDIES

The University of the South Pacific's School of Marine Studies received a major boost when it was presented with equipment worth approximately FJ\$500,000 by the Japan International Cooperation Agency's (JICA) Fiji Office on 28 March, 2012.

This official hand over of equipment and upgraded facilities was part of JICA's follow-up assistance programme and technical cooperation project for Marine Studies at USP.

The hand over was made by the Resident Representative of JICA to Fiji, Mr Shumon Yoshiara.

The assistance from the Government of Japan and JICA follows a long standing relationship with USP and its Marine Studies department. It was through the Japanese Grant Aid that the research facilities at the School of Marine Studies was constructed in 1988.

Since then, JICA has continuously dispatched Japanese experts and senior volunteers in the field of marine studies and also assisted University staff and students exchange to Japan for further studies, trainings and research.

In handing over the equipments and upgraded facilities, Mr Yoshiara said that, "USP will utilise the donated equipment and upgraded facilities to its maximum level of effectiveness in order to achieve results that will assist in sustaining marine privilege for the future generations of Pacific Islanders."

Mr Yoshiara noted that USP is a hub for research and education in the Pacific and added that Japan and JICA see the University as an important institute in the region as it assists in providing solutions to the current problems of coastal

resource depletion and in outreach programmes.

"The Pacific is a key supplier of marine fisheries resources as well as an important sea route for the transportation of energy and raw materials. As Japan is a fellow island nation, JICA intends to provide cooperation for nation building and regional support that will harness the great natural abundance of the Pacific region and work to overcome the challenges faced by the island nations," he added.

To assist in this quest, JICA has donated research equipments including five outboard engines for research vessels, a farm tractor to upkeep the boats, Fish Aggregating Devices (FAD) for better management of fisheries, and upgraded research facilities and a jetty.

Thanking JICA for its contribution, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams said that USP is pleased to accept the donation from JICA.

She pointed out that JICA experts have been working with the University's students, staff, as well as rural communities to explore viable alternative sources of livelihood and have provided financial support to help pay for these facilities.

"Through its Fisheries expert and senior volunteers in Aquaculture and Post Harvest processing at USP, JICA has been collaborating and assisting with on-going research and development on various aspects of sustainable fisheries for almost a decade," she explained.

"The assistance would greatly help the University's Marine Studies programme in many ways and I would like to thank JICA for their continued support and kind assistance to USP," Dr Williams added.

STUDENT PROFILE | HARRY JASON | BACHELOR OF SCIENCE



What is your home country?

Vanuatu.

Which Campus are you studying at?

Laucala Campus.

Why did you choose to study at USP?

To get top class education and an internationally recognized qualification.

What do you enjoy about "UNI" life?

Meeting people from different cultural backgrounds.

What do you find most difficult or challenging?

Completing assignments on time.

What do you like about your programme of study?

Working in the labs and going on field trips.

What can't you live without on Campus?

My phone, food and friends.

What could improve your studying experience at USP?

More computer trainings on how to do research for assignments.

What is your best survival tip?

Manage your time wisely.

What do you do to relax when you're not studying?

Listening to music and telling stories with friends.

What makes a good lecturer?

Someone who is creative and helpful to students.

Who is your role model or mentor?

My best friend – Zacceaus Tabi.

What career(s) will your course prepare you for?

Science teachers.

What are some challenges facing young people in the Pacific?

Climate change and healthy living.



PUBLICATION SHEDS LIGHT ON PACIFIC MONETARY ECONOMICS

Dr T.K. Jayaraman (left) and the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, Mr Odo Tevi with the new publication titled *Readings in Monetary Economics of the Pacific Island Countries*.

A new publication looking at monetary economics of Pacific Island Countries (PICs) was launched at the University of the South Pacific by the Governor of the Reserve Bank of Vanuatu, Mr Odo Tevi on 20 March 2012.

The book is a collection of contributions on various aspects of monetary economics of the six PICs which have independent currencies. These countries are Fiji, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga and Vanuatu.

Titled, *'Readings in Monetary Economics of the Pacific Island Countries'*, the book was authored by the Associate Professor at the School of Economics at USP, Dr T.K. Jayaraman.

Dr Jayaraman has vast experience in writing on monetary issues since 1998. He published the first volume of his work in 2003 titled: *Issues in Monetary Economics of Pacific Island Countries*. The new publication marks the second volume of his work, which he accomplished on various aspects of monetary economics in the Pacific during the 2004-2011 period.

Speaking at the launch which was held at the Laucala Campus in Suva, Mr Tevi described the book as a welcoming development.

While Pacific Island economies face many economic

challenges, Mr Tevi explained that one of the key issues concerning growth of Pacific Island economies is its sustainability.

"The key to improve and sustain growth in PICs is to continue to adopt sound policy reforms in macroeconomic and structural fronts. Continuous reforms and understanding paradigm shifts in economic development is the key. Currently, we need to also think of how to make use of opportunities offered by emerging economies," he added.

The Governor said that the book is useful in addressing these issues as it is based on findings from sound empirical research.

Mr Tevi is confident that the articles in the publication will stimulate much debate amongst students, academics and policy makers in the region.

"Most of the books written on Monetary Economics are focused mostly on advanced economies and this book is unique in a sense that it is focused on PICs and will be of particular interest especially to those countries that have central banks and also to those that love monetary economics in general," he said.

On the topic of adopting a single currency for PICs, which is further discussed in the book, Mr Tevi stated that for PICs to adopt a single currency is still not suitable, either in the form of adopting the

Australian dollar or creating a new single currency. This was also confirmed in the meeting of Central Bank Governors recently.

The publication argues that in the longer term adopting a single currency can only work if there is significant progress towards closer economic cooperation between PICs as spelled out in Pacific Island Countries Trade Agreement (PICTA) and Pacific Closer Economic Relations (PACER).

Mr Tevi commended USP and Dr Jayaraman for the book and encouraged the University to publish more books on other areas of economics with special focus on the Pacific island economies.

In his address, the Acting Head of the School of Economics, Dr Sunil Kumar said the articles in the publication deal with the role of money, monetary policy formulation and implementation.

"This publication will be a good supplementary text for macroeconomic and monetary economics courses, both for undergraduate and postgraduate students, not just at USP but also at other universities in the region," he pointed out.

Dr Kumar said that the articles in the book are a good mixture of theory, methodology and the empirics of monetary economics. The book also discusses the impacts of the financial crises on island economies.



WORKPLACE LEADERS TRAINED BY USP

USP Lautoka Campus Director, Dr Pramila Devi awards a certificate to one of the participants of the Workplace Leadership Training.

Leaders and managers face enormous challenges to lead their teams towards efficiency, outstanding performance and excellence. Hence, there is a need for leaders who are skilled to effectively handle the most strenuous conditions and challenges at their workplaces and also have a sound relationship with their work teams whilst steering them, and ultimately the organisation they represent, towards excellence.

These were the comments made by the Director of the University of the South Pacific's Lautoka Campus, Dr Pramila Devi at the Workplace Leadership Training Certification ceremony on 3 March, 2012.

Thirty-four people from various work places successfully completed the Workplace Leadership Training which was conducted as part of the Continuing and Community Education (CCE) programme at the Lautoka Campus.

Highlighting the importance of such skill-based leadership trainings, Dr Devi said that there is a need for leaders who are well informed to understand the diversity of their workforce and are able to engage with their teams.

"We need leaders who are able to communicate with the people of the organisation, the customers of the organisation and the public," she stated.

She added that leaders should believe and demonstrate that the people of the organisation are the organisation's greatest asset. Such leaders, according to Dr Devi, will help build diverse organisations with powerful representation at every level.

"We need leaders who have vision, initiative, positive attitude, and are able to coach, build teams and lead and guide their teams in the right direction," she emphasised.

Dr Devi congratulated the participants on their successful completion of the training. She acknowledged the initiative taken towards facilitating the training by the course trainer, Mr Rajendra Singh, and the Lautoka Campus CCE Manager, Mr Hasnukh Lal.

The training covered three components: Staff Welfare and Safety Skills; Human Resource Management; and Leadership and Management Skills. Each component comprised five modules.

Mr Singh was pleased with the positive feedback from the participants and their supervisors concerning the training.

"The participants are now more confident and skilled to deal with situations at workplace such as resolving conflicts and addressing various workplace issues," he said.

While thanking the participants for showing interest towards this training, Mr Lal said that these students were the pioneers of this project. He said that there are requests for more trainings of similar nature.

Senior supervisor for the South Sea Cruises Travel Centre, Ms Adi Ana, who was one of the participants, said the course was very inspiring and interesting. The training had helped her in her personal and professional development.

"I applied things I learnt at the training in my workplace in areas like coaching people, performance reviews and supervisory techniques," said Ms Ana.

She mentioned that she has even recommended the course to her colleagues.

Mr Maciu Bolaitamana, a journalist by profession, said the course was an eye-opener. He said the course had exposed him to techniques of team bonding, employee relations, better decision making skills and many other important leadership methods.

"Leadership is not just about staying up there and giving orders, it is about working effectively and in harmony with your team," he said.

Mr Bolaitamana said leaders need to be aware of issues such as workplace harassment and make policies to effectively address such matters.

Another participant, Mr Naibuka Taukei said the training was quite relevant to his work.

Mr Taukei, who is the Masonry Manager at Standard Concrete in Nadi, said the training had upgraded his leadership skills. He has learnt new skills which he hopes to implement in his personal and professional life.

Mr Taukei also said it was interesting to share ideas and train with people from different backgrounds. He is keen to pursue further trainings/courses with USP in the future.

The training was well received by the participants.



Participants of the Project DIREKT-organised workshop.

ELECTRICITY PROVIDER WILLING TO CONSIDER NET-METERING

The Fiji Electricity Authority (FEA) - the only state owned electricity utility in Fiji - is keen to buy electricity from grid-connected systems through net-metering, and has the legislations in place to do so.

This was revealed by FEA's Chief Information Officer, Mr Anand Nanjangud during the Small Developing Island Renewable Energy Knowledge and Technology Transfer Network-Project DIREKT-organised workshop held at the University of the South Pacific on 16 March 2012.

The workshop focused on the economics, application and legislation relating to renewable energy and was attended by 55 participants from four government departments, three regional agencies, the private sector and members of the public.

Presentations were made by speakers from various organisations including USP, Secretariat of the Pacific Community (SPC), Pacific Power Association (PPA), the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and FEA.

The workshop heard that net-metering policies and legislations were already in place in countries like American Samoa, Cook Islands (Rarotonga) and Palau, with the Federated States of Micronesia (Yap)

in the process of preparing such policies. It was also highlighted that the provision had been highly successful in Rarotonga, which was already reaching the required capacity in the span of two years due to surplus power sales to the grid.

The workshop comes in the wake of the recent launching of a 45 kW Korean Government-funded PV system at USP's Lower Campus in Suva.

According to Head of School of Engineering and Physics at USP, Dr Atul Raturi, this system will provide a demonstration of the feasibility of solar energy as an integral part of Fiji's grid-electricity system. However, issues with the supply of electricity to the grid by such independently-owned systems were still being worked out.

Mr Nanjangud assured the gathering that the utility encouraged and welcomed the prospects of grid-connected solar systems.

He pointed out the USP's system was in fact the second one to be installed in Fiji recently, the first being a 12 kW system installed by FRIEND's Fiji, which was already in operation. But such systems had to undergo careful evaluation before they could be approved. Issues such as the size of the system, location, effects of harmonics on the grid

and the sustainability of the installations have to be ascertained first.

Project DIREKT supervisor, Dr Anirudh Singh said the workshop played a pivotal role in enabling the use of solar energy, and in particular grid-connected solar PV systems in the region.

There were economies of scale that had to be evaluated. Legislation was required in the use of modern technology in the alleviation of the region's fossil fuel dependency. Many stakeholders had been waiting for the establishment of a proper legislative framework for the introduction of solar PV systems into Fiji's grid system.

The workshop also looked at evaluating the economics of the use of solar PV systems, and the steps that would be required to facilitate the installation and use of grid-connected PV systems in Fiji. Participants were told that the cost of energy and payback periods of solar systems came down as the size increased.

USP academic, Dr Sunil Kumar explained that while the solar PV systems might be uneconomical at the present time, the rising price of oil and the steadily decreasing price of solar PV systems would make them cost effect in the future.

CAREERS EXPO SEES GOOD TURNOUT

This was the first time that the expo had been opened for students from other schools as previously it was only held for ISS students.

The Principal of ISS, Ms Anna Marsden said that other schools were invited to participate in the expo as part of the school's service to the community and to give students the opportunity to learn more.

More than 10 high schools were part of the one-day expo.

University representatives from the three faculties - Faculty of Arts, Law and Education; Faculty of Business and Economics; and Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment and other sections including the Student Academic Services and the Marketing and Communications unit were present at the careers expo to provide information on the courses and programmes offered by USP.

Highlighting the importance of careers advice and counseling, Ms Marsden said that choosing a career path is a big decision as a lot of sophisticated job opportunities exist now than it did in the past.

Jeremy Paris, a student who attended the careers expo found it informative.

The form six student of Yat Sen Secondary School in Suva is interested in medicine and hopes to get into the medical profession. He plans to do his foundation year at USP next year before going on to do medicine.

Joshua Uluiviti from ISS said he learnt a lot at the careers expo about the different opportunities available for students like him. He also enjoyed meeting friends from other high schools. Like Jeremy, Joshua is also interested in taking up studies at USP. He is keen on pursuing further studies in marine biology.

Two students from Rishikul Sanatan College, Vivian and Loreena said that were interested in a career in the tourism sector.

"The expo helped us to get relevant information and a better understanding of our career paths," they said.

For both of them, the careers expo was an eye-opener. They said that such opportunities should be used by students to understand the various educational and job opportunities that are on offer.

USP's participation at the careers expo was coordinated by the Marketing and Communications section.



The University of the South Pacific participated in a careers expo for schools in Suva on 8 March, 2012.

Students turned up in numbers for the expo which was organised and held at the International Secondary School (ISS) in Suva. Over 200 students got the opportunity to better understand the career opportunities that await them after they finish high school.