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## USPBeat Magazine

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## OVER 800 GRADUATE FROM USP

A total of 802 students graduated from the University of the South Pacific during its second graduation ceremony of the year which was held at the Vodafone Arena in Suva on 7 September.

This special occasion for students and their families, was attended by members of the USP Council and Senate, USP staff, dignitaries from the private and public sector, members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of regional and international organizations, University community at large and other invited guests.

Students from 18 different nationalities received their awards with some being from non-member states of the University, coming from as far as Bangladesh, Germany, Nigeria, and South Africa.

Forty three percent of the graduates received postgraduate level qualifications, and there were also three PhD graduates - two from the Faculty of Business and Economics and one from the Faculty of Arts, Law and Education.

In congratulating the graduands on their milestone achievement, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra said that

the University was proud of their achievements.

"Today, we have come together to celebrate your achievements. Even though the road may not have been easy, you have stuck through thick and thin and with sacrifice and determination reached your goals," the graduates were told.

Professor Chandra reminded graduates that in order to be successful in life, they must utilize the knowledge acquired to make a positive contribution and have beneficial impact on their respective societies.

"That should be a mark of a USP graduate," he stated.

The Vice-Chancellor pointed out that in a world characterized by globalization and rapid change, employers are looking for graduates with certain high-level skills in problem solving, team work, critical thinking and with a strong sense of work ethics.

"I have no doubt that your USP training has equipped you well to make your mark and that you will continue to promote the USP brand," he added.

Professor Chandra also briefly highlighted some of the University's recent

developments. This included the positive feedback from the University Grants Committee, the development of the new Strategic Plan 2013-2018 which will be submitted to the Council in November, the continued improvements in the University's financial performance, as well as the successful implementation of the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) project.

To further strengthen the learning experience, Professor Chandra said that USP continues to work to upgrade accommodation for on campus staff and students and recruit highly qualified and renowned academic professionals.

He added that much improvement has been made with provision of ICTs and new technologies throughout most of the USP campuses.

Professor Chandra concluded by emphasising to graduates that, "the future is what you make of it and much is expected of you. Make USP proud by your strong, innovative and ethical contributions."

The newly-installed USP Chancellor, Ulo-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Aliko Faipule Kerisiano Kalolo conferred certificates, diplomas and degrees to the graduates.







The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra (centre) with the Dean of the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Professor Shigeo Fujii (right) and the Professor of Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Professor Kaoru Takara (left) at the signing ceremony.

## USP PARTNERS WITH JAPANESE UNIVERSITY

The University of the South Pacific and the Kyoto University from Japan signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) on 8 September 2012, to advance academic cooperation and exchange between the two universities.

The partnership involves the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies (GSGES), and Disaster Prevention Research Institute of the Kyoto University and USP's Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment.

Under the agreement, the institutions will engage in the following activities:

- Exchange of scientific materials, publications and information;
- Exchange of students and faculty members; and
- Joint research and research meetings/symposia.

Kyoto University, which is one of the leading universities in Asia, was represented by delegates from the University led by the Dean of the Graduate School of Global Environmental Studies, Professor Shigeo Fujii at the signing ceremony.

Speaking at the signing, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra spoke of the longstanding and strong relationship between USP and the people of Japan through bilateral arrangements with the governments of USP member countries.

He said that USP and its member countries will greatly benefit from this partnership as GSGES at Kyoto University has expertise in areas such as climate change, energy depletion, resource depletion, loss of biodiversity, environmental degradation and disasters.

"These are major issues which are prevalent in the region and it now gives USP an opportunity to partner with a well established University with an elite team which will harness USP's objective of capacity building and human resource development in the region," he added.

While emphasising the need to have current climate change data for research purposes as this will assist in developing policies for vulnerable communities in the region, the Vice-Chancellor stated that the MOU will provide USP an opportunity to build on its capacity to deliver climate change and environmental research by working closely with Kyoto University.

Professor Fujii and his team were assured by Professor Chandra that USP is committed to working closely with Kyoto University on this MOU.

In response, Professor of Disaster Prevention Research Institute, Professor Kaoru Takara shared that Kyoto University was looking forward to collaborating with USP and to strengthen its partnership.

Both Professor Fujii and Professor Chandra also welcomed any future opportunity to work closely on projects or programmes that will benefit the region.

## ROYAL COUPLE VISITS USP TUALU CAMPUS



The Duchess of Cambridge, Kate Middleton talks with students at the Tuvalu Campus. Standing at the back is the Campus Director, Mr David Manuella.



The Duke and Duchess of Cambridge visited the University of the South Pacific's Tuvalu Campus on Funafuti atoll on 18 September 2012.

The brief visit was part of the royal couple's last stop on their Asia-Pacific tour in Tuvalu, to commemorate the Diamond Jubilee year of Prince William's grandmother, Queen Elizabeth II.

Prince William and his wife, Kate Middleton are the first members of the royal family to visit Tuvalu since the Queen in 1982.

Their visit was expected to draw attention to the effects of rising sea levels in Tuvalu – the fourth-smallest country in the world.

The royal couple was received at the USP Tuvalu campus by the campus Director, Mr David Manuella, who extended a warm welcome to the Duke and Duchess of Cambridge on behalf of the University.

During their time at the campus, the royal couple heard a poem by one of the students highlighting climate change from a youth perspective. The campus also organised displays on climate change for the royal couple.

Students of the Tuvalu campus were excited and eager to meet and talk with the royal couple.

"This was a once in a life-time opportunity for not only the students of the campus but also for the people of Tuvalu to see Prince William and his wife in person," added Mr Manuella.

The visit concluded with presentation of gifts from the campus to the royal couple.

Prince William and his wife spent a night in Tuvalu before flying back to London.



The Duke of Cambridge, Prince William talks to students of the USP Tuvalu campus.



## FORUM DISCUSSES IMPROVEMENTS TO LEARNING AND TEACHING



The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) from the James Cook University (JCU) in Australia, Professor Sally Kift delivers her keynote address at the forum.

Staff and students of the University of the South Pacific gathered for the fourth Vice-Chancellor's Learning and Teaching Forum at the Multi Purpose Theatre located at the University's Laucala Campus in Suva.

The forum, which is held once a year, showcases innovative and successful approaches towards improving learning and teaching practices.

The wide range of themes at this year's forum, held on 10 September, focused on learning and teaching spaces, learning technologies, mLearning and research in learning and teaching.

The participants were welcomed by the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and International), Professor John Bythell, who also acknowledged the presence of the University's new Chancellor, Ulo-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Aliki Faipule Kerisiano Kalolo.

Speaking at the forum, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra emphasised to participants the importance of the meeting.

"We are here to be able to dialogue with experts and to showcase what we do so that we have a collective mission to really improve what matters to our students most, and that is the quality of learning and teaching," he said.

Professor Chandra stated that USP has always had a special mission to use advanced technologies

to promote regionality, access and equity. This, he explained, was the reason behind the heavy investment made towards regional campus improvements and upgrades to the USPNet - a satellite communications network connecting all 12 USP member countries.

He outlined a number of initiatives considered by USP in light of the changing role and nature of universities. Some of these include mLearning and roll-out of tablets, maximum use of open educational resources, building on the social and learning orientation of learners, fixing technology problems, providing full learning support to students and incentives to promote change and higher quality flexible learning and teaching.

The keynote speaker at this year's forum was the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Academic) from the James Cook University (JCU) in Australia, Professor Sally Kift.

Professor Kift is a National Teaching Award winner (Australia, 2003) and National Program Award winner (Australia, 2007).

Prior to her appointment at JCU in May 2012, she was a Professor of Law at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), and also served as the Law Faculty Assistant Dean, Teaching & Learning (2001-2006) and QUT's foundational Director, First Year Experience (2006-2007).

In her address on '*A Transition Pedagogy for First Year Student Success*', Professor Kift stressed that student success was largely determined by the student experience in the first-year.

"Engagement matters and it matters most in the first-year. This is where students start to develop their habits and patterns of study. There is overwhelmingly evidence that the more resources we put in the first-year experience, the more successful our students will be," she explained.

In her presentation, Professor Kift talked about the model for a partnership and whole-of-institution approach for first-year engagement, success and retention.

She outlined factors promoting engagement and inclusion that involved respect and equal time for all students, teacher interest and a sense of belonging to the university.

She concluded by pointing out to USP staff that, "once students come to our institutional doors, the educational conditions in which we place them will frame their higher education experience and dictate retention and success."

The centrepiece of that experience, Professor Kift said, must be intentional, integrated, supportive and inclusive first-year curriculum.

The day-long forum was broadcasted to all regional USP campuses.

## JAPANESE TEAM VISITS USP

The Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Joe Nakano (in garland) and the Ambassador of Japan to Fiji, His Excellency Mr Eiichi Oshima while on tour of the Multi Purpose Theatre accompanied by the Director of ITS, Mr Kisione Finau and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams.



A delegation led by the Parliamentary Vice-Minister for Foreign Affairs of Japan, Mr Joe Nakano and the Ambassador of Japan to Fiji, His Excellency Mr Eiichi Oshima visited the University of the South Pacific on 30 August, 2012.

A special welcome was accorded to the delegation at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, located at the University's main Laucala Campus in Suva.

The team was received by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams including a number of other University staff members.

"We are indeed very happy and appreciative that despite your short stay in Suva, you have allowed some time to visit us and to witness for yourself this very fine Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, which is a magnificent contribution from your Government and the people of Japan to the people of the Pacific," said Dr Williams in her welcoming remarks.

She spoke of the longstanding relationship between USP and Japan and added that historically, the University has benefited greatly from the support of the Government of Japan and its people.

"The Marine Studies complex at the Lower Campus, the USPNET Enhancement, the ICT Human Capacity project and the most recent Kizuna project all bear testament to the strong and growing relationship between Japan and USP and through it to the people of the Pacific Islands."

During the visit, the delegation was given a tour of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre which accommodates

the University's entire Information and Computing Technology facility including remote teaching/learning resources with fully equipped specialist equipments, computer labs, offices, video conference rooms, server rooms plus the state-of-the-art Multi Purpose Theatre.

The centre also houses a JICA Technical Cooperation project on ICT for Human Development and Human Security as well as hosts a number of very important ICT-related regional and international offices.

"We are forever grateful to your Government and the people of Japan for this facility. It is a gift that generations of young people in the Pacific will benefit from for a very long time," Dr Williams said referring to the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor said she was hopeful that Honourable Joe Nakano and his team would take back good memories of their short visit and tour of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre.





The Permanent Secretary to the Office of the Prime Minister in Fiji, Lieutenant Colonel Pio Tikoduadua and the Deputy Director-General of Hanban, Ms Jing Wei unveil the plaque at the opening of the Confucius Institute at USP.

## CONFUCIUS INSTITUTE OPENS IN REGIONAL UNIVERSITY

### USP INSTALLS NEW CHANCELLOR



The new Chancellor, Ulo-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Aliko Faipule Kerisiano Kalolo puts on the gown during his installation at the Graduation Ceremony. He is assisted on stage by the Pro Chancellor, Mr Ikbal Jannif.

A major highlight during the 2012 USP Graduation Ceremony held on 7 September was the installation of the University's new Chancellor, Ulo-o-Tokelau, His Excellency Aliko Faipule Kerisiano Kalolo.

The Chancellor is the titular head of the University, who confers the qualifications of the University.

H.E. Aliko Faipule Kerisiano Kalolo is the 19th Chancellor of the University. He takes over from the former Chancellor, the Governor-General of the Solomon Islands, Sir Frank Kabui.

The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra warmly welcomed the new Chancellor to the USP family.

"We look forward to working with you to advance the work of the University," he added.

Professor Chandra said that the new Chancellor's appointment and installation truly demonstrates the regional character of the University and its importance to all its member countries, large and small.

"Tokelau being our smallest member is very much a valuable member of the USP family," he mentioned.

The new Chancellor conferred certificates, diplomas and degrees to 802 students at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.

The University of the South Pacific marked the opening of the Confucius Institute at its main Laucala campus in Suva on 6 September, 2012.

Confucius Institutes are non-profit public institutions aligned with the Government of China that aim to promote Chinese language and culture, support local Chinese teaching internationally, and facilitate cultural exchanges.

Speaking at the opening ceremony, the Permanent Secretary to the Office of the Prime Minister in Fiji, Lieutenant Colonel Pio Tikoduadua said that the opening of the Confucius Institute at USP will enhance the understanding of the Chinese language and culture by the people of Fiji and the South Pacific.

"Students of USP will have an opportunity to learn the Mandarin language and understand the Chinese culture, music and dance in addition to the other studies they are enrolled in. Being an expert in languages other than your official language and mother tongue will be a bonus for students who intend to work at diplomatic institutions or foreign ministries in the future," he added.

Lieutenant Colonel Pio Tikoduadua, who was also the Chief Guest, paid tribute to the positive spirit of partnership and cooperation between China and USP in the establishment of a cultural and learning Institute.

The Confucius Institute at USP was established between USP and the Beijing University of Posts and Telecommunications (BUPT). After approval from Hanban - Confucius Institute Headquarters of China, BUPT and USP formally reached an agreement in April 2011 to jointly build the Confucius Institute at USP.

In his remarks, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra expressed the University's gratitude and appreciation to Hanban and BUPT for their strong support and for their collaboration in this initiative.

The Confucius Institute at USP is actually the first of its kind in Fiji as well as in the region.

"We are very honoured to host the first Confucius Institute in the South Pacific region," he added.

The Vice-Chancellor announced plans to build the Confucius Institute at USP into a multi-level organisation that will provide educational and teaching services in the Chinese language and culture in the South Pacific.

"We also aim to make it a model of excellence amongst the Confucius Institutes worldwide."

By the end of 2010, 322 Confucius Institutes and 369 Confucius classrooms have been established in 96 countries and regions around the world.

While cultural exchanges between China and the South Pacific have been vigorous and fruitful, the Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Fiji, His Excellency Mr Huang Yong believes that further promotion of mutual exchanges and learning will bring them even closer.

The Ambassador pointed out the new Confucius Institute will be a bridge in promoting mutual understanding and friendship between the Chinese people and the people of the South Pacific.

Both the Deputy Director-General of Hanban, Ms Jing Wei and the Vice President of BUPT, Professor Ren Xiaomin were full of praise for USP for the establishment of the Confucius Institute.

Professor Ren Xiaomin emphasized the important role Confucius had on the Chinese education system and assured that, "BUPT will strive to develop and promote more development programs between our institutions."

After the opening ceremony, delegates from China and Fiji were given a tour of the Confucius Institute building at USP.





# CONFERENCE SHEDS LIGHT ON MEDIA AND DEMOCRACY IN THE SOUTH PACIFIC

Media practitioners and educators from around the region gathered at the University of the South Pacific to discuss issues on the role of the media in relation to the transition to and growth of democracy in the Pacific.

The two-day conference, which began on 5 September 2012, was held at the Multi Purpose Theatre at the University's Laucala Campus in Suva.

Speaking at the opening of the conference, the Permanent Secretary for Information, National Archives and Library Services of Fiji, Ms Sharon Smith-Johns outlined that there is a clear division of opinion among journalists and journalist educators about what form of journalism is appropriate for developing countries.

"In developing countries, we all have a responsibility to educate and enlighten, to create stability for investment and to create jobs our people so badly need. This does not come from fuelling division; we must acknowledge there is a special responsibility on all of us, in a multi-racial country like Fiji," she pointed out.

In the interests of national stability, Ms Smith-Johns explained that Fiji felt it necessary to impose a period of censorship on the local media that has now been lifted.

She encouraged journalists to again rise to the challenge of giving ordinary people the information they need.

The conference which was hosted by the University's discipline of Journalism, saw discussion on a number of key issues.

The event also rebuilt the momentum created by the symposium on 'Peace Journalism' that USP Journalism hosted two years ago. It extended its theoretical scope to include alternative models of media, such as Development Journalism and Asian Values Journalism.



The Permanent Secretary for Information, National Archives and Library Services of Fiji, Ms Sharon Smith-Johns delivers her address at the Media and Democracy Conference. Also in picture is the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams.

In her remarks, USP Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams emphasised the importance of a responsible media.

"Making sure that the media lives up to its responsibilities is no simple matter. The question is how to find a mechanism that makes the media accountable for what it prints and broadcasts while not undermining its freedom of speech or its important role as a public watchdog. This is not an easy issue to resolve in countries across the region," she said.

As the media in the Pacific strives to establish a responsible role in rapidly changing societies, Dr Williams stressed that attention must be given to the following issues:

- Potential impact of governments on the media;
- Impact of media on governments and on society in general; and
- Raising awareness in Pacific communities on the role of the media in growing democracy.

While training of journalists to improve the quality of reporting and journalism is needed, Dr Williams highlighted that, as a regional institution, USP provides education and training for future media and mass communication workers for Fiji and the region.

To date, USP Journalism has produced over 140 graduates working for 30 different media organisations in 10 Pacific countries.

"Many graduates have become established and influential journalists in Fiji and the South Pacific. The structure of our programme is intended to produce journalists who are not only skilled in their profession, but have a broad-based knowledge about the world," she added.

The keynote address of the opening day was given by Professor Robert Hackett from the Simon Fraser University in Canada. His main areas of research include media activism, political communication and news analysis.

## COMPETITION ENGAGES STUDENTS TO PRESENT RESEARCH

The University of the South Pacific successfully staged its annual Three Minute Thesis (3MT) Competition to help develop research communication skills among its postgraduate students.

The event, hosted by the University's Research office, was held on 5 September 2012, at the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies located at the Laucala Campus in Suva.

During this year's competition, eight postgraduate students presented their original research in three minutes using non-specialist language and a single presentation slide.

The competition supports the development of research students' capacity to communicate ideas effectively and share their research experiences not only here at USP but also internationally.

Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and International), Professor John Bythell, Director of Development, Marketing, Communications and Alumni, Mr Jaiendra Karan and the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) Project Manager, Mr Ashwin Raj sat on the judging panel.

After hearing compelling orations from the participants, the panel made a unanimous decision and announced Mr Ravikash Prasad as the overall winner.

Professor Bythell commended all the participants for their excellent presentations, but cited the compelling arguments, clear expression and engagement with the audience that gave Mr Ravikash the edge.

Mr Prasad, a MSc student in Environment Science from the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment, presented his research topic on 'Invasive Plant to



First and second runner-up, Ms Allison Ramsay (far left) and Mr Edgar Pollard (far right) and the overall winner, Mr Ravikash Prasad with the Pro Vice-Chancellor (Research and International), Professor John Bythell.

control Invasive Termite.'

As the winner, Mr Prasad won an Asus laptop and will represent USP at the Trans-Tasman 3MT competition which will be hosted by the University of Queensland later in the year.

First and second runner-up prizes were awarded to Mr Edgar Pollard and Ms Allison Ramsay respectively.



Professor Randolph Thaman, an academic at USP, who has been awarded with the honorary membership of IUCN.

One of the longest serving staff members of the University of the South Pacific, Professor Randolph Thaman, from the Division of Geography has recently been awarded with the honorary membership of the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN).

The award, which recognizes individuals for their outstanding services to the conservation of nature and natural resources, is presented by the World Conservation Congress on the recommendation of the IUCN Council.

## ACADEMIC RECEIVES INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION FOR ENVIRONMENTAL CONSERVATION

Professor Thaman along with 10 outstanding international members were honoured at the IUCN World Conservation Congress on 11 September, 2012. He was the only one from the Pacific region, other than Australia, to be awarded at this event in Korea.

In extending his sincere congratulations, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra said that the University community is proud and pleased to learn of the prestigious award presented to Professor Thaman.

"This is a timely recognition of Professor Thaman's efforts and for his immense contributions in areas that are very critical to the survival of our Pacific region," he added.

The Vice-Chancellor praised Professor Thaman for serving the region tirelessly through research and teaching.

Since joining USP in 1974, Professor Thaman has taught and mentored countless number of Pacific Island students, many of whom are regional leaders in natural resource conservation and management in government

institutions and other organizations throughout the Pacific.

Professor Thaman's pioneering research and teaching has focused on community-based biodiversity conservation, Pacific floras and ethnobiology, agrobiodiversity and food security, invasive species, and ecosystem restoration and species recovery in degraded small islands and marine managed areas.

He has worked extensively with local students and communities to document endangered traditional ethnobiodiversity as a basis for effective conservation.

Professor Thaman has been a member of IUCN's World Commission on Protected Areas since 1998, as well as a founding member of the IUCN Commission of Education and Communication, and a past member of the Oceania Regional Committee.

Most recently he represented Fiji in the successful establishment of the Intergovernmental Science Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services.

## UNIVERSITY FACILITATES TALKS ON FIJI'S CONSTITUTION

Close to 300 people attended the panel discussion on Fiji's Constitution making at the Multi Purpose Theatre located at the University of the South Pacific's Laucala Campus in Suva.

The discussion, held on 11 September 2012, was jointly conveyed by USP's School of Government, Development and International Affairs (SGDIA) in the Faculty of Business and Economics and the Fiji Women's Rights Movement.

Those present were told that academics and scholars play a critical role as they have the expertise in various areas and can contribute towards providing ideas to the people of Fiji about what could be in the new Constitution.

This was shared by the Fiji Constitution Commission Chairman, Professor Yash Ghai, while opening of the panel discussion.

As Fiji prepares to draft its new Constitution and with the consultation process well underway, the Commission continues to receive submissions from people around the country.

While the Commission had received many narratives on peoples' lives and livelihood issues, Professor Ghai admitted that what they had not received were the broad frameworks within which State and society should operate, the relationship between society and State, and organised groups within society.

"We think your contribution would be very important in providing good structures of the State, relationship of the State to civil society, the role of human rights relating to different communities not only between the State and citizens," he said.

Professor Ghai also launched the Constitution Commission book titled 'Listening to the people of Fiji'. He encouraged everyone to read the book and said he hoped the book would be a useful source of information for Fijians as it highlights significant areas that the Constitution will address.

In thanking Professor Ghai for his brief address on the Constitution, the Director of SGDIA, Professor Vijay Naidu emphasised the importance of the Constitution.

"The Constitution is the supreme law of a country and sets out the nature and structure of the state," he said.

Professor Naidu pointed out that if designed well, the structure of government in governmental processes can effectively contribute in addressing the concerns of the citizens and move a country peacefully towards a more just society.

During the panel discussion, the panelists shared their experiences and views relating to various issues concerning the Constitution-making process. The panelists were Professor Christina Murray, Associate Professor Sandra Tarte, Tura Leewai, Noelene Navulivou, Ashwin Raj, Jope Tarai and Alisi Daurewa. They represented academia, women, youth, Non-Government Organisations, and minorities.

Some of the issues discussed by the panelist included women's participation in Constitution making process with reference to the South African experience; sustainable democracy; an indigenous young person's vision for Fiji; alternative approaches to citizenship - on unity and diversity in Fiji; engaging youth; and local government.

The South African experience provided lessons on how the multi-racial women's movement actively sought positive outcomes for women in the Constitution. The women are also continuing their efforts to ensure that the provisions of the Constitution work for them.

For Fiji, the importance of evolving a culture of democracy that ended the cycle of coups was emphasized, and it appeared that all ethnic groups agreed that there should be no more coups. Some inconsistencies in the 1997 Constitution between equality of citizenship and treating them differently on ethnic basis were highlighted.

Young people's vision of a peaceful multi-ethnic Fiji and listening to their voices were strongly advocated as was the importance of equitable treatment of all citizens in the spirit of unity in diversity.

It was pointed out that local government system in the country had been rather divisive, and until more direct central government direction since 2007, the iTaukei administration had failed indigenous Fijians living in rural villages. Greater authority and power of representation of Turaga-ni-koro (village headmen/women) was recommended.

A lively discussion ensued with several comments and questions from the floor. Among the topics raised were culture change, the place of youth, indigenous rights, the judiciary, role of politicians, voting age, and women's representation.

The panelists encouraged active participation of all citizens if positive changes were to be reflected in Fiji's Constitution.

Twelve constitutional submissions were made following the panel discussion, more than half of these were made by young persons.





## FIRST EVER PARTICIPANTS DEPART UNDER KIZUNA PROJECT

The first batch of 91 participants recently toured Japan under the newly-launched Kizuna Project.

The student groups from Cook Islands, Niue, Marshall Islands and Federated States of Micronesia were in Japan on fully funded two-week study tours.

This provided the opportunity for Pacific Island youths and future leaders to obtain a perspective into the Japanese way of life and to promote the understanding about the recovery efforts after the earthquake and tsunami that occurred on March 11, 2011, and current situations in Japan.

Kizuna (Bonds of Friendship) Project, a F\$5.5 million Japanese Government funded project was launched on 6<sup>th</sup> July 2012 at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre.

The 14 PICs in this programme include Cook Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, Fiji, Kiribati, Marshall Islands, Nauru, Niue, Palau, Papua New Guinea, Samoa, Solomon Islands, Tonga, Tuvalu and Vanuatu.

Each country group consisting of 22 students and one adult supervisor will travel to Japan by country at different times between September to December 2012.

The Director of the USP Marshall Islands Campus, Dr Irene Tafaaki, said that the Marshall Islands students were very excited about their trip.

She added that the Kizuna Project has created stronger bonds of association between the Marshall Islands campus and Japan as well as the students.

Similar views were shared by the Secretary of Education in Cook Islands, Ms Sharyn Paio, who thanked the Government of Japan for providing this opportunity to the students of Cook Islands, noting that, "much good learning takes place outside the classroom".

The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra said that the significance of this project would build and foster a deep and meaningful relationship between the Pacific Island Countries and Japan.

He stated that this was just another example of the expansive nature of the assistance to the Pacific and to USP by the Government and the people of Japan.

The Embassy of Japan in the Federated States of Micronesia, Marshall Islands and Fiji, as well as the Embassy of Japan in New Zealand who were in charge of the Cook Islands and Niue group sent their warm greetings to all the participants in this very first dispatch of students on the Kizuna Project and wished that the experience under this project will be beneficial to all the participants.



## USP STUDENT CHINA BOUND

The first-ever recipient of the 'Confucius Institute Scholarship' travelled to China on a three-year study period to complete her Master's degree in Teaching Chinese to Speakers of Other Languages.

Ms Meihua Luo, a student of the University of the South Pacific, said before her departure that, she is excited and nervous about her trip as this is the first time she will be away from home.

"Being out of my comfort zone will be a challenge for me but at the same time I will get to experience being independent. It will be a great learning experience," she added.

Ms Luo, who was born in China, was raised in Fiji since the age of five.

She will spend a year in China learning the Mandarin language and the Chinese culture after which she will pursue her Masters degree for the next two years.

The scholarship scheme is part of efforts by Hanban, the Confucius Institute Headquarters to support the development of Confucius institutes, facilitate Chinese language promotion and Chinese cultural transmission in the world, and cultivate qualified Chinese language teachers as well as talented students of the Chinese language.

Ms Luo who has also been part of the recently established Confucius Institute at USP is really looking forward to her trip.

She explained that the reason behind applying for the scholarship was the opportunity to study the Chinese language and culture. This was something that she had always wanted to learn.

Under the scholarship, Ms Luo will be studying at the Beijing Language and Culture University. After completing her studies, Ms Luo will be engaged in Chinese language teaching.

"Having completed a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychology at USP, I believe my qualifications would relate well to a career in teaching," she mentioned.

The scholarship is provided to outstanding students of Confucius institutes. Her studies will begin in autumn 2012, and the scholarship grant will cover two academic years.

The Directors of the Confucius Institute at USP, Professor Denggui Li and Ms Sin Joan Yee wished Ms Luo all the best in her studies.

Ms Luo left for China on 30<sup>th</sup> August.



# MARINE BIOLOGISTS GET TRAINED ON ALGAL TAXONOMY

A workshop aimed at training marine biologists in the identification of common tropical marine algae (seaweeds) occurring in the Pacific Islands region was held recently at the Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) based at the University of the South Pacific in Suva.

The three-day workshop, which ran from 14-16 August 2012, was organised by Mr Klaus Feussner and Dr Katy Soapi from IAS.

It was attended by staff members from IAS, the School of Marine Studies and Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta in the United States.

Identifying seaweeds is a skill useful when undertaking surveys and scientific research for natural products, as well as doing biodiversity assessments or environmental impact assessment.

Seaweeds are important primary producers and the base of the food chain, providing food to many other marine species. At least seven different species of seaweeds are consumed in Fiji and Rotuma, the most common ones being the genera *Caulerpa*, *Gracilaria*, *Hypnea* and *Meristotheca*.

During the workshop, participants were shown some of these seaweed species and trained how to identify them including many more that are commonly found on coral reefs around the Pacific region.

The training instructor, Dr Antoine De Ramon N'Yeurt, an expert on algal taxonomy in the Pacific region, discussed the importance of seaweeds as indicators of the health of marine ecosystems where a predominance of seaweeds is an indicator of poor reef health in the tropics.

He explained on the other major disturbances that lead to algal dominance such as increase in nutrients, over fishing of herbivores, tropical cyclones and warmer climate.

"Seaweed dominance can also act as indicators of climate change, their sensitivity to seawater temperature and migration southwards as the climate becomes warmer, are early warning signs of global warming," he added.

Participants also had an opportunity to get some hands-on experience in identifying algae samples collected from the Nasese foreshore in Suva and samples from the Solomon Islands

collected from a field expedition in March earlier this year.

One of the participants, Professor Mark Hay thanked the instructor and organisers for arranging the workshop, adding that, he enjoyed it and learned a lot.

Professor Hay and his team are working with IAS to find new drugs from marine algae and a red alga from Fiji has shown very strong antimalarial potency.

The workshop concluded with Dr N'Yeurt thanking the participants for their enthusiasm and keen interest in learning about algae and their identification, followed by presentations of certificates to the participants.



OLPC Trainer and Consultant, Mr Ian Thomson explains the use of the digital laptop.



## 4<sup>TH</sup> EDUNIVERSAL WORLD CONVENTION

The University of the South Pacific's Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) is recognized as one of the best ranking business schools in the world.

This was revealed at the 4<sup>th</sup> EDUNIVERSAL World Convention held at the Tongji University in Shanghai, China last year.

The global event attracted academics and strategic representatives from the Best Business Schools and Faculties of Business and Economics. More than 50 countries participated in this one-off event to promote the internationalization of Higher Education and student mobility.

As part of the convention, the EDUNIVERSAL Award Ceremony was organized to reward the Best Business Schools in the World (selected from the list of 1,000 Business faculties) in front of an international expert audience and media from many countries. This ranking and awards are based on the Deans' recommendations.

USP's Faculty of Business and Economics received three EDUNIVERSAL Palmes consecutively for the fourth time.

The EDUNIVERSAL Palmes indicate the level of an academic institution's international reputation. They are awarded on the basis of the research work carried out by the International Scientific Committee, which compiles the list of criteria, together with the assessments made by peers including the Deans' vote.

The purpose of EDUNIVERSAL is to offer students a serious reference that reflects the international dimension of each school and therefore enables them to make the right decision regarding the choice of their future school.

International Scientific Committee of EDUNIVERSAL is responsible for making selection of 1000 best Business Schools from all over globe. The selection of 1000 best Business schools are made according to very precise criteria such as:

- The international Influence and reputation of the School
- The Quality of the programs

- The quality of the teachers
- The accreditations and labels obtained by the Schools
- The state recognition, the results in the main rankings
- Their membership in different international associations

Out of 50 Universities in the Oceania region, 18 were awarded 3 Palmes (15 from Australia, 1 from New Zealand and 1 from Hawaii) and out of these 18, FBE stands at 6<sup>th</sup> position.

FBE's overall ranking amongst all 50 universities in Oceania is 17<sup>th</sup>. Within the three Palmes category, 10 universities (from Australia, New Zealand and Hawaii) have lower ranking than USP and two universities have ranking equal to that of the USP.

Only six Universities from Oceania have been awarded with 5 Palmes and twelve with 4 Palmes, eighteen with 3 Palmes, twelve with 2 Palmes, and two with 1 Palme.

The 2011 EDUNIVERSAL Convention also provided for USP's Professor Biman Prasad and Dr Gurmeet Singh to have one-to-one official meetings to discuss the options for possible collaboration in different areas.

The convention also was special in the sense that six of FBE's Masters programmes have been included for International Eduniversal Rankings.

These programmes are:

1. Masters of Business Administration (MBA)
2. Masters of Commerce in Management and Public Administration
3. Masters of Commerce in Economics
4. Masters of Commerce in Tourism and Hospitality Management
5. Masters of Commerce in Banking and Finance
6. Masters of Commerce in Accounting