

in this issue ▾



3

LAUNCH OF SPICTEX 2011



5

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM



7

UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DAY - A SUCCESS

USPBeat Magazine

USPBeat is published by the Development, Marketing and Communications Office, The University of the South Pacific, Suva, Fiji.

Managing Editor

Ashley Gopal
Tel: (679) 323 2039;
email: gopal_a@usp.ac.fj

Desktop Publisher

Imraan Sheik

Pre-press and Printing



Circulation

3000 copies are distributed throughout the University's member countries and internationally. The views expressed in USP Beat are not necessarily the views of the University or the Managing Editor.

Next issue - July 2011



JICA PRESIDENT VISITS USP

The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra and Madame Sadako Ogata, JICA President, during her visit to the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre.

The University of the South Pacific hosted a delegation from the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) led by Madame Sadako Ogata, the JICA President, for a visit to the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at the University's Laucala Campus in Suva on 23 June, 2011.

The visit was part of Madame Ogata's trip to Fiji and Tuvalu from 20 - 24 June. Madame Ogata visited JICA's on-going project sites and met with government representatives, donor partners and diplomatic missions to learn more about their perspectives on the economic and social development of the Pacific.

A welcome ceremony was accorded to Madam Ogata and her team by the University.

In his welcoming remarks, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra stated that the University is honoured to host Madame Ogata and her delegation at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, which is a testimony to the generosity of the Government and people of Japan and the goodwill and co-operation that exists between the Pacific Islands and Japan.

"The construction of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at USP is a tangible example of JICA's vision of inclusive and dynamic development. The potential of the Centre is unlimited as is the potential for positive and lasting development outcomes when we all work together in the close and sustained manner that characterises the JICA-USP relationship," he added.

The Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, which has been funded by the Government of Japan through JICA as part of Japan's bilateral assistance to Fiji, officially opened in July 2010.

According to Professor Chandra, the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre is the result of a

project designed to close the digital divide in the Pacific region and promote the use of ICT to boost economic growth, improve socio-economic development, reduce poverty and preserve regional cultures.

He elaborated that the Centre is having a great impact in the areas of learning, teaching and research. He added that JICA's support for the University to engage in preparatory projects, such as the ICT Human Capacity Building Project, has enabled USP to develop sufficient human capacity to fully utilise the Centre for the benefit of the region.

The Vice-Chancellor thanked the Governments of Japan and Fiji for establishing the Centre at USP. He assured Madame Ogata and her delegation that the long-term investment that the Government of Japan, through JICA, has made at USP is benefitting the entire region in a "remarkable manner" and will continue to pay dividends for many years to come.

He acknowledged that JICA's support extends beyond infrastructure to the many aspects of ICT development and applications at the University. JICA's support for ICT service delivery, says Professor Chandra will enhance quality and facilitate distance learning through broadband connections to remote islands of the region and upgrade of the USPNet satellite network.

In thanking Japan for its support towards the University, Professor Chandra said that USP has a long-standing relationship with the Government of Japan and highlighted that, "we hope to build on our close, significant and expanding co-operation and assistance."

In her remarks, Madame Ogata commented that it was a pleasure to visit USP which she described as a very beautiful campus.

In expressing her delight with the University, Madame Ogata said that, "by coming here we got to learn how the situation is and that USP, being the core of the Pacific is of great interest and concern to Japan."

She applauded USP's commitment to education in the region considering that the region is spread out across oceans and the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) have different levels of development and diverse expectations of science and technology.

"You have a good approach of being useful in a very central way to the whole development of the Pacific Islands region," she added.

She noted that the University, through the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, is providing students from PICs with access to technical education and facilities.

Highlighting the importance for science and technology education, Madam Ogata said that JICA sees potential for this area in the region and will continue to expand its support.

Madame Ogata said that science and technology is a very special brand of development assistance that JICA has been involved in for many years. She highlighted examples of JICA's support for science and technology education in most engineering and technical education institutes in South-East Asian countries.

Madame Ogata emphasised the need for education to enable people to get a suitable job. She wished the University well in the future.

Madame Ogata and the JICA delegation were given a tour of the Centre and presented with a USPNet demonstration using the Remote Audio Conferencing Tool (REACT) with the USP Tuvalu Campus.



USP COUNCIL 72nd MEETING

The 72nd meeting of the University of the South Pacific Council - the governing body of the University - was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands from 12-13 May, 2011. The Council, which meets twice a year, is headed by the Pro-Chancellor, Honourable Fiaame N. Mata'afa.

The highlights of the recent Council meeting included a half-day workshop on Benchmarking and Performance Evaluation; presentation of a report by the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra, and discussion on matters concerning Finance, Audit and Risk; Programming and Quality; Students; the Governance Management Enhancement and Strengthening Project (GMES Project).

In his presentation to the Council members, Professor Chandra outlined key developments and achievements of USP since the last Council meeting in November 2010.

He pointed out that the University had a very productive first quarter of 2011 and added that, "the University community is working together towards the common goal of a University which is deeply Pacific-oriented, responds to the needs and priorities of the region, and works innovatively to anticipate and understand emerging trends and

generate debate on and solutions to developing issues."

Professor Chandra said that USP's student support services and facilities clearly distinguish the University from other educational institutions in the Pacific region, as the University welcomed its new and continuing students for the 2011 academic year, with improved and interesting orientation activities.

He highlighted the support USP received from donors and development partners which was marked by partnership launches with partners like New Zealand and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and mentioned that, the signings of new Memorandum of Understandings (MOUs) during the first quarter further enables the University to better meet the academic and development needs of the region.

He stated that USP has served the region well and the financial situation of the University continues to improve.

In order to be responsive to the region's needs, Professor Chandra assured the Council that the Strategic Total Academic Review (STAR) project undertaken by USP was well underway to develop a comprehensive suite of programmes to meet the

region's human resource development needs.

Professor Chandra assured Council members that the University will continue to play a pivotal role in the development of the Pacific region through the provision of higher education, relevant and useful research, and reliable and practical technical advice to member countries and regional meetings.

As USP looks forward to its 50th anniversary in 2018, Professor Chandra said that, "we can celebrate a great university at that time if we follow through with our reforms and repositioning, and if we continue to nurture an institution that is widely seen as one of the most successful examples of regional co-operation."

In his concluding remarks, Professor Chandra thanked the member countries and the development partners for their support to the University and acknowledged the contributions of staff and students.

The Vice-Chancellor's report contained a comprehensive update on developments relative to the funding from donors and supporters and a list of the University's activities by Strategic Plan Priority Areas.

NEW HEAD FOR USP LAUTOKA CAMPUS

The University of the South Pacific recently announced the appointment of Dr Pramila Devi, a long serving staff member as the new Director of the USP Lautoka Campus.

The role is not new to Dr Devi as she has served as the Acting Director of the Lautoka Campus since June 2009.

She joined USP in 1994 as a Lecturer in Continuing and Community Education (CCE) and has since worked in Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) and CCE areas at USP's regional campus based in Lautoka.

In announcing Dr Devi's appointment, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses) of USP, Dr Esther Williams congratulated Dr Devi and wished her well in the new role.

Dr Williams called on all members of the USP family to provide their full support to Dr Devi.

Dr Devi who has been with the University for over a decade expressed her joy with the appointment.

She outlined a number of immediate plans concerning the Lautoka Campus which are

to: work closely with the Offices of the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses) and Properties and Facilities to advance the campus development plan of the Campus; focus on marketing and promotion of DFL and CCE deliveries with the intention to expand both the sections; and improve services to students with a particular emphasis on the two sub-centres in Rakiraki and Sigatoka.

"The attempt to accomplish these immediate goals will be done within the framework of the role of the Lautoka Campus in delivering the services of the University to the communities in the Western Division of Fiji," she added.

Dr Devi attained her PhD from Victoria University Wellington, New Zealand; Masters in Media Studies from New School for Social Research in New York; Bachelor in Economics and Sociology from USP; and Diploma in Community Development from USP.

Her doctorate research deals with Information and Communication Technology (ICT) modes of communication in distance education and her research interests include ICT, distance learning, media and gender.



LAUNCH OF SPICTEX 2011

The Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama and the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra during the SPICTEX 2011 launch.



The launch of the South Pacific Information and Communications Technology Exposition (SPICTEX) 2011 was commemorated by the University of the South Pacific at the Tanoa Plaza in Suva on 20 June.

The inaugural ICT Expo, which is scheduled to be held from 20 - 23 July 2011, will be hosted at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at USP's Laucala Campus.

Being the first of its kind for Fiji and the region, SPICTEX is an initiative of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE) at USP, in partnership with the Government of Fiji and the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA).

SPICTEX was officially launched by the Chief Guest and the Prime Minister of the Republic of Fiji, Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama, who emphasised that ICT plays a major role in the lives of all citizens of the world and is critical to the provision of services, operations, and developments in education, medicine, governance, and industries.

The Prime Minister pointed out some initiatives undertaken by his Government to advance ICT growth in Fiji, such as the liberalization of the telecommunications sector, reduction of import duty on smart phones, introduction of the Telecommunication Levy on incoming international calls to fund future ICT projects, and capacity building through participation in upcoming regional ICT workshops and forums.

He highlighted that tertiary institutions are critical to the development of ICT as they build human capacity through research and development and provide technological changes.

In congratulating the SPICTEX partners, the Prime Minister said that the collaboration between the Fiji Government, USP and JICA to facilitate the Expo is "significant".

"The Expo presents the first organised large scale opportunity for local and regional companies and organisations to review and explore how ICT can help improve businesses, enhance the quality of life for the people of the region and drive economic growth," he added.

The Prime Minister noted that the involvement of experts from Japan in the Expo will also be highly beneficial to the attendees as these experts will share their expertise and knowledge in the area of Cyber Security and Business Incubation.

He acknowledged the generosity of the Government of Japan for establishing the Japan Pacific ICT Centre at USP so that it is available to students from around the region.

In his address, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra said that the regional nature of USP and the scattered nature of the population make ICT fundamentally important to the University.

He added that the completion of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at USP has further complemented the University's ICT development and capabilities such as additional and advanced education and training in ICT and the possibilities for complex research and international networking.

According to Professor Chandra, "SPICTEX is an important initiative on the part of the University to ensure that the benefits of ICT flow to the relevant stakeholders."

The Vice-Chancellor stressed that the Pacific needs to have modern and dynamic ICT as the region gets more integrated into the globalised world.

"ICT impacts not only the economy, but also offers huge opportunities to improve the lives of the ordinary people through social networking, e-health, e-governance, and e-education, apart from reducing

the impact of distance and isolation," he explained.

Professor Chandra expressed his sincere thanks to the Governments of Fiji and Japan for their strong and sustained support towards the University.

SPICTEX is based on three main themes: 'ICT in Education, ICT in Business and ICT for All' with a focus on target groups such as students, ICT industries, regional educators and the general public.

Among the many activities planned for the Expo are presentations by international guest speakers, ICT symposium and panel discussions, information sessions for the public, product and service exhibitions by local and international ICT companies, and quiz competitions for schools.

Speaking at the launch, the Dean of FSTE, Dr Anjeela Jokhan elaborated on the four-day Expo which will be open to the public for free.

"The Expo aims to provide something for all members of the community to see, participate in, enjoy and learn," she said.

According to Dr Jokhan, the major objectives of SPICTEX are to establish links between the industries and regional educational institutes, create greater ICT awareness, showcase the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre and provide information to the general public about ICT and its influence in the society.

The closing remarks were made by the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration, HR and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams who thanked the partners and sponsors of SPICTEX.

The function was attended by the Attorney General, Mr Aiyaz Sayed Khaiyum, the First Secretary, Embassy of Japan, Mr Takato Maki, JICA Deputy Representative, Mr Yutaka Fukase, senior government officials, members of the diplomatic corps, members of the USP Senior Management Team and other invited guests.

STAFF PROFILE | MOHAMMED MOZEEM | DEVELOPMENT FINANCE OFFICER

What is the length of time you've been employed at USP?

9 months.

What is your home country?

Fiji.

How do you usually begin your working day?

I get to work by 8am and start my day by saying "Good Morning" to all my colleagues. I check my emails and get to all urgent tasks of the day. I meet with the Director to update him of the tasks that are urgent. He also assigns further tasks. I then prioritise all my tasks in the morning so that the day ahead is all planned.

What is the best part of your current work?

Meeting delegates and important people who make a difference in organisations.

What is your best practical remedy for work and life stress?

I usually take my car and go for a small drive near the seawall. A fresh breeze and the quietness of the environment can clear off any stress.

What is the most unusual/ unexpected event that has ever happened to you?

I am still waiting for it to happen.

What is the best advice you've ever been given, or have given to students at USP?

Career should come first. Look at where you want to be in 10-15 years in time and choose your pathway to lead you there.

What have been your main career highlights?

Being a Project Manager for one of the UNDP Projects. It was my second year of employment only and I was a junior staff. Being given the opportunity boosted my career path.

What are some challenges you think are faced by young people in the Pacific?

Education and the ability to secure jobs is becoming a concern for all young people in the Pacific these days.

What are your hopes for the Pacific in 2011 and beyond?

This year has been good but it is moving too fast and it is becoming hard to catch up with time. *Time and tide waits for no man*, that's a principle that everyone should bear in mind. The Pacific is going through a big revolution in 2011 and the years ahead with new challenges for Pacific Islanders. We have to move ahead bearing in mind the challenges we face like Climate Change, Globalization, Brain Drain and many more. The Pacific as one big community can achieve many more things than individual countries can do alone. Together we can do it and together we will cherish the benefits!



NZ REGIONAL SCHOLARSHIPS TEAM VISITS USP

The University of the South Pacific hosted the New Zealand Regional Development Scholarships (NZRDS) officers for a visit to the Laucala Campus on 25 May, 2011.

The officers, accompanied by the First Secretary (Regional Development Programme), Ms Emma Dunlop-Bennett, met with the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra and the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Services) of USP, Professor Susan Kelly.

In welcoming the team, Professor Chandra said that USP was glad to have New Zealand as a strategic partner for the past 43 years. He briefed the NZRDS officers about the role of the University as the premier institution of higher education for students in the region.

He added that USP provides the region with well rounded graduates and builds graduates with a strong 'Pacific' sense which will help them to look beyond their countries and cultures.

Professor Chandra pointed out that studying on-campus is an important part of the USP experience.

According to him, students staying on-campus have a much greater chance of interacting with their counterparts from different countries and a better chance of being well-rounded by participating in campus life activities. This, Professor Chandra says, also increases the likelihood of students utilising the resources available on-campus such as the computer labs and the library.

Highlighting USP's commitment to providing students with suitable accommodation, Professor Chandra stated that a new 144-bed hostel was nearing completion.

"We want to have 3000 to 5000 students staying on-campus in the long run because if students do not stay, play and live together then the part of USP that is regional is not fulfilled," he explained.

Professor Chandra also discussed issues regarding academic performances of students and highlighted that the University will continue to improve student learning at USP.

Professor Susan Kelly acknowledged some of the major difficulties students face such as the transition from high schools to university as well as cultural and social changes. She said that these problems were being addressed by the University through various initiatives to ensure that students have a smoother transition to university life.

Professor Kelly reiterated USP's commitment to make studying at USP, an enjoyable and educational one and added that students will also have to take responsibility for their studies and do their part and produce positive results.

After the meeting, the NZRDS officers were given a tour of the Laucala Campus by the Group Manager, Campus Life, Mr Glenn Pope. As part of the visit, the officers met with NZRDS students from the region on 26 - 27 May.

GOVERNMENT OF FRANCE AND USP SIGN AGREEMENT ON RENEWABLE ENERGY PROJECTS



The French Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency, Mr Gilles Montagnier and USP's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Services), Professor Susan Kelly during the signing of the Agreement.

The signing of a Financial Convention between the Government of France and the University of the South Pacific was held at the Laucala Campus on 21 June, 2011.

The agreement, which formalises France's commitment towards funding support for the 2010 -2011 Renewable Energy and Sustainable Development projects at USP, was signed by the French Ambassador to the Republic of Fiji, His Excellency, Mr Gilles Montagnier and USP's Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Learning, Teaching and Student Services), Professor Susan Kelly.

The two projects funded by the French Government involve replacing kerosene/benzene with solar lights in selected village communities and the development of a wind-solar hybrid renewable energy system for the USP student 'Fales'.

During the signing, Professor Kelly thanked the Government of France for its generous support and assistance for the projects and stated that USP has a good relationship with France.

"These projects will strengthen the capacity of USP to advance in clean energy technologies and contribute to the sustainable development choices of its member countries," she stated.

Professor Kelly said that the University looks forward to implementing the two projects and also welcomes any future opportunity to work closely with the French Government through its Embassy in Fiji on projects or programmes that will benefit the region.

Highlighting the need to move to renewable energy in the future, Professor Kelly said that it is becoming economically unviable for Pacific Islands Countries (PICs) to continue to use fossil fuels.

She applauded France's support and commitment towards research in the areas of marine biodiversity, environment, arts, culture, sustainable development and renewable energy in the region.

In his address, H.E. Mr Montagnier said that USP, as a regional academic institution, continues to play a major role in the cooperation between France, the French Pacific territories and PICs.

He explained that the signing of the grant agreement is intended "to strengthen our cooperation and relations, in order to work for the development of the South Pacific."

The Ambassador pointed out that the development of renewable energies remains a challenge in Fiji and the whole region.

"We hope, by initiating this project, to develop the knowledge and the training capacities of USP, as well as empowering rural communities and developing the use of solar lighting in Fiji and the neighbouring states," he added.

The projects will be coordinated by Dr Atul Raturi, Head of the School of Engineering and Physics at USP.

DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS FORUM

The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra addresses development partners during the Forum.



A meeting between development partners and the University of the South Pacific was held at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at the Laucala Campus on 30 June, 2011.

The objectives of the Forum were:

- to provide a comprehensive update on USP's activities;
- to facilitate discussion and exchange between development partners on their respective key regional education initiatives;
- to identify areas of USP's Strategic Plan which could benefit from further development support and collaboration to contribute towards the development of the Pacific region; and
- for USP to share its plans for the future and possible new areas of development partner's support.

In welcoming the development partners, the Vice-Chancellor and the President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra acknowledged the support and collaboration with existing development partners for the University to deliver high-quality and effective education and research to the region.

Highlighting the importance of the Forum, Professor Chandra said that the meeting serves as a platform for USP to discuss with development partners the progress made against the objectives of the University's Strategic Plan 2010 -2012, and provides an opportunity to explore possible areas of engagement with existing donors and cooperation with newer development partners.

Professor Chandra emphasised to the development partners that USP is an ideal mechanism through which assistance to the region can be provided in a sustainable way.

He explained that development assistance supports the University to produce better graduates who are prepared to meet future challenges and will work to make an impact on the development of their countries.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, assistance received from existing development partners amounted to FJ\$27.5 million which was 20 percent of the University's total income in 2010.

In his presentation, Professor Chandra gave an update on USP's achievements in the context of the Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012 including the University's financial situation, development assistance overview and the strategic priority areas and targets.

Professor Chandra assured the development partners that the University is largely on track with the implementation of the Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012, and is working towards the development of the next Strategic Plan.

He highlighted that this year, the University is focusing on introducing innovations to improve learning, teaching and student achievements.

"We are taking a closer look at the needs of the regional campuses and integrating them further into all activities, while undertaking capital works that will make immediate improvements to the learning environment," Professor Chandra said.

As part of the meeting, an open forum was held where the respective development partners expressed their governments' and institutions' priorities and views on the Strategic Plan of the University.

Key development partners like Australia and New Zealand which provide funding support towards the implementation of the University's Strategic Plan expressed their satisfaction with the progress made by USP and reiterated their continued support for the University in the future.

Similar support for the University was indicated by Japan, which has provided funding for the construction of Phase I and Phase II of the Japan Pacific ICT Centre at the Laucala Campus. The European Union (EU), which supports the climate change education project at USP, also confirmed its continued collaboration with the University.

During the conclusion of the meeting, Professor Chandra thanked the development partners and their governments' and institutions' commitment towards the University and the development of the region.

Professor Chandra said he hoped that the discussions will result in new partnerships and added that USP is open to suggestions to steer the way forward for closer collaboration between the University and its development partners.

Representatives of Australia, New Zealand, Japan, EU, Korea, India, Asian Development Bank, France, South Africa, UNDP and Taiwan attended the forum.

ALUMNI PROFILE | JENIES MUDILIAR | MARKETING & EVENTS COORDINATOR

What is your home country?

Fiji.

Which programme did you graduate in and I which year?

BA in Management and Public Administration and Banking and Finance.

Who was your favorite lecturer and why?

Peter Fulcher, my banking lecturer. He had the ability to capture and maintain a student's attention for the entire duration of the lecture without even any slides.

What was your most memorable moment as a student?

Putting the finishing touches to my banking assignment and then losing it all due to a power outage. Yes, I hadn't saved the day's work.

What is your funniest moment as a student?

I am a disaster magnet so there have been many. Once I got locked in the washroom and had to txt my friend, who was in a tutorial, to rescue me.

What was your greatest achievement while studying at USP?

Passing my BF202 unit because I had been told beforehand that it had a very low percentage pass-rate.

How do you think USP helped you in your career?

USP prepared me well for the corporate world and instilled values in me that not only enhanced my education, but also aided my mental maturity.

What inspires you and why?

I get inspired by my peers in the same age group who are making a name for themselves in their respective fields.

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

Getting a position at Investment Fiji (FTIB) as their Investment Promotion Officer and now working at DMC, USP.

Your advice to current and future USP students?

Do not be pressured into choosing a field of study for yourself because nothing is more monotonous than falling into a career that you are not passionate about.

What you hope USP will be like in the future?

The focal point of education for not only the Pacific region but the Asia Pacific region at least.





USP FACILITATES PHYSICS LABORATORY WORKSHOP

USP Beat | Volume 10 | Issue 6 | June 2011

The School of Engineering and Physics (SEP) at the University of the South Pacific in association with the South Pacific Physics Society (SPPS) successfully hosted a Physics Laboratory Workshop for Form Seven students from secondary schools around the Central Division in Fiji on 9 June, 2011.

The workshop which was held at the USP Laucala Campus, attracted close to 100 students and teachers from eight different schools. The workshop offered students with insights into the various types of instruments/meters used in elementary Physics as well as provided hands-on experience on the proper use of such specialised equipments. It also gave teachers the opportunity to refresh their practical skills in using science equipments.

Mr Amol Kishore, Assistant Lecturer at USP and the President of SPPS, said that many schools today face the challenge of providing appropriate learning resources in science teaching such as equipments used in conducting science experiments.

He acknowledged the importance of the workshop and said that, "laboratory work is an integral part of the Physics curriculum especially at the form seven level."

During the workshop, six different experiments were conducted in six sessions and a preliminary response from students indicated they received the experiments well.

The students and teachers found the workshop worthwhile and very useful towards their learning through the expertise provided by the academic and technical staff of USP.

6

One of the participants at the workshop, Mr Alyric Singh, a student from the Tailevu North College said that the workshop helped students learn and use different equipments and improve their practical knowledge in Physics.

"We have lab classes in school but we do not have all the resources which are required in carrying out some lab experiments," he added.

Similar sentiments were shared by Ms Losalini Biu from the Assemblies of God High School in Suva, who said that the workshop was very educational and thanked USP for allowing students to use science equipments.

Both Mr Singh and Ms Biu said they are keen to pursue a career in Physics at USP in the future.

Teachers who accompanied students to the workshop expressed their delight and interest for future workshops of this nature and suggestions were made for future workshops to be conducted over a two-day period.

Mr Shiva Kumar, a teacher from Rampur College in Navua, said that the workshop allowed students to take advantage of the available resources as students were given limited access to lab equipments in schools because of the risk of damaging and the cost involved in replacing such equipments.

Mr Kumar mentioned that the workshop assisted teachers to learn news ideas and techniques which are currently being used in science laboratories at USP. He highlighted that USP is one of the best institutions to study Physics because students can take their learning to a higher level.

He further emphasised the need for more workshops as such to assist schools in giving students the much needed practical knowledge in science.

The SEP and SPPS wishes to acknowledge the support of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE) in organising the workshop.

INSTITUTE OF APPLIED SCIENCES HOSTS REGIONAL CONSERVATION MEETING

Representatives from seven Pacific Island Countries (PICs) were hosted to a regional meet by the University of South Pacific's Institute of Applied Sciences (IAS) in Suva from 13 -14 June, 2011. This was to discuss the results of a project that was developed in 2009 to determine the baseline levels of persistent organic pollutants (POPs) in the human body and the air in these Pacific nations.

POPs pose several environmental and human health concerns that are regulated under the Stockholm Convention which calls for the monitoring of the effects of actions taken to reduce such pollutants.

The IAS began developing the expertise to measure these pollutants and it was recognised as the Regional Centre of Excellence in POPs Analysis in 2008 by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) Chemicals Division.

As part of the project, a USP team visited and conducted awareness on POPs and trained local staff to set up the air samplers and the protocols for collecting breast milk samples in the seven PICs. The work involved the Departments of Environment, the Ministries of Health, and the Departments of Meteorology.

The samples were collected and a portion was analysed at the IAS Laboratory and a second portion was sent to an expert laboratory in Europe.

Not all samples have been analysed but the general results indicate that the samples tested from the PICs are in the lower range compared to other countries. The exception is DDT, an insecticide banned in many countries in the 1980s due to serious environmental effects. The residues of DDT, which was used for some time in the Pacific and is still used for malaria control in Western Melanesia, still remain.

Another positive outcome was the close agreement between the IAS Laboratory results and those of the expert laboratories.

UNEP's Dr Heidelore Fiedler was very pleased with the meeting and the excellent results and improvements with the IAS Laboratory.

The project was coordinated by IAS staff, Mr Waisea Votadroka and the analyses was done by Mr Vincent Lal.

STUDENT PROFILE | SHAHIL RAM | BACHELOR OF ENGINEERING TECHNOLOGY

What is your home country?

Fiji.

Which Campus are you studying at?

Laucala Campus.

Why do you choose to study at USP?

The University offers a Degree in the field I want to go in.

What do you enjoy about "UNI" life?

Freedom

What do you find most difficult or challenging?

I find being consistent throughout the semester difficult.

What do you like about your program of study?

That is what I wanted to always do and that it looks at renewable energy as well.

What can't you live without on Campus?

I cannot live without sporting events.

What could improve your studying experience at USP?

New computers for the Engineering Block.

What is your best survival tip?

Work hard from the start and do not compete with others. Compete with yourself and you will succeed.

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

Hang out with friends and have some drinks and socialise.

What makes a good lecturer?

Being able to convey the concepts to the students of what he/she is teaching.

Who is your role model or mentor?

Ronaldo (Brazil)

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

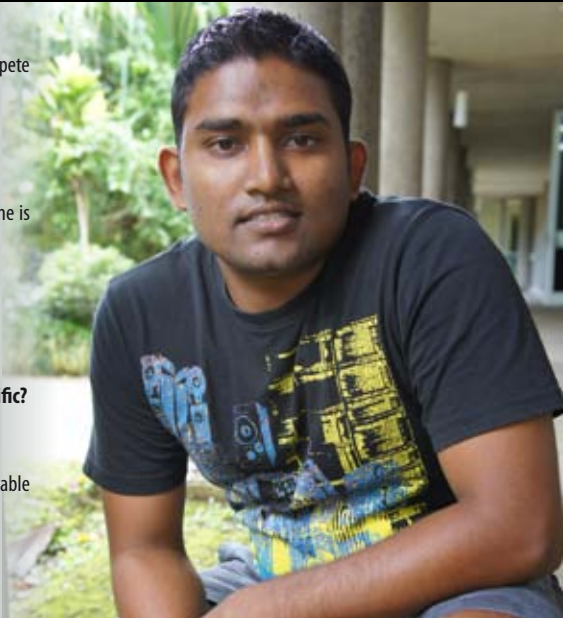
It will prepare me for anything in the engineering field.

What are some challenges facing young people in the Pacific?

Westernisation.

What are your hopes for the Pacific in 2011 and beyond?

I hope that Pacific Island nations take a step forward in the renewable energy field.



UNIVERSITY RESEARCH DAY - A SUCCESS

University staff and students who were part of this excursion expressed their appreciation for being given the opportunity to participate in a very educational and informative research field trip.

Mr Epeli Waqavonovono, a postgraduate student in Economics at USP stated that it was an excellent and a well organised trip with well prepared and informative presentations pitched at the right level.

Mr Waqavonovono added that he was impressed with the depth of knowledge and the enthusiasm shown by the researchers.

Similar views were shared by another USP student, Mr Jeremia Veisa, who said that "the research trip was a memorable one since I managed to get into a cave that was not only geographically spectacular, but also rich in tradition and historical significance."

University student, Mr Veremo Muria who hails from Wailotua, explained that the immense local significance of the caves is because different rooms in the caves accommodate different Gods (ancestors from the Kaunitoni Migration) for resting before they continue with their journey around Fiji.

He said that the caves consisted of three levels - the first level is for Gods while the other two levels are used by villagers and visitors.

Research Days are an initiative by the University's Research Office to raise awareness of key areas of research within the University and to encourage cross-fertilization of ideas. It also encourages a holistic view of solutions to challenges that confront the Pacific region.

A booklet of the Research Day to the Wailotua caves can be found on the University's Research webpage: <http://www.research.usp.ac.fj>

The University of the South Pacific's Research Office in collaboration with the Rites and Sites Research Group successfully hosted the first 2011 Research Day tour to the Wailotua Caves in Fiji for the University community on 4 June.

Over 40 staff and students traveled to Wailotua Village located 23 kilometres west of Korovou town along the Kings Road to the historic site of the caves.

The Research Day started off with brief introductory lectures from the researchers on four different research perspectives in relation to the study of the caves. These included the anthropological, historical, physical/geological and cultural significance of the Wailotua caves which according to traditional Fijian oral narrative, is believed to be the site where the spiritual ancestors or 'kalou vu' regularly passed through on their way to various parts of Fiji or where they would hold meetings.

During the trip, participants were divided into four groups and made their way to the Wailotua caves or the Snake-God caves accompanied by a local guide and one of the Research Group leaders.

Members of the Rites and Sites Research Group who accompanied participants on the trip included Dr Lynda Newland and Dr Christine Weir from the School of Social Sciences; Dr Mark Stephens from the Division of Geography; and Mr Elia Nakoro from the Fiji Museum.



Mr Go Ota, JICA Expert, lecturing on ITIL framework at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre.

USP-JICA ICT PROJECT CONDUCTS GLOBAL IT CERTIFICATION SEMINAR

A seminar on Information Technology Infrastructure Library (ITIL) - the worldwide standard framework and the collection of best practices of IT service management was held at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, USP Laucala Campus on 14 - 15 June, 2011.

The 'ITIL Version 3 (v3) Foundation Certification Seminar' which was facilitated by the USP-JICA ICT for Human Development and Human Security Project, was well attended by the USP IT staff.

ITIL is about delivering value to customers and serves as the best practice descriptive framework to:

- Facilitate desired outcomes;
- Enhance the performance of tasks; and
- Increase the probability that the real expected, needed and desired outcomes will be achieved.

According to the Chief Advisor of the USP-JICA ICT Project, Mr Kazuyoshi Fukushima, ITIL is also important to Information Security Management practices as it helps organisations like USP, which manages and operates complex ICT systems with more than 20,000 users, define its processes.

"The implementation of ITIL framework will greatly help by enhancing IT support and services delivery not only for the Laucala Campus but also for other regional campuses," he explained.

The ITIL v3 Foundation Certification is one of the most demanded certification worldwide and a comprehensive knowledge on ITIL is required in order to pass the certification exam.

Mr Fukushima said that the USP-JICA ICT Project believes that the certification will benefit the IT staff as ITIL is now the "global common language" in IT support and services delivery.

There were four seminar sessions conducted over the 2-day period for the 55 staff that participated. The seminar was conducted by Mr Go Ota, a JICA expert. He trained participants in thoroughly understanding the ITIL concepts and its implementation. He also provided some useful tips for the ITIL exam.

Currently, the University through its Information Technology Services (ITS) Section is undertaking the implementation of ITIL framework into its IT support and services delivery processes with the support of JICA experts.

STAFF REWARDED FOR MAJOR PUBLICATIONS



The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra (centre) and members of the Senior Management Team with the recipients of the awards.

The University of the South Pacific rewarded twelve academic staff for their high quality research publications in 2010.

The inaugural presentation of awards was made by the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra at a special morning tea on 8 June, 2011.

The Vice-Chancellor elaborated that the awards were to celebrate the achievements of authors and to encourage more participation of staff to engage in research.

In congratulating the recipients, Professor Chandra emphasised the importance of research, and said that the University is genuinely interested in promoting research while also fulfilling its commitment towards learning and teaching.

He assured the recipients that the University would continue to provide funding and institutional infrastructure support towards research that is relevant and beneficial to the region.

Highlighting the University's role in research, Dr Esther Williams, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration, HR and Regional Campuses) pointed out that one of the key outputs of Priority Area 3 in the University's Strategic Plan 2010 - 2012, is increased quality research publications.

The University adopts the Australian Research Council (ARC) and the Australian Business Deans Council's (ABDC) classification to rank the research outputs of research publications by the academic staff.

This scheme which is administered through the University's Research Office, commenced in January 2011, and will continue for two years when it will be reviewed. The University will make further awards in 2011.

A list of the recipients and their publications can be viewed on: <http://www.research.usp.ac.fj/rewards4publications>

USP Alafua Campus celebrates Samoa's 49th Independence Day

The staff and students of the University of the South Pacific's Alafua Campus were part of the celebrations to mark Samoa's 49 years of Independence.

Led by the Alafua Campus Director and Head of School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) Professor Ekpo Ossom, staff and students participated in the Independence Day March Past, which was held at the national *Ti'afau*, *Mulinuu* grounds on 1 June 2011.

The Alafua Campus contingent was part of the diverse groups of schools, organisations and Government ministries, Judiciary, Diplomatic Corps and community leaders that took part in the celebrations at the *Malae-o-Ti'afau* in the capital of Apia, in front of the Parliament House.

Wearing specially designed *ie lavalava* (sulu) the Alafua campus community proudly represented USP at this remarkable event.

The celebrations began with a prayer service, followed by the address by His Highness, Tui Atua Tupua Tamasese Efi, Head of State, who stressed the importance of the day.

"As we set sail towards our Golden Independence celebrations, we give thanks to God that we have reached this 49th birthday and pray that through his love and grace and our active and faithful service, we will have the privilege of seeing the sun rise again on this same day next year," he stated.

The celebrations were broadcast live on the local television and radio stations in Samoa. The Alafua Campus eagerly looks ahead towards the Golden Jubilee celebrations.



Samoa's 49th Independence Day celebrations.



USP Lautoka Campus hosts Road Show for the Rakiraki District

USP staff assist students with information during the USP Lautoka Campus road show in Rakiraki.

8

The University of the South Pacific's Lautoka Campus held a road show in Rakiraki - a district in Fiji's *Ra Province* located on the northern coast of *Viti Levu*, Fiji's largest island, on 25 June 2011. This was targeted at helping prospective students living in the remote areas of Rakiraki become aware of the options of pursuing further education with the University.

The road show, which was held at the Rakiraki Provincial Administrator's Ground, attracted the attention and participation of a large number of students, teachers, parents and the public at large.

According to Dr Pramila Devi, Lautoka Campus Director, the concept behind the road show in Rakiraki was to enhance the commitment of the Campus towards remote communities in the Western Division of Fiji and to provide information to students on the diverse range of learning and career opportunities available at USP.

During the road show, prospective students who cannot live and study at the USP Laucala Campus in Suva were advised of the benefits and convenience of studying via the Distance Flexible Learning (DFL) mode from their hometowns.

The participants were also given professional guidance from qualified staff of the Lautoka Campus and representatives from the Student Academic Services and the three University Faculties - Faculty of Arts and Law, Faculty of Business and Economics and the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment.

Dr Devi said that students were given an insight into the world of higher education in a fun, informal yet effective way. She added that the response towards the road show was very positive.

School of Agriculture and Food Technology participates in debate series



Debate series at the USP Alafua Campus.

The School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) at the USP Alafua Campus successfully organised three debates as part of the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE) debate series. The debates, which were held in May and June 2011, are expected to become an annual event for the campus in Samoa.

The three SAFT debate topics were: *Agriculture plays the most important role in eliminating obesity; Agriculture contributes to climate change; and Agriculture is the backbone of a country's economy, respectively.*

The four debate teams consisted of students from around the region who are studying at the Alafua Campus. The teams were assisted by staff members acting as the team advisors.

Lively presentations by the debaters and enthusiastic contributions from the floor added to the very interesting discussions during the debates.

Professor Ekpo Ossom, Alafua Campus Director and Head of SAFT, described the debate competitions as a "milestone" for SAFT and the Campus.

He added that it was a learning experience for the participants as most students had never taken part in a live debate.

Prizes were awarded for the best individual contributor for each debate, winning team of each preliminary round as well as the winning team of the final. The first debate was won by team Red while the second debate winner was team Green. Team Red took out the finals as the overall winner.

The winning SAFT team will travel to the USP Laucala Campus to compete against one of the six FBE Schools based in Suva during semester II.