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## USPBeat Magazine

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## PRIME MINISTER OPENS NEW STUDENT HOSTEL

The University of the South Pacific officially opened a new student hostel on 24 November, 2011 which will provide on-campus accommodation to students studying at the University.

The new 10<sup>th</sup> Hall of Residence, located at the Laucala Campus in Suva, was opened by the Prime Minister of Fiji, Honourable Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama.

The modern state-of-the-art student accommodation complex was built mainly by the University with F\$3.67million of its own funds and an additional amount of F\$0.8million from AusAID.

The new facility comprises six buildings, each with three floors and will accommodate 144 students. Each floor consists of an eight-bedroom multi-share facility and has its own showers (hot water), bathrooms, toilets, washing machine, kitchen and cooking facilities.

The Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams described the opening of the new student accommodation as a happy occasion for the students and staff of the University. She added that the new facility has been built after 15 years since the last student Halls of Residence was opened.

Dr Williams highlighted that the demand for more student accommodation has always been high given the increasing numbers of regional and international student population as well as local students from outside Suva needing on-campus accommodation.

With the addition of the 144-bed student hall, she said that the University has exceeded its target to increase the number of student accommodation by an additional 100 beds by 2011.

While highlighting the facilities and services provided at the new student hostel, Dr Williams said it will provide fantastic student lifestyle, academic and pastoral support, an organised social programme, excellent student and living facilities, and in particular the opportunity and choice to build lifelong friendships with students from all over the Pacific and the world.

"The new hall will be ideal in providing a home away from home," she assured.

In his speech, the Prime Minister, Honourable Commodore Bainimarama said he was "pleased to officiate at the opening of the new facility which will provide quality housing for more young minds at one of the region's leading education institutions."

Commenting on the important role the University plays in the region, the Prime Minister said that over the last four decades, USP has produced more than 40,000 graduates across a number of fields.

He said that former students of the University have gone on to become young leaders, ministers, professionals, and hold senior government positions in their respective countries throughout the region and even in international organisations around the world.

The Prime Minister reiterated Fiji Government's commitment to creating and supporting a knowledge-based society.

"This means molding a society in which access to quality education is available to all, and undertaking reforms to promote education delivery," he added.

He pointed out that improving the financing of education institutions remains a goal of the Fiji Government to ensure the adequate distribution of education grants - both to urban areas, and to fellow Fijians in rural areas.

The Prime Minister added that, "USP is the only university in the South Pacific with a truly regional presence, and will continue to enjoy its designation as a 'centre of excellence', as it produces innovative and practical solutions for the region's challenges."

The Prime Minister further stated that, "it is my hope that this facility and other similar advancements will benefit the students of Fiji and the region and provide them with safe and secure living and learning environments that are conducive for both mental and personal growth."

After the unveiling of the plaque, the Prime Minister was given a tour of the new facility followed by entertainment from the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies.



The Prime Minister of Fiji, Honourable Commodore Josaia Voreqe Bainimarama gives his address at the opening of the new student hostel. Also in picture: Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration & Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams.

# WATER QUALITY MONITORING TRAINING FOR COMMUNITIES IN KADAVU

The University of the South Pacific's Institute of Applied Science (IAS) under the Water and Nature Initiative project (WANI) is currently working with the district of Nakasaleka in Kadavu to improve the monitoring of drinking water quality.

Led by Dr Bale Tamata from IAS, the main purpose of the training exercise is to raise awareness about the link between unsustainable land-use practices from the surrounding upper catchment areas and their impact on the quality of drinking water for communities.

Higher form students of Kadavu Provincial School within the Nakasaleka district were trained in the use of a simple Hydrogen Sulphide (H2S) paper-strip test kit in July 2011.

H2S kits are used to determine the levels of sulphide-reducing bacteria as an indicator for contaminated drinking water. The kits consist of a strip of special paper in a sealed tube which is filled with the water to be tested and if contaminated, the water slowly develops a dark colour which indicates the contamination.

H2S tests have relatively good correlation with results from faecal and total coliform analyses making it ideal for widespread use on remote islands in the Pacific where conventional water quality monitoring is unable to be carried out.

During the exercise, students were tasked with monitoring the quality of water from three different water sources which were the secondary school water tank, primary school water tank, and the primary school creek over a period of three days. The results from the tests which were presented to the school indicated the presence of sulphide-reducing bacteria in the three water sources.

According to the Assistant Project Manager at IAS, Ms Leigh-Anne Buliruarua, the training has empowered members of the Nakasaleka district to make better decisions on their land-use practices after studying its effects on the quality of drinking water available to them.

Women participants from the Nakasaleka district also undertook the same training on 6<sup>th</sup> September. They used H2S kits for testing water quality within their respective communities from rivers and springs used for drinking.



## LAUNCH OF THE PACIFIC ICT REGULATORY RESOURCE CENTRE

(Left-right): ITU-EC Project Coordinator for the Pacific, Mrs Gisa Fuatai Purcell, Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams, Director of PIRRC, Mr Muhammad Aslam Hayat, Permanent Secretary for Public Enterprises, Communications, Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ms Elizabeth Powell, and the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra

The development of the Information and Communications Technology (ICT) sector in the region was further strengthened after the opening of the Pacific ICT Regulatory Resource Centre (PIRRC) at the University of the South Pacific on 10 November, 2011.

Located in the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre in Suva, PIRRC is funded by the World Bank and managed by LIRNEAsia, a consultancy firm from Sri Lanka.

The new Centre will collect key industry statistics and issue periodic reports on the state of telecommunications competitions in Pacific Island Countries (PICs). It will also develop information packages on priority regulatory topics including those where technical skills may be required in analysing industry trends, provide advisory services in response to country requests and identify additional sources of expertise and issue best practice statements on telecommunication policies and laws, and implement rules and regulatory instruments.

The Centre was inaugurated by the Permanent Secretary for Public Enterprises, Communications, Civil Aviation and Tourism, Ms Elizabeth Powell, who said that the opening of PIRRC comes at an opportune time for the region to maximize its benefits from the ever-evolving ICT sector.

Speaking at the launch, she highlighted that the resources made available through the PIRRC will help member states make sound policy decisions based on current international best practices.

The establishment of the Centre could also be seen as the recognition by the World Bank of the existing knowledge gap in the South Pacific, the Permanent Secretary further commented.

"The PIRRC will play an important role in helping to build capacity in our regulatory institutions. The training programs that they will facilitate in the South Pacific, and the tools and know-how that they bring to the region, will prove invaluable to member island states and their local institutions," she added.

According to Ms Powell, PIRRC's location at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre in Fiji places it within easy reach of all regional island states. This will enable PIRRC to quickly respond to and assist member island states throughout the region.

She affirmed Fiji's commitment towards ensuring the continuous development of the resource centre and the ongoing improvements to policies and regulations.

Ms Powell encouraged PICs to become members of the PIRRC in order to take advantage of the tools and services that the Centre will provide, and to enable mutual learning through shared experiences and discussions.

"The journey has only started and we are looking forward to many exciting new ICT initiatives and ways of refining and improving our regulatory framework," she stated.

Highlighting the importance of regulatory frameworks for ICT in the Pacific, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra said that the regional Centre will work directly with the regulators to provide information, training, and best practices to ensure that the Pacific regulatory framework for ICT is one that will promote the maximum use of ICT.

Similar views were shared by the Director of PIRRC, Mr Muhammad Aslam Hayat, who emphasised the vital role played by the Centre towards the development of the ICT sector in the Pacific.

In briefly sharing the history behind the establishment of the Centre, Mr Hayat said there were requests by the PICs for such a resource centre in order to provide capacity building for governments and ICT regulators.

He explained that providing regulatory resources to 14 Pacific countries separately would have been extremely difficult and expensive. This led to the decision to establish a centre at a central location providing support to governments and regulators in the PICs.

The efforts to establish the Centre dates back to 1996. In March 2006, the Pacific ICT Ministerial Forum held in New Zealand, recognised the importance of pooling scarce resources in the regulation of telecommunications services, and directed officials to approach the World Bank and other development partners.

After a study was commissioned by the World Bank in 2008, the recommendation to establish the PIRRC at the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre was endorsed at the Pacific Regional ICT Ministers Meeting on 18 June 2010, in Tonga.

Present at the launch were representatives from the Fiji Government, regulators from Pacific Island Countries, members of the World Bank, Pacific Islands Telecommunications Association, International Telecommunications Union, Pacific Islands Forum Secretariat and the Japan International Co-operation Agency, and USP staff and the media.



# 73<sup>RD</sup> USP COUNCIL MEETING



The 73<sup>rd</sup> USP Council meeting was held at the Video Conference Room of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre at USP's Laucala Campus from 3 - 4 November 2011. The Council normally meets twice a year to discuss the affairs of the University.

The first meeting is usually held in mid-May, in one of the member countries while the November meeting is always held at the Laucala Campus. The first meeting this year was held in Rarotonga, Cook Islands in May.

The Council is the highest decision making body of the University and comprises representatives of the 12 member country governments, academic staff, and student, community and business leaders. Representatives of Australia and New Zealand and a member of the CROP agency are also part of the Council.

The two-day meeting was chaired by the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council, Honourable Fiaame N. Mata'afa, Minister for Justice, Samoa.

In her welcoming remarks, the Honourable Fiaame Mata'afa thanked the members for their attendance to this important meeting of the University.

The Chair pointed out that as the University nears its 50th anniversary, more challenges and demands are on the University to take its performance to another level. In order to do that, she emphasised the need for the development of the next Strategic Plan, which will shape and make USP into a university of excellence. She therefore called on all members for their continued support and assistance.

In presenting his report, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra echoed the sentiments expressed by the Pro-Chancellor. He highlighted the following achievements since the last Council Meeting in May, which the Council acknowledged with appreciation:

- The construction of Phase II of the Japan-Pacific ICT Centre was completed on time and the ceremonial handover of keys took place in October;
- The third Vice-Chancellor's Forum on Learning and Teaching was held at the Laucala Campus to engage staff on the topic of 'Thinking about teaching better: Four challenges of fine universities', which was presented by the key note speaker Professor Peter McPhee from the University of Melbourne;
- USP and Australia signed an agreement governing the upgrade to the AARNet project, worth AUD 1,131,294, on 7 July. The upgrade will result in a quadrupling of bandwidth, which will be sufficient to meet the University's needs and requests from students and staff for increased speed;
- The University Grants Committee recently concluded its mid-term review. It has found that the University has made a very significant turn-around in all respects and is well placed to face future challenges;
- His Excellency Sir Frank Ofagioro Kabui, Governor General of the Solomon Islands, was installed as the new Chancellor of the University during the Laucala Campus Graduation ceremony in September;
- There was an increase in the number of students graduating at the postgraduate level at the Laucala and Cook Islands Campus Graduation ceremonies. This is consistent with the University's intention to increase the proportion of postgraduate enrolments and to increase research; and
- The Pacific Islands Centre for Public Administration (PICPA) has commenced operation since the beginning of August with the appointment of Professor Peter Larmour as the Interim Director.

Professor Chandra also highlighted the strategies for 2012 and beyond to transform the University into a higher quality, more relevant and sustainable institution that is widely seen as valuable by stakeholders.

In addition to the development of the next Strategic Plan, activities in 2012

will be centred around four key themes, namely institutional sustainability; student success, transformation and academic excellence; human resource transformation; and regional engagement and delivery.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, achievement in these areas will guide the University toward its goal of becoming a university of excellence by its golden jubilee in 2018.

## Major decisions of the Council

Key decisions taken by the Council were:

- **Leadership of USP:** The Council noted that the University had made a significant turnaround since the appointment of Professor Rajesh Chandra and expressed full confidence in his leadership at this critical time in the development of the institution;
- **USP Annual Plan and Budget for 2012:** Approval of the USP Annual Plan and budget for next year with total income projected at \$149.2m and total expenditure amounting to \$143.5m;
- **ADB Soft Loan:** Approval to proceed with a US\$19m soft loan from the Asian Development Bank for regional campus development;
- **USP Funding Formula:** The USP funding formula is to be retained in its current form with improvements to bring it more up-to-date. The overall member government contribution should continue to consist of the current two components (General and Special Grant) but have the components renamed as Student Grant and Campus Grant;
- **New Programmes:** Two new programmes were instituted, which are Bachelor of Engineering (Mechanical) and Bachelor of Engineering (Electrical and Electronics). The University was congratulated on the development of the engineering programmes which directly responded to the needs of the region;
- **New Strategic Plan:** The next USP Strategic Plan will be for a duration of six years (2013 - 2018), with the six priority areas in the current plan to remain as the main priorities, which are to be adopted as the focal areas for the new Strategic Plan;
- **USP Risk Management System:** The Council held an interactive session on the University's Risk Management System during which members were updated on the Risk Register and mitigation taken by risk owners with respect to the risks in their various portfolios. The University's Audit and Risk Committee would be responsible for identifying and rating new risks; and
- **Regional Copyright Licensing Agency:** The Council approved in principle USP's proposal to participate in the establishment of a Regional Copyright Licensing Agency subject to final endorsement by the Deputy Chair of Council and the Chair of the Finance & Investments Committee.

The Chair on behalf of the Council noted with gratitude that the confidence of member countries and development partners remained very strong and extended her appreciation to all stakeholders for their support towards the University. The Japan-Pacific ICT Centre is an excellent example of Japan's bilateral assistance to Fiji for the university as well as the Government of Korea's assistance on renewable energy.

The Chair also thanked the Vice Chancellor, Staff and Students of the University for excellent work in 2011. Finally, she thanked the Fiji Government for the hospitality extended to all members.

The Council meetings for next year will be held in early May and early November respectively. The May 2012 meeting will be held in Vanuatu back-to-back with the Forum Education Ministers meeting.





# LAUNCH OF KEY HOUSEHOLD SURVEY REPORT

The Counsellor, Development Cooperation at AusAID, Ms Sarah Goulding, Deputy Chief Statistician of FIBoS, Mr Epeli Waqavonovono and the Acting Head of School of Economics, Dr Sunil Kumar at the launch of the report.

A report on the household income and expenditure, titled '2008-2009 Household Income and Expenditure Survey for Fiji' was jointly launched by the School of Economics, Faculty of Business and Economics at the University of the South Pacific and the Fiji Islands Bureau of Statistics (FIBoS) on 3 November, 2011.

The report was funded by AusAID and compiled by Professor Wadan Narsey, a former academic and Professor in the School of Economics at the University.

The report brings out some major findings which are of interest. Besides highlighting the income and expenditure patterns in 2008-2009 period in Fiji, the report makes a number of useful comparisons from the earlier report published for the 2002-2003 period.

The report provides useful information on household income and expenditure patterns disaggregated by rural and urban areas, divisions, ethnicity and income groups, which are of great benefit for policy makers and researchers alike. Whilst showing some serious shifts in the income and expenditure patterns, the results also show some direction for the future of Fiji's economy.

Speaking at the launch held at the Laucala Campus in Suva, the Deputy Chief Statistician of FIBoS, Mr Epeli Waqavonovono highlighted that the report was a major achievement for the Bureau to be able to make such important data available at regular intervals.

"With a steady flow of household survey data such as the HIES, we will be in a better position to evaluate policies and programmes, update the poverty incidence rate and income distribution information," he explained.

Dr Sunil Kumar, Acting Head of the School of Economics, chaired the launch of this report. He underscored the relevance and timeliness of the report and congratulated AusAID, FIBoS and School of Economics, in partnering together to achieve this important milestone.

Many of the findings of the report mirror those which have emerged from other AusAID-funded poverty analysis conducted by the World Bank in conjunction with FIBoS.

In her address, Ms Sarah Goulding, Counsellor, Development Cooperation at AusAID, stated that the report provided an exciting opportunity to analyse and compare complex macro-economic and demographic changes.

She said that Australia provided technical assistance on data cleansing and analysis for the report. The assistance was part of AusAID's programme to better understand poverty and vulnerability in order to determine the right policy actions.

Notably, one of the key findings of the 2008-2009 report in comparison to the 2000-2003 report was that the incidence of urban poverty had declined across all ethnic groups. While poverty in rural areas had increased from 40 percent to 43 percent on the basis of numerous different economic indicators, and compounded by the impact of the global economic crisis.

The Australian Government provides a significant level of support to Fiji as the largest confirmed bilateral donor. This includes approximately F\$70million for 2011. Ms Goulding said that AusAID will continue to support efforts to better understand and respond to the nature of poverty in Fiji.

"Understanding poverty in Fiji is a key requirement for policy makers," she added.

On behalf of AusAID, Ms Goulding extended her congratulations to Professor Narsey and his team for producing a robust and high quality report.

Professor Narsey, who is currently in Japan, also made a short recorded video on the report which was presented during the launch.

## STUDENT PROFILE | KRISHNEEL KRISHAN KUMAR – BACHELOR OF COMMERCE



**What is your home country?**

Fiji Islands.

**Which Campus are you studying at?**

Laucala Campus.

**Why do you choose to study at USP?**

USP helps students to become independent learners and has a vibrant learning environment and a multicultural society.

**What do you enjoy about "uni" life?**

Everything, since it provides students with so many opportunities to study, particularly the latest versions of computers for students to use.

**What do you find most difficult or challenging?**

The most challenging part is when you have to stand alone and do all the work by yourself, while there is no one to back you up.

**What do you like about your programme of study?**

We get to learn about the business world with technological innovations.

**What can't you live without on campus?**

Computers! Because everything is accessible through student online services.

**What could improve your studying experience at USP?**

The friendly learning environment and supportive staff at USP help improve our study experiences and the availability of computers throughout the campus.

**What is your best survival tip?**

When you are bored with your life, read some encouraging articles and

journals and reflect on how to move forward in life.

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

I go out to play with my friends, sometimes jogging and chatting on Facebook.

**What makes a good lecturer?**

Someone who listens to students' queries, provides guidance to students when they are in need and treats everyone fairly and equally.

**Who is your role model or mentor?**

My parents! Sometimes I also get inspired by Swami Vivekananda and Mahatma Gandhi.

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

To become an accountant, auditor, system analyst, database administrator, software designer, and many more.

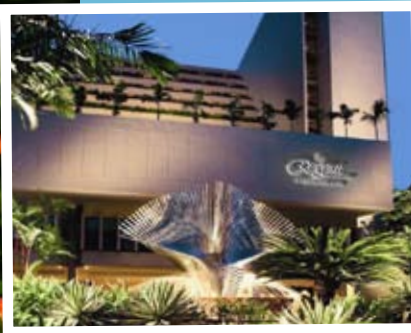
**What are some challenges facing young people in the Pacific?**

The most common challenge faced by young people in the Pacific is poverty, which restricts youths from achieving further education. On the other hand, literate young people are faced with the problem of unemployment.

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

I hope all the children who dream to get an education get their wish fulfilled and every school in the Pacific, especially in rural areas, are pushed towards higher education to enhance their knowledge and to become better citizens of the Pacific.





# INTERNATIONAL INTERNSHIP FOR TOURISM STUDENT

Florence Law will begin her 12-month internship at 'The Regent Singapore' in 2012.

A student of the University of the South Pacific has recently received an internship at an international five-star deluxe hotel in Singapore.

Ms Florence Kar Law, a second year Bachelor of Commerce in Hospitality Management (BComHM) student, will spend a year at 'The Regent Singapore'. As the first student in the Tourism programme to be placed overseas, Ms Law will begin her 12 month-long training in Food and Beverage and Rooms Division in 2012.

Ms Law is a high performing student and an active member of the Tourism and Hospitality Students Association. She had expressed her interest in obtaining an international placement and the School of Tourism and Hospitality Management (STHM) at USP successfully facilitated this request.

Looking forward to her internship, Ms Law says that she feels very proud of her achievement and that her hard work has been recognised.

She says that the experience will be a unique one as the environment and atmosphere in Fiji is relaxed while it will be the opposite in Singapore.

"I am very excited to work in a place that is very different from Fiji and look forward to experiencing new cultures and meeting new people," she mentioned.

The experience and skills she learns in Singapore will immensely benefit her career in tourism. This, she added, will help her gain an excellent "base knowledge and grounding" in the industry.

"With the knowledge that I gain, I hope to share it with my fellow students and future work colleagues. This can help improve the standard of hotels and resorts in Fiji, which is very important to the industry as a whole," she explained.

During her internship, Ms Law aims to perform to the best of her abilities to further enhance the University's reputation and to make it possible for more students to do their placements in Singapore like her. This will also assist in attracting students to study at USP, and in particular with STHM.

The Coordinator of the Hotel Management programme at USP, Mr Greg Cornwall said that Ms Law is a capable student and a high achiever.

He is hopeful that Ms Law's internship will inspire other students to take up similar international placements and will encourage them to study tourism and hospitality at STHM.

According to Mr Cornwall, her placement is a major step by STHM to strengthen its partnership with international stakeholders and other countries to provide the best opportunities for its students.

He highlighted that STHM is in discussion with the Indonesian Embassy to arrange student internships in Bali next year.

Mr Cornwall further stated that several of Fiji's premier hotels, resorts, tourism operators, and Carnival Cruises of Australia, have interviewed STHM students at the Careers Fair held earlier this year in September. He confirmed that some students had been offered internship positions.

Emphasising the importance of practical work experience, Mr Cornwall said that this enables students to apply the theoretical knowledge they have learned at the University to real life situations.

Ms Law will return to Fiji in 2013 after completing her internship to finish her final year of studies in the four-year BComHM programme.

## LAW STUDENTS ACHIEVE TOP HONORS

The University of the South Pacific's Emalus Campus in Vanuatu recently organised and participated in two international moot competitions and came out on top against teams from renowned universities in Australia and New Zealand.

The Pan Pacific Moot Competition, which was held from the 13 - 15 October, 2011 in Port Vila, Vanuatu, had teams from the USP Emalus Campus, University of Waikato (NZ), and Queensland University of Technology (Australia) taking part in this competition.

Each university had two teams consisting of two students. Each team mooted twice in the preliminary rounds based on issues relating to human rights and custom.

The final moot was between the QUT appellant team, Mr Damian Riggall and Ms Liana Marteus and the USP respondent team of Mr Joeli Ditoka and Ms Tupoutua'h Baravilala. Also mooting for USP were Ms Robyn-Ann Mani and Ms Jacqueline Wi-Kaitaia.

The moot team from the USP Emalus Campus came out victorious in the competition and won the Sibley Hill Trophy.

A similar feat was accomplished in August this year when USP hosted an international moot competition during the Law and Culture Conference. The University of Auckland, University of Otago and USP competed against each other. There were four teams from Auckland, Otago, Laucala (USP) and Emalus (USP).

The mooters from the Emalus Campus beat the Otago moot team in the final. This was a historic achievement as it marked the first-ever win for USP against Otago University.

The Emalus Campus Director and Head of the School of Law at USP, Professor

Eric Colvin said the win was a great moment for the Pacific region, and a testimony in itself that USP produces the best in the world.

He added that such competitions play a prominent role in enhancing relationships across Australian, New Zealand and South Pacific universities.

Whilst presenting the certificates to the participants, Professor Colvin acknowledged the hard work and efforts of the Moot Committee comprising law lecturers, Mr Joseph Fokouna, Ms Sofia Shah, Mr Michael Blaxell, Ms Carolyn Penfold and Mr Paul Mae in making the competitions possible.

Professor Colvin also took this opportunity to thank the Chief Justice of Vanuatu, Honorable Justice Lunabek for his continuous support to the international moot competitions and his panel of judges, Honorable Justice Spears and Honorable Justice Fatiaki for judging the competitions and providing feedback to the mooters of the region.

Other judges thanked were Professor Rhona Smith of International Human Rights at the University of Northumbria in the UK, Mr Jeremy Dore, a visiting lecturer, Mr Bill Bani, President of the Vanuatu Law Society, Mr Edward Noyal, a local practitioner, Mr Gideon Shapiro, Ms Siobhan, Professor John Dawson, University of Otago, and staff of the USP School of Law who contributed towards the moot competitions.



**Mooting is a competitive activity in which law students argue a hypothetical legal case at an appellate level. Moot court competitions are common within law schools, among law schools in particular jurisdictions, and internationally. Several courses in USP's School of Law have made use of mootings for assignments and assessment.**





## CAPACITY BUILDING WORKSHOP FOR RESEARCHERS

A two-day workshop on writing proposals was hosted by the Oceania Development Network (ODN) at the University of the South Pacific's Laucala Campus from 8 - 9 November, 2011.

Held at the Faculty of Business and Economics (FBE), the capacity building workshop attracted researchers from around the region to present and discuss on how to prepare research proposals.

As one of the regional networks of the Global Development Network, the ODN contributes to an effective Pacific Island Research Community through the promotion, generation, sharing and application of multidisciplinary knowledge for the purpose of development by investing in research by Pacific Islanders.

The ODN has established itself as one of the key networks within the GDN - which has become a worldwide network of research and policy institutes working to provide new perspectives to the development challenges of the present times.

In his introductory remarks, the Dean of FBE, Professor Biman Chand Prasad who also serves as the ODN Chairperson, highlighted that the ODN's main focus was to help develop the research capacity of young researchers in the region.

He explained that the workshop was a means to mentor young researchers to develop not only good research outputs but also to engage in policy relevant research and try to find ways to work with policy makers in the region.

According to Professor Prasad, ODN has come a long way since its inception. He stated that the expansion of ODN plays an important role in the region.

"We have had a series of research competitions, production of policy papers and I am very pleased that we were able to expand the network beyond the four or five universities we initially had," he remarked.

He acknowledged the assistance provided by academics from USP and other universities in facilitating the workshop.

The workshop also provided participants with the opportunity to interact with the people of USP and the winners of the Regional Research Competition.

Speaking at the workshop, the Chief Guest and Coordinator of International Relations from the University of French Polynesia, Dr Leopold Mu Si Yan said that such workshops were vital to support young research scholars in the region and to listen and discuss their research papers.

As a member of one of the five research teams at the University of French Polynesia, Dr Yan told participants that every four years, the research teams at the University have to produce relevant and interesting research.

"This is necessary to get accreditation and funding and it is one of the reasons the University of French Polynesia encourages young scholars to participate in various research programmes of the University which are result oriented," Dr Yan explained.

Professor Prasad informed participants that the next GDN annual conference will be held in Budapest, Hungary, in June 2012, after which ODN will host its own pioneer conference in September 2012, in Fiji.

## UNIVERSITY'S ANNUAL PUBLICATION WINS ACCOLADE



Winners in the four categories of the SPSE Annual Report Competition. (Left-right): Governor of the Reserve Bank of Fiji, Mr Barry Whiteside, Airports Fiji Ltd Chief Executive Officer, Mr Tony Gollin, Amalgamated Telecom Holdings Ltd Acting Manager Finance, Ms Sisilia Daveta and the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra.



The University of the South Pacific was declared the winner in the 'Co-operatives, Non-Profit and Charitable Organisations' category during the Annual Reports Competition Awards Night organised by the South Pacific Stock Exchange (SPSE) on 9 November, 2011 in Suva.

The 2010 USP Annual Report was awarded in category B - one of the four categories in the competition.

SPSE Chief Executive Officer, Ms Jinita Prasad said the process of preparing an annual report provides an institution with an opportunity to take a step back and look at the overall practical and financial health of the business.

"It allows the organisation to document essential information about its business in a format that is consistent year after year, enabling the company to compare and develop its core business infrastructure," she added.

Ms Prasad explained that the judging criterion for the annual reports focused on the objectives of the organisation including its mission statements, aims and objectives, the Chairman and the Chief Executive Officer's reports, presentation of financials, timeliness and compliance with accounting standards.

The judging panel consisted of six independent members. The panel was led by Ms Renu Chand, partner at KPMG, and members included Professor Michael White from USP, Mr Sunil Sharma from AliZ Pacific, Ms Glenis Yee from Munro Leys, Mr Ritnesh Narayan from the Auditor General's Office and Mr Peni Tora from Ernst & Young.

The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra said that the award was a good external validation of the University's work.

In thanking everyone involved in the compilation and production of the 2010 Annual Report, Professor Chandra said "we will ensure that we take account of any comments that the selection panel may have made on annual reports to see how we can improve our report even further."

The winners in the other three categories - 'Statutory Authorities, Government Bodies & Unlisted Trusts', 'Other Public Companies and Unit Trusts', and 'Listed Companies' were Reserve Bank of Fiji, Airports Fiji Ltd and Amalgamated Telecom Holdings Ltd respectively.

A total of 29 entries were received by SPSE this year.



# USP AND FINTEL FURTHER PARTNERSHIP

The Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra and the Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of FINTEL, Mr Ioane Koroivuki at the signing of the agreement.

The University of the South Pacific signed an agreement to further its partnership with Fiji International Telecommunications Limited (FINTEL) to upgrade its internet service from STM1 (155 Mbps) to STM4 (622 Mbps).

The signing took place at the Laucala Campus in Suva on 7 November, 2011.

Under the agreement, FINTEL will provide USP with Southern Cross Cable Network (SCCN) Capacity and Network Access services which include landing capacity and facilities interconnection services.

This will enable the University to access its own capacity on AARNet at the FINTEL cable landing station and further enhance USP's connectivity and reach to its member countries.

Speaking at the signing, the Vice-Chancellor and President of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra highlighted that USP has always appreciated the spirit of partnership it has with FINTEL, which allowed the University to achieve another milestone in terms of ICT and bandwidth capacity at USP.

According to the Vice-Chancellor, the University had formed an earlier partnership with FINTEL in 2005. This upgrade was to support distance education for students and to take advantage of the AARNet (Australian Academic Research Network) connection - a fibre optic cable network.

Professor Chandra described the partnership as a mutually beneficial one

for both the organisations.

"For USP, the partnership marks a significant upgrade in the University's internet capacity and we hope that this partnership continues in the future," he added.

In his remarks, Mr Ioane Koroivuki, Managing Director and Chief Executive Officer of FINTEL, agreed with the sentiments shared by the Vice-Chancellor.

He expressed FINTEL's appreciation of the faith and trust shown by the University towards the ongoing partnership.

Mr Koroivuki said FINTEL was happy to be part of USP's upgrade in moving from STM1 to STM4 which enables the University to supply internet to students and meet its requirements.

"As a service provider, we take pride in supporting the ventures of the University in its endeavors to be the institute of choice," he added.

Highlighting the role played by USP in the region, Mr Koroivuki said that this is similar to the way FINTEL positions itself to support government and education initiatives in the Pacific.

The signing was attended by representatives from both the organisations including the Deputy Vice-Chancellor (Administration and Regional Campuses), Dr Esther Williams and the Director of Information Technology Services at USP, Mr Kisione Finau.

## STUDENTS SHOWCASE UNIQUE PRODUCTS

Management students from the winning Luviopra Gravinda Jam Delights team display their products to the crowd.

Management students of the University of the South Pacific staged a product display at the Laucala Campus on 3 November, 2011.

The display was part of the Marketing Principles and Strategies (MG206) course which required students to prepare a marketing plan for a new or improved product, and then create and display the actual product based on their plan.

According to Ms Jashwini Narayan, the MG206 course lecturer, the display is an assessment component of the course which is aimed at enabling students to gain practical insights into the marketing process.

Ms Narayan elaborated that this not only helps students to understand the planning side of marketing but also the implementation side. She added that such displays expose students' talents and hard work.

She said that new products can be relatively easy to design on paper but the actual creation of the product can be difficult.

"In this way, the display encourages students to not only come up with good ideas but also ideas which are workable and can be converted into actual products," she stated.

The MG206 course is an in-depth survey of the principles of marketing based on the understanding of the importance of marketing towards the success of any business endeavor.

Highlighting the course benefits, Ms Narayan explained that it helps students to understand and appreciate the importance of marketing functions, the management of these functions, and how each function affects other functions within the marketing domain.

In assessing the products, the judges (from the School of Management) looked into various components, such as the display arrangement, product benefits to customers, pricing justification, and the originality of the products.

The Luviopra Gravinda Jam Delights team was declared the overall winner for the 2011 MG206 Product Display. Breadfruit Crackers and the Pumpkin Jam teams were placed second and third respectively.

The Luviopra Gravinda Jam Delights team displayed a healthier alternative for jams by using the glaviola fruits.

Ms Vicky Fong, a member of the winning team, said the idea behind the product was to make people more health conscious.

Another student, Ms Lusia Iagivuni pointed out that the competition among the students was tough and being awarded for the best product was a surprise.

"The products were amazing. The students all came up with new things which can actually be put into the real market and can be done in real life," she commented.

Members of the USP community were present at the display to witness first-hand the innovative products showcased by the students.



# HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TRAINING FOR FIJI SUGAR CORPORATION



With the incessant organizational change and the increasing global competition, there is a growing demand for new skills, continuous learning and accelerated work pace to meet exceptional service quality delivery. Such challenges must be looked into at the management-level in order to create and maintain a work place and team that functions effectively and efficiently.

These issues were addressed at the two-day training programme on *'The Fundamentals of Human Resource Management'* organised by the University of the South Pacific.

Senior and middle-level managers and human resource officers from the Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) participated in the workshop which was held from 24 – 25 November, 2011.

The training was held at the USP Lautoka Campus as part of its Continuing and Community Education (CCE) to prepare managers to perform more competently and professionally. The training was conducted by Mr Rajendra Singh and co-instructed by Manager CCE, Mr Hasmukh Lal.

In his welcome address at the opening of the workshop, Mr Lal said that the Lautoka Campus was pleased to host the training of selected senior and middle managers of all four mills and the headquarters staff of FSC.

"This training will add the fundamental skills that are required to manage human resources which is the biggest asset for any organisation. All the change, innovation, productivity, efficiency and effectiveness can be achieved at any organisation if the human resources are properly looked after," he explained.

Mr Lal told participants that the workshop is a refresher course for human resource officers and offers a structured training for those who are non-specialist human resource officers but manage people, like the section heads of the engineering and mechanical divisions.

According to Mr Lal, the training includes a workplace assessment component to ensure the epistemologies acquired from the training are implemented at the workplace.

Through this assessment, participants will provide substantial or supporting evidence of strategies implemented at their workplaces from the content they have learnt in the training before being certificated.

Mr Lal pointed out that USP anticipates a long-term partnership with FSC in terms of professional training.

In his address, FSC's Manager Human Resources, Mr Timoci Laqai said FSC valued the training and up-skilling of its staff.

He stressed the need for staff to be well versed with the revolving changes and the need to be updated with contemporary skills.

Mr Laqai thanked the Lautoka Campus for the training. He indicated his interest in furthering the USP – FSC partnership in the area of professional training.

The training covered topics like: The Interview Process; Using Behavior Description Interviewing; The Importance of Job Descriptions; Advertising for Resumes; Absenteeism; Diversity; Compensation and Benefits; and Discipline and Termination.

## LAUTOKA CAMPUS BLOOD DRIVE



Donors register during the blood drive in Lautoka.

After successful blood drives at the University of the South Pacific's Lautoka Campus earlier in the year, a similar initiative was launched by the USP Lautoka Campus for the Western Division in Fiji.

In its first-ever blood drive, the Lautoka Campus collected a total of 52 pints of blood which has the capacity to save over 150 lives.

Held at the Sugar City Mall in Lautoka on 12 November 2011, the blood drive was part of the Campus initiative to give back to the local community and encourage youths to participate in a worthy cause to save lives.

A recent proposal by the Campus Life Group Manager, Mr Glenn Pope led to the formation of a committee comprising of staff, who liaised with the Lautoka Hospital to organise the event.

The Chairman of the Blood Drive Organising Committee at the Lautoka Campus, Mr Dennis Sen was pleased with the response from students who took out time from their busy study schedules to donate blood.

"It was good to see that many young people were interested in donating blood. We took out time to explain to them and others on the importance of donating blood," he mentioned.

Mr Sen said that the blood drive attracted a lot of donors that included students and staff of the Lautoka Campus, a majority of them being first-time donors who will most likely become full-time donors.

To create awareness for the blood drive, notices were placed in and around Lautoka city, community messages were aired on major radio stations, and Vodafone txt messages were sent to regular donors at the Lautoka Hospital.

Following a positive response from those who had turned up to donate blood, there are plans by the Lautoka Campus to continue and incorporate this initiative as a bi-annual or quarterly event.

Mr Pope elaborated that after the success of the blood drive in Lautoka, the USP Campus Life is planning to expand this campaign to other USP regional campuses.

He applauded the Lautoka Campus Director, Dr Pramila Devi and her staff for their efforts in organising the blood drive.

During the blood drive, the Campus also marketed its courses and programmes offered through Distance and Flexible Learning (DFL) as well as Continuing and Community Education (CCE).

## ALUMNI PROFILE | SOFIA ALI | FIJI



### 1. What programme did you graduate in and in which year?

I graduated in Master of Education (10th September, 2010,) Post Graduate Diploma in Education, (11th April 2008), Bachelor of Education (Primary) (27th April 2007).

### 2. Who is your favorite lecturer and why?

My favourite lecturers were Professor Konai Helu Thaman and Dr Unaisi Nabobo Baba. They were my mentors towards my studies and they had given me amazingly strong will to complete my studies.

### 3. What was your most memorable moment as a student?

Most memorable moment was when I was doing my summer school unit in December 2009, there was a cyclone that

struck Fiji. The power was down and we had to complete our assignments so we had to visit houses that had generators to complete assignments.

### 4. What was your greatest achievement while studying at USP?

While trying to complete my last unit for Master in Education, I was given an opportunity to join Lautoka Teachers College as a lecturer.

### 5. How do you think USP helped you in your career?

USP has helped me in making my career by achieving my goals and helping me to build my status. It helped me in getting back into studies after a lapse of 10 years since I graduated from Lautoka Teachers College in 1990 now known as the Fiji National University.

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

After graduating my greatest achievement is getting a new job as a lecturer at Fiji National University Lautoka Campus.

### 7. Your advice to current and future USP students?

Set your goals and work hard towards achieving your goals. If you can think about it, you can achieve it - nothing is impossible. And for the late starters - age is not a barrier to education. Studying at USP is challenging for most young people, but when students don't have access to mentors who have studied at this level and can provide advice, they can feel lost and unsure whether higher education is attainable. So have a mentor!



