

Commissioning of a New Solar-Wind Hybrid System



The Vice-Chancellor of the University of the South Pacific, Professor Rajesh Chandra and the Cooperation and Cultural Action Counsellor of the French Embassy Mr Bernard Maizeret.

Considering the high dependence of Pacific Island countries on imported fossil fuels for their electricity generation and the impacts of such fuels on the environment, it is imperative to develop *'Renewable Energy-Based Electricity Generation Systems.'* These systems may be solar, wind, mini hydro or biomass and may help combat the impacts of global warming and climate change. The University of the South Pacific (USP), as a regional education provider, is at the forefront of research, teaching and capacity-building in renewable energy, which is also a part of the university's strategic plan.

The commissioning of a new *Solar-Wind Hybrid System* at USP's Laucala Campus represents a small step in the right direction. This small 1.02 kilowatt system, while providing lighting to parking areas on-campus, will serve as [CONTINUED ON PAGE 3](#)

Visiting Senior Lecturer, Mr John Green, from the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand, recently delivered a series of presentations on several aspects of online learning and teaching to the Centre for Flexible and Distance Learning (CFDL) staff from 8–22 October 2009. Of particular interest was the presentation on *'Second Life' (SL)*, a first for USP which was attended by the Course Design and Development team and the Student Learning Services team leader.

During the presentation, the CFDL staff members observed with spell-bound interest as the avatars of Mr Green and Mr Dhiraj Bhattu (staff member) met and talked to avatars from Texas and Saudi Arabia synchronously. Mr Green explained the *'avatar concept'* as a 3D persona (similar to an alter-ego of the person who creates the avatar) and gave *'real-time'* demonstrations of how other avatars manoeuvre and interact in SL. In New Zealand, the government has funded the Second Life Education New Zealand (SLENZ) project which commenced in August 2008. Specific examples of how SL supports education were illustrated by midwifery and foundation courses at the Open Polytechnic. At USP, special permission was obtained from the Information Technology Services (ITS), to allow the accommodation of the Second Life Multiuser Virtual Environment (SLMVE) in which Second Life avatars live and interact.

Other particularly relevant areas to USP's learning and teaching community include Mr Green's presentations on:

- time released announcements; and
- automated marking and return of marked assessments.

Mr Green also stated that these online learning enhancements drastically improved his student retention rates, and his teaching workload has been reduced significantly over the years that he has been engaged in eLearning.

Mr Green has over 10 years of experience in online distance learning, in particular, using technology-based learning management systems including Blackboard and Moodle. His presentations are based on his research interests that include student retention, social presence and student interaction, online pedagogy, clanning, second life, and mobile learning via Moodle. ■

Visiting Avatar



Mr John Green the visiting Senior Lecturer from the Open Polytechnic of New Zealand.

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REGIONAL NEWS IN BRIEF

Pacific Nations Plead for Climate Change Agreement

A group of 11 Pacific Island countries has issued a joint call to the United Nations General Assembly to adopt a legally-binding treaty to tackle climate change.

Speaking on behalf of the group, Palau's ambassador to the UN, Stuart Beck, warned that failure to take action immediately will result in the loss of entire nations. He has told the 192-member body that only the agreement on a treaty at next month's climate change talks in Copenhagen can save low-lying Pacific nations like Kiribati, Tuvalu and the Marshall Islands. Mr Beck's plea comes amid concerns that a proposed treaty will not be ready in time for the December meeting in Denmark.

In recent weeks both the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) and Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation (APEC) have failed to come to any agreement on how to cut harmful carbon emissions.

The president of Kiribati, Anote Tong, has told Radio Australia's 'Pacific Beat' programme he's concerned by the negative outlook for the Copenhagen talks. Kiribati is among the world's most climate-vulnerable nations, and Mr Tong said his country desperately needs the world's major polluters to commit to an immediate reduction in emissions.

He said the world can't afford to be pessimistic, "there must be agreement and we must convince everybody to come away with an agreement, not on everything, because I know we cannot agree on everything, but let's not waste our time. I think there's too much at stake."

Australia to Join Coral Triangle

Australia's Environment Minister Peter Garrett is travelling to the Solomon Islands for talks on protecting the marine environment known as the Coral Triangle.

The triangle – which is the world's richest marine area and provides food and a livelihood to 240 million people – has been threatened by a population increase and unsustainable fishing practices. Mr Garrett will take part in talks with ministers from Malaysia, Indonesia, East Timor, Papua New Guinea, the Philippines and Solomon Islands, and they are expected to discuss ways to protect the area from the impacts of climate change.

Earlier, the Coral Triangle meeting said it would consider revising fishing quotas. The Solomon Islands Minister for Environment, Conservation and Meteorology, Gordon Darcy Lilo, who is chairing the meeting, said they were confident of agreeing on new fishing quotas and practices that would help protect the area.

"I believe that the co-operation we have established so far has worked out very well", he said. "With the kind of support from donors that has been indicated and confirmed, I do believe we will be able to have a good programme to go ahead in preserving this particular triangle, the Coral Triangle."

(SOURCE : PACNEWS)

Professor Eduard Babulak USP's new Professor of Computing Science and Information Systems at the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE), at Laucala Campus.



USP has a new Professor of Computing Science and Information Systems

Professor Eduard Babulak has just joined the University of the South Pacific (USP) as the new Professor of Computing Science and Information Systems at the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE) at Laucala Campus.

Professor Babulak is an international scholar, researcher, consultant, educator, professional engineer and polyglot with more than twenty-five years of teaching experience and industrial experience as a professional engineer and consultant.

He was an 'Invited Speaker' at the University of Cambridge in the United Kingdom in March 2009, as well as at MIT in the United States in September 2005. He was also an Expert-Evaluator for the European Commission in Brussels in June 2007.

Dr Babulak is a Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce (RSA), Fellow of British Computer Society (BCS), Nominated Fellow of the IET, Nominated Distinguished Member & Senior Member of ACM, Mentor and Senior Member of IEEE, and served as a Chair of the IEEE Vancouver Ethics, Professional and Conference Committee.

He worked as a Full Professor and Head of the MIS Department in Cyprus, held five 'Visiting Professorships' in Canada (B.C. and Quebec), Spain and in the Czech Republic (Prague and Pardubice). He also worked as an Associate Professor in California, Senior Lecturer in the UK, Lecturer in Pennsylvania, Germany and Austria, Lecturer and Teaching Assistant in Canada and College Instructor in Czechoslovakia.

Professor Babulak's academic and engineering work was recognised internationally by the Engineering Council in the UK, European Federation of Engineers and credited by the British Columbia and Ontario Society of Professional Engineers in Canada. He was the Editor-in-Chief, Honorary Editor, Co-Editor and Guest Editor. The professor's research interests are in Future Networks and Ubiquitous Computing and QoS, E-Commerce, E-Health, IT, MIS, Applied Informatics in Transportation, E-Manufacturing, Human Centric Computing, E-Learning, Automation and Applied Mathematics.

Professor Babulak speaks 14 languages, and is a member of the Institution of Engineering Technology (MIET), American Society for Engineering Education (MASEE), American Mathematical Association (MAMA) and Mathematical Society of America (MMSA).

Professor Babulak is a family man, enjoys bird watching, the countryside, likes to walk, and plays the guitar and organ. His biography was cited in the Cambridge Blue Book, Cambridge Index of Biographies and a number of issues of Who's Who. ■

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JICA and USP officially launch ICT project

The Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) and the University of the South Pacific (USP) officially held a Signing Ceremony to launch the 'ICT for Human Development and Human Security Project' on Friday 30 October 2009.

The project aims to strengthen USP's ability to produce cutting-edge Information Centre for Technology (ICT) resources for the Pacific region through the introduction of new Computer and Information Science degree programs, enhancing the utilisation of USPNet for the delivery of distance learning, and supporting maximum utilisation of the new Japan-Pacific ICT Centre as a regional centre of excellence. Construction of the new Japan-Pacific ICT Centre, a US\$21.5 million (FJD\$43 million) Japanese Grant Aid Project, will be completed in March 2010.

Over the course of the three-year project period, several ICT-related experts from JICA will be dispatched to support USP faculty and staff in the project implementation. Short-term and long-term training opportunities will also be offered, and the necessary equipment provided for the project operation, at a cost of around US\$2.8 million (FJD\$5.6 million).

Through the 'ICT for Human Development and Human Security Project', JICA is supporting the Strategic Plan to use ICT in strengthening the delivery of learning and teaching across the university, and developing ICT courses to meet the priorities of the region.

All 12 USP member countries are expected to benefit from the project, which is being implemented under JICA's Pacific Regional Programme to utilise ICT for advancing human development and ensuring human security in the Pacific region. The Record of Discussion for the project was signed between Mr Tomoyuki Naito, Director of the Transportation and ICT Division at JICA Tokyo Headquarters, Dr Esther Williams, the Acting Vice-Chancellor of USP, and Mr Josefa Natau, the Deputy Secretary of the Ministry of Education, who represented the government of Fiji. ■



Mr Tomoyuki Naito (JICA), the Acting Vice-Chancellor of USP, Dr Esther Williams, and Mr Josefa Natau, the Acting Deputy Secretary of the Education Ministry representing the Fiji government.

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a demonstration and training unit. This is the first in a series of several systems planned. About 60-70 students from all over the Pacific take the University's courses on renewable energy every year and it is hoped that they will carry the knowledge and message to their home countries and communities on their return. The project will also help create renewable energy awareness among campus residents and visitors. The French Embassy in Suva provided the initial funding for this project with additional support from the USP Administration.

A small ceremony was organised on Friday 23 October 2009, to officially commission the project. The commissioning was jointly officiated by the Vice-Chancellor of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra, and the Cooperation and Cultural Action Counsellor of the French Embassy, Mr Bernard Maizeret. In his speech, the Vice-Chancellor reiterated USP's resolve to promote sustainable development in the USP member countries, and conveyed his support for renewable energy education and training at the University. He applauded the strong ties between USP and the French institutes in the Pacific region, and mentioned that there is almost half a million dollars worth of operational French-funded projects within the University. In his short address, Mr Maizeret expressed his commitment

to forge stronger ties with USP. The Dean of the Faculty of Science, Technology and Environment (FSTE), Dr Anjeela Jokhan, welcomed the guests while Dr Atul Raturi, Co-Principal Investigator, presented a short background of the project. He said the project was essentially a statement that:

- Talks about the Pacific Island countries' need to move away from imported fossil fuel-based electricity generation;
- Stresses the urgency to develop indigenous renewable energy resources; and
- Reinforces USP's commitment to help develop manpower for sustainable development in the region.

Dr Raturi said he hoped this small beginning will lead to larger projects all across the Pacific, with the French Embassy joining hands with USP to promote sustainable energy.

Dr Anirudh Singh, the Head of the School of Engineering and Physics, gave the vote of thanks. The project team consisted of Dr Ajal Kumar (Co-Principal Investigator), Mr Shivneel Prasad (Post Graduate student), and Mr Radesh Lal and Mr Viti Buadromo. The support extended by Mr Jeremy Henderson, Projects Manager USP, and the University were also acknowledged. ■

STAFF PROFILE | RONILESH PRASAD | Customs / Procurement Officer



Length of time employed at USP: 1 June 2009 to date;

Home Country: Fiji

Campus: Laucala

How do you usually begin your working day?

I check my e-mail and attend to queries, before I start with purchase orders and customs clearances.

What is the best part of your current work?

It's always busy and I have very friendly and hard-working colleagues.

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

Listening to soft music or playing soccer.

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

That is still to come or yet to happen.

Best advice you've ever been given, or have given to students at USP?

Don't work hard but work smart.

Who inspires you and why?

Our Procurement Manager. She is very hard-working and inspires us as well.

What have been your main career highlights?

Being employed by USP.

What book are you reading at the moment, and why?

I hardly read books.

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

A lack of recognition for their talent.

What are your hopes for the Pacific region in 2009 and beyond?

Better education, more job opportunities and better living standards. ■

Oceania Centre Feather Appeal raises over \$20,000 for Tsunami Appeal

As part of the University of the South Pacific's response to the tragic tsunami in Samoa and Tonga, the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies (OCAC-PS) organised a community fundraiser, called the 'Samoa Feather Appeal'

The Feather Appeal activities raised a total of \$21,752, and organisers of the event said they were overwhelmed by the generosity of the art community, business houses and the general public. USP student and staff responses were also very positive.

In an intimate handover, Acting-Director OCAC-PS, Frances Cresantia Koya, presented a cheque of \$16,412 to Vice-Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra. She explained that some funds had already been deposited into the USP Tsunami account in the amount of \$1,040, bringing the contribution to the USP Tsunami appeal to \$17,452. In addition to this amount, \$4,300 raised in a raffle has been earmarked for direct contribution to the Samoa Red Cross as per the raffle permit issued. The donation from USP to the Samoa Red Cross is expected to take place later.

The Samoa Feather Appeal Music and Dance Extravaganza brought together a multitude of locally based Pacific artists, in an event unlike anything Suva has ever witnessed. Held at Suva's Holiday Inn, the concert included music performances by Tom Mawi and the



The Vice-Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra receives a cheque of \$16,412 from the Acting Director of the Oceania Centre for Arts, Culture and Pacific Studies (OCAC-PS), Ms Frances Cresantia Koya.

house band, Laisa Vulakoro, Pacifica Voices, Kaila Star winner 2009 - Ana Silivale, Adrian 'Magic Fingers' Narayan & Francesca Horoi, 4 bois, Niu Sounds, Asesela Ravuvu and Sogaia Sereicacoko. Dance performances featured the Oceania Dance Theatre, Katya, Rako Dance group, the Terana Dance group, Shobna Chanel, and a fashion segment by emerging local designers Aggie Tokotaha, Michael Mausio and Stephanie Semisi. The 'MCs' of the event were former radio personalities Lenora Qereqeretabua and Aquila Qumi. The 'Samoa Feather Appeal' was the result of a week of hard work by the core team comprising Ann Tarte, Kylie Jayne Anderson, Allan Alo and Frances Koya. Ms Koya acknowledged the support of friends, artists, USP staff and students, and friends of the centre who came together in such a short time to contribute to the activities. She thanked all the sponsors, in particular the Holiday Inn and the Fiji Times, all supportive business houses including ticket outlets and sponsored prizes, Kahawa, Esquires, the USP Book Centre, Shoreline Boutique, Guava Restaurant, Mango Café, Bligh Water Shipping, Uprising Beach Resort, and Fiji Fashion Week.

Special acknowledgement was also made to the artists who contributed works towards the raffle and art auction which included: Marita Brodie, Lingikoni Vaka'uta, Craig Marlow, Peter Sipeli, Ledua Peni, Pita Waqanui, Paula Liga, Adi Nacola, Marie B. Koya, Lambert Ho, Anare Somumu, Maria Rova, Dominique, and Teweiariki Tezero. Kylie Anderson, Ann Tarte and Frances Koya also donated art works towards the raffle.

At the official handover, the Vice-Chancellor of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra, thanked the organising committee for their efforts and commended the Acting-Director for her leadership in taking the initiative to organise the event. He said that it was heartening to see the way the wider community responded to this Pacific tragedy. The Oceania Centre hosted a BBQ lunch on Saturday 31 October to thank the art community and volunteers for their support towards the tsunami appeal. The Feather Appeal Raffle was also drawn at this final event. ■

STUDENT PROFILE | ANITA NANDANI | BSc Gced Biology & Chemistry

Year of Study: 2nd year student

Home Country: Fiji

Campus: Laucala

Why did you choose to study at USP?

Because I wanted to study at a well recognised institution

What do you enjoy most about uni life?

Interacting with different cultures

What do you find most difficult or challenging?

Coping with the University's academic life

What do you like best about your programme of study?

It gives me a better understanding about my environment and people around me

What can't you live without on campus?

Communicating with friends, and the University facilities like the pool and internet

What could improve your studying experience at USP?

Seeking the services of a mentor

What is your best survival study tip?

To revise every day

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

I surf the net and mingle with friends

What makes a good lecturer?

A lecturer who constantly communicates with his students

Who is your role model or mentor, and why?

A lady by the name of Mrs Nilesni Prasad. She was my secondary school teacher and encouraged me to study at USP

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

Teaching in Secondary Schools

What are some challenges facing (young) people in the Pacific?

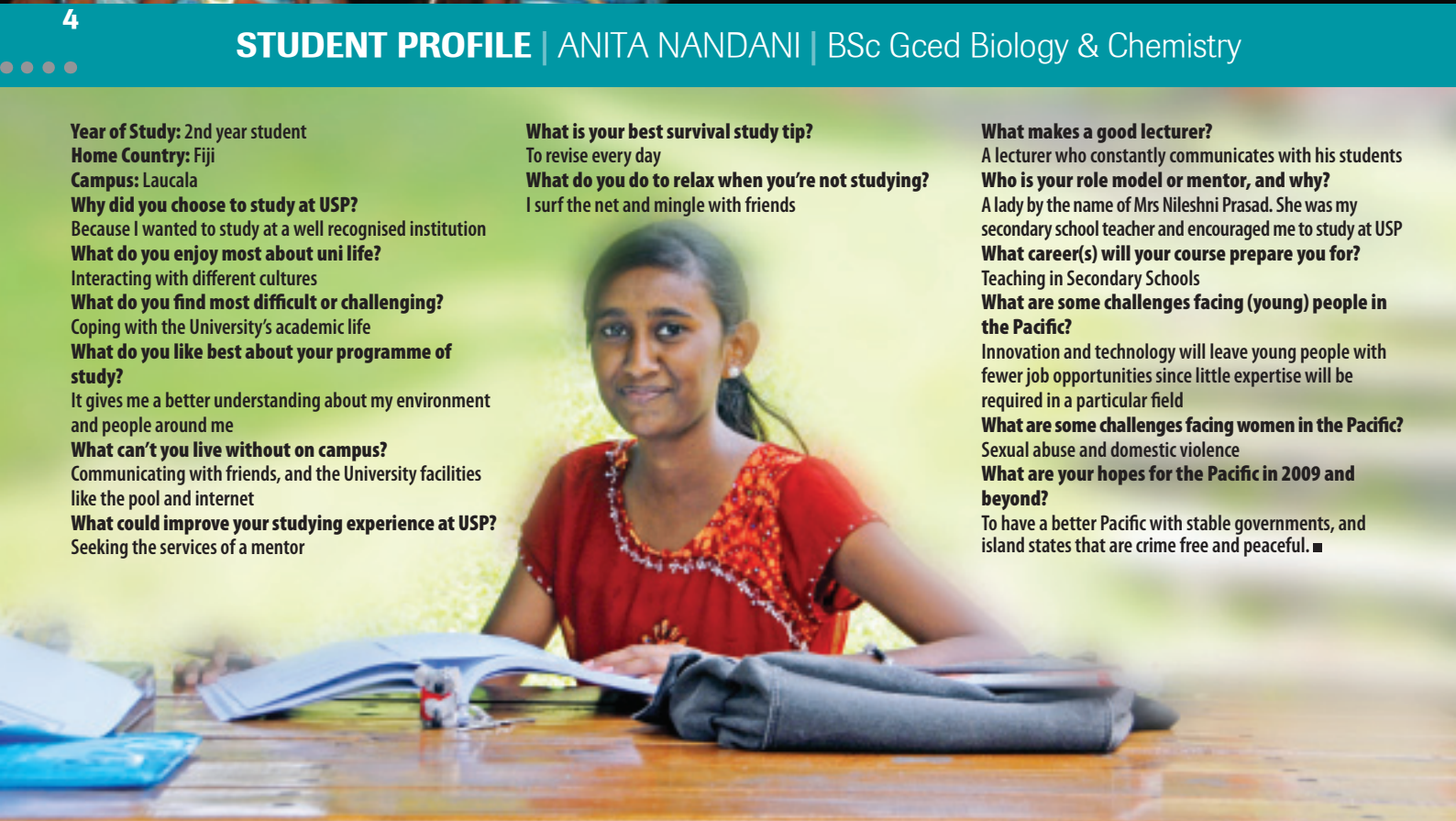
Innovation and technology will leave young people with fewer job opportunities since little expertise will be required in a particular field

What are some challenges facing women in the Pacific?

Sexual abuse and domestic violence

What are your hopes for the Pacific in 2009 and beyond?

To have a better Pacific with stable governments, and island states that are crime free and peaceful. ■



Making the Transition:

From Student to Librarian

To succeed in their study, a successful student will have developed good research skills. Graduating students must be familiar with the library catalogue and books on their subject area, online databases and internet search techniques.

To use these resources you will have to have a range of effective strategies to locate the information you need, and you will know that doesn't just mean computer searches. It also means scanning contents pages and searching the indexes of those old-fashioned things you see on library shelves – books.

After your degree, you can continue using those research skills during your working life. However, some people enjoy the research side so much that they take a step sideways – to a career in searching, as a librarian.

The library profession and library employers welcome subject experts and there are good career prospects, as being qualified in a subject field as well as librarianship brings a double benefit to your employer.

In the Pacific, there are libraries covering marine science, agriculture, medicine, museums, training, law, journalism and many more. In government, academic and NGO libraries, knowledge of economics, statistics, politics, geography or law is a real benefit.

So if you think library work could be a good career for you, where do you start?

Here, at the University of the South Pacific. The Diploma in Library/Information Studies is a degree level program with ten 100 and 200 level courses. The program includes six L/IS courses, three electives and the compulsory core course *UU114: English for Academic Purposes*. As a graduate, courses you have already studied may qualify as electives within the L/IS Diploma. The minimum requirement for Diploma entry is Form 7.

As this is a distance and flexible learning programme, we have students all over the Pacific. Many students work full-time or part-time while they study, but it is also possible to study the complete programme full-time. The more library work experience you have, the better. Paid employment is obviously best, but some libraries offer opportunities for voluntary work.

Diploma graduates start in library assistant positions throughout the Pacific. To enhance local career prospects, we are also developing a proposal for a full degree in library studies. For senior and management positions, a post-graduate qualification is often necessary. Currently there are no post-graduate library qualifications in the Pacific Islands, but senior librarians have studied in countries such as Australia, New Zealand and Britain.



Albert Miller a USP Library staff, shows a student what libraries can do for him.

A library career means you will be part of the Pacific's knowledge base, and it is a challenging career with plenty of variety. There are good opportunities to work with computer systems, in management positions, or promoting information literacy to the future generations. The USP website has more information: usp.ac.fj/library_studies ■



USPs Women and Men's volleyball teams.



USP INTER-TERTIARY CHAMPS FIVE IN

A ROW

The University of the South Pacific (USP) has done it again! They have successfully defended their title as Champions of the Inter-Tertiary Games for five consecutive years.

According to the USP Team Sports Coordinator, Mr Abdul Mannan, the USP senior rugby team retained the trophy for this year. He said the men's and women's soccer teams took out top honours in their competition, and so did the mixed netball team, the men's and women's basketball teams, the women's hockey team, the mixed touched rugby team, the tennis team and the athletics team.

Mr Mannan said, "We lost in nine categories out of twenty-four, but that did not dampen the spirits of the students, as they performed outstandingly and displayed talent and skills, with an excellent display of professional sportsmanship throughout the four-day event."

He said, "Our aim is to get all USP sports teams to participate in competitions outside of the university, so that they can get exposure and experience, preparing them for next year's Inter-Tertiary Games where we hope to win all twenty-four categories."

He added, "As the years progress, the competition gets tougher, and with the available facilities, supportive coaches and many interested students who have the potential, USP Sports is eager and ready to take sports to another level, to produce talented, skilled and disciplined sporting individuals and teams, to compete in the ever-so-competitive sporting arena."

The USP Sports Team comprises individuals from different ethnic backgrounds and provides the unique milieu of a 'melting pot' that upholds the tradition of unity on the playing field. ■