

# Span



IRETA

SPAN Vol. 40, No. 11 November & December 2015 ISSN 1015 - 950

## USP Alafua Graduation - Welcome Ava Ceremony by Iva village

**T**his year was a very special year for the graduating USP Alafua Class of 2015. This is the first ever graduation of USP Alafua to be held in the Big island of Savai'i at the Apita o Pisaga Hall at Salelologa, which is far from its main campus and capital city, Apia.

On Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2015 before the graduation day, the USP Council members, Vice Chancellor and staff were treated to a traditional Ava ceremony by the village of Iva, Salelologa. The USP Council members and staff were overwhelmed by the warmth and generous welcome by the Chiefs and people of Iva. The USP Officials were also treated to a most sumptuous feast and cultural performance by the children of Iva.

The hospitality shown by the Chiefs and the people was outstanding and the USP party were truly humbled with the care and love shown by the people of Savai'i.



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# USP Alafua Graduation - Class of 2015

(Friday 11th December 2015)

The graduation ceremony started with a Prayer by Rev. Tonu Mauafu of the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Iva.

The welcoming remarks were delivered by the Minister of Education, Sports & Culture, Hon. Magele Mauiliu Magele. This graduation ceremony was very special as the Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sa'ilele Malielegaoi was conferred an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of the South Pacific.

Vice-Chancellor and President, Professor Rajesh Chandra presented the University's Report followed by the Prime Minister of Samoa's graduation address.

Acting Pro-Chancellor Mrs Fekitamoeola Utoi'kamanu, awarded certificates, diplomas, and conferred degrees to a total of 138 graduates but unfortunately, not all of them were present.

The Telefoni Retzlaff Memorial Prizes were also presented. "Top Samoan Law Student" went to John Wesley Ilalio and "Most Outstanding results in Animal Husbandry" was presented to Rose Mary Yolanda Votaia of Solomon Islands.

The address from the graduating class was delivered by Faumui Tovio Taefu who graduated with a Bachelor of Arts degree.

The songs sung by the choir from the Congregational Christian Church of Samoa, Iva were marvelous and really captured the spirit of graduation.

The School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT), the only faculty school based at Alafua Campus, graduated 24 agriculture students of whom only 15 were present. Amongst these 15 students, 5 were Samoan students all of whom were sponsored by the Government of Samoa from the 20 scholarships they give out each year.





## Prime Minister of Samoa receives an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) from USP

**O**n Friday 11<sup>th</sup> of December 2015 during the graduation ceremony, the University of the South Pacific awarded Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sa'ilele Malielegaoi with an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD). A detailed citation was read out of the Hon. Prime Minister's achievements.

The Honorable Prime Minister completed his primary and secondary education in Samoa from 1949-1963. He then moved to St. Paul's College in Auckland, New Zealand in 1964 and graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce in 1968, and a Masters of Commerce in 1969 from Auckland University, New Zealand.

Hon. Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sa'ilele Malielegaoi served in a number of positions in the parliament of Samoa before becoming the Prime Minister in 1998. Now he is serving his fifth term holding the office of Prime Minister for 17 consecutive years. Through his time as the Prime Minister, Samoa has been lifted out of the Least Developing Countries (LDC) category into a lower middle economy. He has championed gender equality and has become a strong advocate of Human Rights.

His achievements internationally are also impressive. He received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from Victoria University in Wellington, New Zealand in 2012. In 2014, he received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the National University of Samoa. In addition, to these achievements, he has now received an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws from the University of the South Pacific.

As sportsman, he is the first Prime Minister to participate in the South Pacific Games in 2007 and won himself and his country a silver medal in Archery.



## Prime Minister of Samoa say's USP's work has Samoa's strong support



"Inclusivity of Development is a cornerstone pillar of our government's policies, captured in our undertaking that what is available to the people of Apia, should also be available for the people in the rest of the country", said Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Tuilaepa Fatialofa Lupesoliai Sa'ilele Malielegaoi.

The Prime Minister thanked the USP Council for bringing this year's graduation Ceremony to Samoa's Big island, Savai'i. "The Salelologa township is of key importance to Samoa's long term development strategy, as the distribution centre for commerce and services for Savai'i, to help relieve the pressures of urban drift on Apia", the Prime Minister added.

He congratulated the graduating students and wished each and everyone success for them personally, for their families and for the contributions they make to the future of their countries and leadership. He also thanked the University for presenting him with an honorary degree of Doctor of Laws.

The Prime Minister spoke about Climate Change and made specific reference to 'national capacity' which has been seen as a bottle-neck that prevents our small island states from effectively carrying out and implementing the developments we need.

He mentioned that the work the University of the South Pacific is doing regionally, for capacity building to complement the higher education strategies of individual countries, is highly recommended and has Samoa's strong support.



He added that, "All of our Pacific countries need every help we can obtain to ensure that our people are educated to a level of awareness, that enable informed judgments to be made to achieve the future development aspirations of our communities".



Lastly, he emphasized the importance of having a good education, that would enable people to be aware and differentiate what is good or not for our community and society, which will be critical to the future peace and security of our countries.



## Vice Chancellor and President's Address during the USP Alafua Graduation



The University of the South Pacific continues to celebrate the achievements of its students. A total of 138 students graduated from The University of the South Pacific's (USP) Alafua Campus graduation ceremony which was held for the very first time on Savaii Island in Samoa on 11 December 2015. This allowed the University to be experienced by different parts of Samoa and build stronger support among the people of Samoa for USP and in particular the Alafua Campus.

A key highlight of the ceremony was that the Prime Minister of Samoa, Honourable Tuilaepa Sa'ilele Malielegaoi was awarded the Honorary Degree of Doctor of Laws (LLD) by USP. Sixty-four percent of the graduates were women - an indication of growing gender equality in the Pacific. Fifty-six percent graduated in postgraduate level qualifications. The figure stood at 44% last year and this is a very impressive increase in postgraduate qualifications.

Amongst the graduates, a student from American Samoa but originally from Savaii, Mr. John Wesley Ilalio, has completed his LLB entirely on-line registered through the Alafua Campus. Not only did he do the whole degree without going to the Emalus campus, he also did extremely well and will receive the award for being the top Samoan law student.

### Highlights of some significant achievements of USP Samoa on SAFT and IRETA this year

January 2015, enrolment in the School of Agriculture and Food Technology increased by 24% compared to 2014 and currently, we have 3 PhD, 9 Masters and 37 Postgraduate Diploma students who have either completed or are pursuing their further education. We are also pleased that ACIAR had offered two scholarships for Masters and three for Postgraduate Diplomas for 2016.

The SAFT Programme Review was undertaken by external reviewers last year. SAFT has already taken action on some of the recommendations to improve current activities. The revised Bachelor of Agriculture program will be implemented in 2017.

SAFT and Czech University of Life Sciences, Prague (CULS) are looking at more collaborative research into essential oils, underutilized crops and stimulants such as coffee, cocoa and Kava in future, for which SAFT already had an MOU with them.

IRETA: There has been a steady increase in egg production over the past 3 years that has improved the farm income significantly and the pig numbers and sales in 2015 also increased compared to 2014.

We continue to collaborate with the National University of Samoa (NUS), with three of its students serving their two weeks practical training in Poultry at the IRETA Livestock Farm to acquire practical skill in egg production and other livestock management.

## Christmas Message

Vice-Chancellor and President of USP

Professor Rajesh Chandra



This year has been another important year for The University of the South Pacific (USP). We marked the end of the first triennium of the University's Strategic Plan (2013-2015), and we are on track in our aspirations to transform USP from a good to an excellent University.

I am pleased with the efforts made by our Alafua Campus which houses the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT). The SAFT Programme Review was successfully completed and parts of the recommendations already being implemented to improve current activities. There has also been a steady increase in undergraduate postgraduate student numbers over the past three years as well as very impressive research outputs. The IRETA institute has helped complement agricultural development efforts in the region. There has been a steady increase in egg production and significant improvements have been made to farm facilities, including tissue culture and other labs for postgraduate student research and vocational training.

As we approach the end of 2015, I am sure that we all can celebrate our achievements and continue our hard work in the coming year. I take this time to very much thank the efforts of staff and students of USP, and in particular everyone at the Alafua Campus.

USP wishes you a blessed and joyous Christmas and a prosperous new year.

## Christmas Message

Professor Keith Tomlins

President of ISTRC

On behalf of the ISTRC, I would very much like to thank Mohammed Umar, President ISTRC- PB, the Council members and Prof Satish Chandra, Regional Councillor for the Pacific and most importantly, you as members, for your support in 2015. The ISTRC Pacific-PB has been a spectacular success with several major teaching and training workshops, and new research cooperation activities in the Pacific Region. Looking to 2016, it is clear that the ISTRC-PB is growing in strength, status and influence as an important organisation promoting the merits of root and tuber crops in the Pacific Region. I look forward to meeting ISTRC-PB members who attend the World Congress on Root and Tuber Crops in Nanning, China from January 18 to 22 where we bring the global community in root and tuber crops together. Finally, I would like to wish everyone a very happy Christmas and successful New Year.





## Christmas Message

Professor Franco Gandolfi

Dean - Faculty of Business & Economics

As we move closer to Christmas Day and ending up a very successful 2015, I would like to take a brief moment and reflect upon the many wonderful achievements that the School of Agriculture and Food Technology and IRETA have enjoyed.

Many leading indicators including improvements in student numbers, research activity, community involvement, and agricultural production, demonstrate very clearly that the Samoan operations have performed strongly and contributed very positively to the overall excellent performance of the Faculty of Business & Economics. I am deeply indebted to Mr. Mohammed Umar who has shown strong leadership and excellent strategic skills in moving SAFT and IRETA forward in an overall challenging business environment.

As your Dean, I am very proud of and deeply thankful for all the individual and collective contributions that you have all made under Mr. Umar's capable leadership.

On a final note, I would like to thank you for all your work for the university and all the support towards my office and me during the year. May you use your well-deserved time off with your families to relax and invigorate yourselves. May God grant us all a very prosperous, healthy, and successful 2016.





## Christmas Message



**Professor Roger J. Field**

**Advisor to the Vice-Chancellor of USP**

### Season's Greetings

It is with particular pleasure that I wish all our colleagues and friends in the Pacific a very Merry Christmas and a very prosperous 2016.

I have been very fortunate to be able to assist in the development of the Alafua Campus of the University of the South Pacific since 2012. We have seen significant growth in the number of students studying agriculture and a renewed focus at Alafua on learning, teaching and research to support the development of graduates and the wider support of agriculture to meet the particular needs of Pacific nations. There are many challenges but both the public and private sectors, and most importantly the students, now have a greater appreciation of the importance of further enhancement of agriculture and food production for the region.

Best wishes

## Christmas Message

**Mr. Michael Hailu**

**Director of CTA**

Dear Pacific Partners and Friends,

On behalf of CTA staff and on my own behalf, it gives me great pleasure to send our best wishes for a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to you and your families. Over the last few years, CTA's engagement in the Pacific has increased substantially covering areas such as value chain development, knowledge management, agro-tourism, ICT for agriculture and youth. Our work in the region will grow even more in the years ahead as more resources will be devoted to the Pacific through our partnership with IFAD and other development organizations. We look forward to working with you for prosperous, resilient and healthy Pacific Islands.





## Christmas Message

**Assoc. Prof. Mohammed Umar,**  
*Head of School of Agriculture and Food Technol-  
ogy & Director, IRETA*

We have been blessed with yet another wonderful year here at the University of the South Pacific Alafua campus. As you all know, 2015 was filled with challenges as well as successes. But our endurance, dedication, passion and commitment helped us pull through once again to achieve our goals. As for our shortcomings, not all hope has been lost as now we are blessed with a chance to reflect on ourselves and on new challenges for 2016. Christmas is all about a time to enjoy our successes and achievements of the ending year as well as to reflect on our future goals. A time of satisfaction and hope. What better way to experience this other than with the loved ones -- with families, friends and joyous celebration. 2015 has helped us appreciate dedication and honesty towards our work, and has gifted us with new vision. So on a happy note, I wish you all an enjoyable Christmas and a prosperous 2016.

Today our Pacific region is faced with many challenges. I ask you all to remember our afflicted brothers and sisters around the region in your prayers and for peace. And remember hope springs from the place we fear most. Take a chance.



Happy celebrations!





## Professor Anabella Tulin of USP SAFT presents seminar at the Tropical Agriculture Conference in Brisbane, Australia

Professor Anabella Tulin, Senior Soil Lecturer of the School of Agriculture and Food Technology (SAFT) represented the University of the South Pacific (USP), Samoa in the Tropical Agriculture Conference that was held from the 16<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> of November 2015, in Brisbane, Australia.

Prof. Tulin presented on the topic “Micronutrient biofortification of acid and neutral soils for enhanced crop production and improved Anthocyanin contents of sweet potato”. She said the participants gave comments and asked questions following her presentation. She was thankful for the opportunity to share her understanding with others.

Prof. Tulin felt really honored to represent USP, Samoa in the conference. The Conference was filled with people from all over the world, from different universities and organizations. She was amazed to be around very smart and famous people from around the world and it was an experience that she will never forget.



## Development for USP Alafua Staff

The Dean of the Faculty of Business and Economics, Professor Franco Gandolfi and Ms. Marjorie Bola held a training school on Office Management for the admin staff of USP Alafua that would support and advance them in their field of work.

The training discussed ways of having excellent customer services. The staffs were given and explained 10 top customer service skills that they can and should use as they work in their different areas. They were also presented to 10 top tips for answering telephone calls professionally. These were some of the many things that were learned in this training. The trainers also shared a lot on their work experiences. Responses from staff members that the training was very good and they really enjoyed and learned a lot from it.

The Dean also visited to meet with staff members. He visited different laboratories within the university, such as; the computer labs, animal science lab, tissue culture lab and soil labs. He also took a trip to the IRETA farm to observe different activities that are undertaken at the Crops and Livestock section. The Dean was quite impressed with the range of activities the farm offered to student's practical work.





# Merry Christmas and Happy New Year

## Nov & Dec Images

