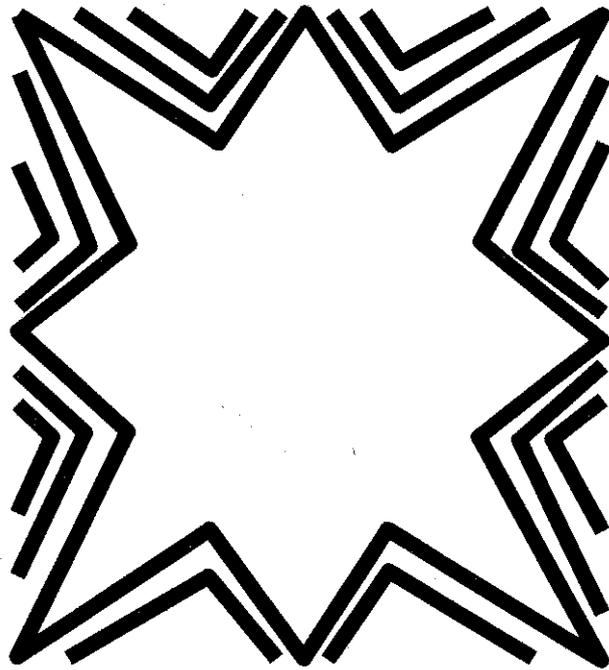


Western Samoa Education *for the 21st Century*

PRIORITIES & NEEDS



Apia, Western Samoa ♦ March 1997

Acknowledgements

The University would like to acknowledge with gratitude the support and assistance of the Western Samoa Government in facilitating the successful staging of the seminar. The Honorable Minister's own personal interest in, and encouragement of the seminar is much appreciated. Particular mention is made of the hard work by the national Planning Committee in the organisation and smooth running of the seminar. The contributions by the authors of the various papers, the panellists as well as all seminar participants, are gratefully acknowledged.

The support of the Australian Government in funding the Western Samoa seminar is also acknowledged with appreciation.

Preamble

Education, by its very nature, is about change. It is therefore crucial that USP is not simply just a spectator, but an active participant in the process of change. It would be a serious error of judgement to assume that the institution will be shielded from regional and global changes that are taking place in the tertiary education sector generally. Member countries of the University will need to ensure that their priorities, values, assumptions, organisational structures, current and future technology, and quality controls can contribute to a successful future for USP as well as to their own national education structures.

That there are no roads maps to the future presents member governments and USP with a unique opportunity to map out their own. To chart a course that will achieve our collective purpose and is financially responsible, we must first not only understand ourselves, but also the likely trends in the external environment in which universities are expected to operate. And as USP nears the beginning of the 21st century and its fourth decade of service to the region, it is opportune to pose the question of whether its course offerings, research and consultancy activities are still responding effectively and efficiently to the real needs of its member states.

While another regional "Future Directions" conference similar to that held in Suva in 1983, was possible, the University was of the view that it would be inadequate for the purpose, given the changes in its clients' base. A minimum requirement for such a conference would be participation by large numbers of government departments, statutory bodies and private concerns usually interested in the services of the University. Clearly, this was not feasible because of resource and time constraints. As well, the University wished to ensure that its strategic planning took account of the training services offered by national tertiary training institutions, and their medium term development plans, in each country.

For these reasons, the decision was taken by the Ministers of Education to hold, over a period of 12 months, a series of national seminars in education in each of the University's twelve member states, as part of the process to develop a USP Corporate Plan. The format adopted for the seminars was designed to facilitate maximum local participation in the preparation of papers, the delivery of these papers, their discussion and analyses, and finally acceptance of decisions concerning their priorities in the education sector. The outcome of these discussions and deliberations for Western Samoa, the fourth in the series of seminars, is recorded in the following pages. It should be emphasised that the recommendations and proposals represent the collective wishes and aspirations of the local community.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. INTRODUCTION	1
2. OPENING	2
3. SESSION 1	
Public Sector Paper	5
Panel Discussion	9
Public Forum	11
Recommendations	14
4. SESSION 2	
Private Sector	
Panel Discussion	18
Recommendations	19
5. SESSION 3	
Non-Government Organisations	
Panel Discussion	20
Public Forum	22
Recommendations	23
6. SESSION 4	
Post-secondary Institutions Paper	25
Public Forum	27
Recommendations	28
7. SESSION 5	
Donor Presentations	29
Discussion	30

8.	SESSION SIX	
	Parents and Students Paper	32
	Panel and Public Discussion	33
	Recommendations	34
9.	CONCLUDING SESSION	
	Recommendations	35
10.	CLOSING	39

ATTACHMENTS

Attachment A
Attachment B

APPENDICES

Appendix 1
Appendix 2
Appendix 3
Appendix 4

INTRODUCTION

The Western Samoa seminar was held at the Western Samoa Polytechnic Conference Centre over a three-day period from 25-27 March 1997. Its main purposes were for the Western Samoa community to advise USP of their requirements for future tertiary training, and for all sections of the community to be more involved in the process of identification, formulation and determination, particularly of educational policy at the national level.

A total of four papers (see Appendices) were presented representing the views and aspirations of the public sector, NGOs, the private sector, parents and students, and the aid community. At the conclusion of each paper presentation, members of the general public were invited to comment on any aspects of the paper or any other matter they felt was relevant to the discussion (see Attachment A for seminar programme). A Panel, comprising of local representatives (names presented in Attachment B) were then asked to discuss and analyse the paper, take into account any comments made during the public forum session which they deemed useful, and to prioritise the needs of that section of the community as they saw them. In both the public forum and panel sessions, it was not a requirement to speak in English. Participants were welcomed to communicate in their own language and this opportunity was used by some people.

The final session of the seminar was used to bring together the various priorities of the sectors involved in a consensus "list of priorities" that represents the national interest.

This report, then, reflects what the people, Government, and education authorities see ahead for their national education system, and for their University, USP.

Summary Record of Seminar Proceedings

Tuesday 25 March 1997

OPENING

1. The Reverend Vaiao Eteuati presided over the opening prayer. The Director of Education then welcomed participants to the seminar before inviting the Minister to present her opening address.

2. The Honorable Afioga Fiame Naomi Mataafa, Minister of Education, officially opened the Western Samoa Strategic Planning Seminar held at the Polytechnic Conference Centre at 8.45 a.m. In welcoming all participants, the Minister said that she was especially happy to see the involvement of not only Government, but the private sector, NGOs, parents and students, and the donor community, in the seminar. She urged all participants to focus on the issues to be raised in the papers as well as inputs from the general public over the next three days to ensure that Western Samoa's priorities in the education sector were clearly identified. The Minister also said that the seminar provided a timely opportunity to revisit some of the issues discussed nationally between 1993 and 1994 regarding education development generally, given the wider participation of the community in the current exercise.

3. The Minister acknowledged the important contribution made by USP towards Western Samoa's overall development as reflected in the number of graduates employed in various sectors of the economy. According to the Minister, it was important for Western Samoa to regard USP as an integral part of the country's overall response to addressing its educational needs and not as a "distant institution". Hon. Fiame then challenged the seminar to consider not only immediate national needs, but to take the opportunity to critically examine future requirements in the education sector. The development and relocation

of the National University of Samoa was part of Government's integrated response to the country's needs at the tertiary level, she said. It was equally important that clear focus be directed to the other levels of education as they too needed attention. Hon. Fiamé then elaborated on the criteria used by Government in the allocation of scholarship awards. She said that the country's Human Resources Development Plan had been the main guide in decisions relating to granting of study awards. Over the past several years, according to the Minister, Government had not been able to award scholarships in two of its key development areas (science and technology), because candidates were not successful in securing the minimum entry level of academic standards required by overseas tertiary institutions for admission. Perhaps the USP could assist in these areas.

4. The Minister then highlighted the need for Western Samoa to clearly articulate its own priorities in the education sector before the USP could be expected to assist in some of these. She also expressed the hope that the seminar would be the springboard to future exercises in the education sector, but perhaps concentrating on specific areas such as science education, technology, and business studies. Hon. Fiamé also assured the meeting that Government would look very carefully at the outcome of the seminar in framing its response to the various and often competing priorities within the sector. She then wished the seminar participants well in their deliberations before officially declaring the Western Samoa Strategic Planning Seminar open.

5. Professor Rajesh Chandra, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, responded on behalf of USP. He thanked the Minister for taking time out of her busy schedule to open the seminar and all present for their participation. He also acknowledged the support and assistance of the Government and people of Western Samoa, and hoped that this would continue in the future. Professor Chandra confirmed that USP was already taking action to address two of the areas identified by the Minister as requiring urgent attention for Western Samoa. He said USP had upgraded laboratory facilities in its Extension Centres with the aim of science courses being offered by all Centres. In the area of technology, USP had restructured its Bachelor of Technology programme from being a generalist degree to a more specialised qualification, in an attempt to respond positively and effectively to the needs of the member countries.

6. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor then noted that as society stood at the threshold of the next century, it was crucial that it identified precisely its requirements and needs in the educational sector. The environment in which educational institutions operated was constantly changing and this further necessitated the need to be very clear about one's needs and priorities. In terms of USP, the University already had a broad overall mission statement which guided its operation. However, this statement needed to be operationalised in terms of concrete programmes and activities which were responsive to the needs and requirements of member countries. Professor Chandra then highlighted the twin objectives of the seminar: for member countries to inform USP of their needs and requirements; and for all sections of the community to be aware of their ownership of USP and the importance of their involvement in charting future directions for the institution. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor further reiterated USP's position in the seminar; that is, to listen and provide information where necessary but not to intrude too much into the discussion.

SESSION ONE

PUBLIC SECTOR PAPER: Tupae Esera, Director of Education.

7. The public sector paper titled, "Education is the Key", was presented by Tupae Esera. In his introductory remarks, Mr Esera gave a brief overview of the development of formal schooling in Western Samoa beginning with the Germans setting up a school in Malifa, followed by the involvement of the New Zealand Government in the further development of education in the 1920's. He then highlighted some of the planned developments in the formal education sector for Western Samoa. The current situation, he advised, was that almost every village has a primary school run either by Government or Missions, with a participation rate of 92% in 1996. Beginning as primary schools and later developing into secondary schools, the Vaipouli College in Savaii was established in 1922 and the Avele College in Upolu in 1924, followed much later in 1953 by Samoa College. The Missions also set up their own secondary schools and now provided for a large majority of senior secondary students. The full text of the Director's paper is reproduced as Appendix 1.

8. To cater to the need for trained teachers, the Primary Teachers' College began in 1939 and the Secondary Teachers' College opened its door in 1978. These two institutions merged in 1991. The Director reported that all the primary school teachers and nearly all junior secondary schools teachers have been trained by the Teachers' Training College. The present Polytechnic started as a Technical Training Institute in 1963 and is now fully autonomous with further upgrading in the pipeline. It is planned that the Polytechnic will merge soon with the Marine Training College which is currently under the Ministry of Transport. As far as the development of the National University of Samoa (NUS), this began in 1984 with 45 students and offered the pre-university foundation year programme. NUS has grown since and plans are under way for it to merge with the Teachers Training College later in the year, in addition to being relocated to a new site.

9. Mr Esera then outlined several new initiatives being undertaken by the Education Department which included Early Childhood and Special Needs Education. With Early Childhood Education, a working party has been established and tasked with the responsibility of

formulating aims and policies to guide development in this area. In addition, this body will also oversee training options, appropriate curriculum guidelines, and regulatory mechanisms. In the area of Special Needs Education, there are non-government organisations such as Loto Taumafai, Fiamalamalama and the Blind, and Vaiala Beach School specialising in the provision of education to this group. According to Mr Esera, there is no intention on the part of the Education Department to take over the roles of these institutions in the medium term.

10. Mr Esera then proceeded to highlight some of the areas of concern which are being addressed by the Department as part of its strategic plan. In summary they are:

- * school facilities;
- * curriculum materials such as readers, textbooks, basic science equipment, Home Economics and Industrial Arts equipment;
- * written materials in the vernacular such as a monolingual dictionary and grammar text;
- * literacy and numeracy skills training of teachers at lower primary;
- * comprehensive training programme in development, production and delivery of high quality teacher and student curriculum materials;
- * promoting the use of formative and summative assessment;
- * benchmark testing in literacies;
- * developing core academic subjects and providing a comprehensive programme, both academic and applied for all students;

- * widening the scope of the Curriculum Unit to include Year 12 and Year 13;
- * providing every secondary school with a library and a laboratory;
- * extending support to non-government schools through distribution of curriculum materials, participation in regional assessment and evaluation procedures, and their access to pre and in-service teacher education;
- * supplementing and supporting community initiatives in special needs education;
- * upgrading the process of teacher education;
- * encouraging all teachers (both government and non-government) to upgrade qualifications through in-service teacher education;
- * addressing areas such as management, literacy/bilingualism and multi-grade teaching techniques;
- * addressing the needs for bilingual individuals fully literate in both Samoan and English;
- * adopting a management structure that facilitates effective decision making, responses and actions;
- * establishing effective management in individual schools by setting up partnerships between the community, teaching staff and the Department with regular inspections; and
- * keeping a balance between scholarship and intellectual development on one hand and employment related skills development on the other.

11. In conclusion, Mr Esera identified the following areas for USP attention:

(a) USP and the emerging National Post Secondary Institutions of the region will now have a much bigger role to play in providing university education and they should be prepared to take on non-traditional university roles such as preparing students for the work arena and acquiring employable skills.

(b) The training role of USP was acknowledged in terms of the large numbers of USP teaching graduates in Samoa. This role needed to continue in certain areas.

(c) As far as general education in Samoa is concerned Mr Esera highlighted the following areas requiring USP attention:

- maintaining Early Childhood Teacher Training and Special Needs education courses;
- continuation of USP's role in curriculum assistance, literacy and assessment;
- IOE/USP and WSTC/NUS to negotiate collaborative research work in areas of shared concern;
- in the medium term, USP to continue to provide opportunities for students to pursue first degrees in all areas, a role to be ultimately taken up by national institutions as national capacities improve;
- USP extension services to continue to be active in continuing education;

- USP to continue to develop post-graduate programmes particularly in Education, Psychology, Literature and Linguistics; and
- the development of Course Accreditation between USP and post secondary institutions.

12. The Chairperson thanked Tupae Esera for his informative presentation before inviting the team of panelists to make their individual contributions.

PANEL DISCUSSION

13. The first panelist took the opportunity to thank USP for promoting debate especially with non-government organisations. He acknowledged that with rapid changes being the norm everywhere, USP needed to reconceptualise its roles. With the emergence of NUS it was important for Western Samoa to clearly identify what role USP ought to play in the country's overall response to its plans for future development in the tertiary education sector. There had been a great entrepreneurial shift and development in Western Samoa and USP would therefore need to identify what options are available to it. He floated several options such as those identified below and cautioned that these should be subjected to continuous monitoring and support:

- an independent path for NUS?
- USP to find niche markets?
- USP to run parallel to NUS?
- agree for comprehensive plan of co-ordination with USP?
- a subsidiary ("subservient") to NUS?

14. The key issue, the speaker said, was the availability of adequate funds to tertiary institutions and how these were being distributed. It was also argued that there was a need to avoid duplication of efforts between tertiary institutions as this was wasteful and unsustainable especially for small countries. He pointed out the need to look at the nature of training available at tertiary level and the kinds of graduate Western Samoa needs. He said that the proposed focus on vocational education by the Department was too narrow and perhaps there was a need for broad-based education that would lead to graduates being able to visualise the big picture and having the capacity to think creatively, productively and skilfully. In conclusion, he stressed the need for a partnership arrangement between NUS and USP and for them to produce students who would be productive to society.

15. The next panel member elaborated on the Department of Foreign Affairs involvement in the selection of scholarships students to USP and other tertiary institutions. The Government's main criteria links scholarships selection to the Human Resource Development Plan (HRDP). The problem was how to advance all students to their maximum potential. He noted that there were only about 80 scholarships available for overseas training, with a strict screening process in place. With NUS, according to the panel member, Western Samoa was looking at innovative ways to provide higher education to its young people. NUS provided easy access to local students wishing to pursue university studies. The seminar was informed that Western Samoa cannot afford to rely on its donors' generous support for overseas studies but must seek affordable options such as the USP Extension studies. The rise in external enrolments at the Centre was testimony to the value of easy access and affordability, as most parents could not afford the \$8,000 or so required for USP internal studies. The scholarships provided by donors were sometimes available only if they were linked to needs. He concluded by saying that if Western Samoa wanted a better society, it needed "intellectual development and excellence."

16. The third panelist noted that in the Director's presentation, one important omission was in the area of computer education, especially given developments in information technology and the Internet. He pointed to various mission schools having computer courses as well as NUS and USP Extension. In addition, he highlighted some

duplication/conflict in course offerings such as the special education early childhood course offered by NUS/WSTC and USP. He acknowledged the problem of non-recognition of theological degrees in New Zealand and Australia and suggested that USP work with Theological Colleges in upgrading the B. Theology degrees.

17. The last panel member claimed that education in the country was being driven by limited resources resulting in the promotion of an elitist system (4000+ students vying for 80+ scholarships). He challenged the Education Department to have a clear vision, mission statement, and strategies on where education in Western Samoa should be heading over the next ten to fifteen years. He commended the USP for aspiring to dialogue and concluded by suggesting the following areas of need for USP to consider:

- (a) close partnership between USP and other institutions such as NUS, schools, and parents in the development of curriculum, assessment etc;
- (b) provision of meaningful education and the need to seriously address the link between learning and the workplace;
- (c) education to be compatible with culture;
- (d) promoting Science and Technology; and
- (e) need for a career counselling and guidance service in schools.

PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION

18. Several issues and concerns were raised by members of the general public during this session. The first was that USP and NUS are disconnected from culture and traditions of Western Samoa and concentrating only on “intellectuals and academics”. For example the education system is not guiding students to undertake research in Savaii on bird life, environment, and lava formation. It was important for USP to communicate more and establish links with the community and the

public. Second, to meet some of the costs involved in such work, USP should fundraise. She cited the experience of the University of Florida in this area as a possible model to follow.

19. The vital role of research in the development of the country was raised and USP was urged to consider doing more in this area, especially with regard to the learning styles of Samoan children and their environment. The speaker then posed the question of whether there was an element lacking in higher education. What was needed was learning that brings out entrepreneurial skills, flexible qualities, and positive attitudes.

20. The Deputy Vice-Chancellor responded that while it is true that USP is trying to re-conceptualise its mission, the institution was also in the process of finding out what national institutions, Governments, and people's aspirations were. He confirmed that it is established USP policy that the University should work in collaboration with national institutions such as NUS. Professor Chandra went on to cite several examples of collaboration with national institutions such as Fiji School of Medicine, Fiji College of Advanced Education, and Solomon Islands College of Higher Education with linkages being mutually beneficial. The quality of education, he said, was very critical and USP's qualifications were well recognised in Commonwealth countries. On the issue of scholarships, he noted that there was a growing awareness that the provision of scholarships should not fall wholly on Governments and donors but alternative options should be explored to increase access, such as the introduction of a loan scheme for tertiary education to be paid once employed.

21. Another member of the public highlighted the need for special education courses, not just for trainers but for people with disabilities. He argued for such courses to be translated into the vernacular. While it was fully accepted that USP is a major provider of university education in the region, there was a concern expressed as to the status of the institution in ten years time. The involvement of NUS in the seminar was therefore critical. He informed the seminar that the Law Society of Western Samoa had decided that USP Law graduates could be admitted to the Bar when they graduate. He acknowledged that the majority of graduates working in the country were from USP but warned that there was still the "colonial mentality" that saw USP, and

NUS for that matter, as inferior. With regard to the allocation of scholarships, it was claimed that the views of the donors was the main determining factor. It was also noted that there was wasteful duplication in courses being offered by NUS and USP that must be avoided. This situation had resulted due to a lack of cooperation and dialogue, it was claimed, between the institutions involved.

22. In response, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor stated that USP was owned by twelve member countries. While there is a perception that USP is becoming a Fiji owned institution, USP had taken steps to decentralise some of its functions, such as the relocation of the Foundation Science Programme to Alafua, and siting the Law School in Vanuatu. With special needs education, USP was now offering a Diploma in Special and Diverse Education Needs. One participant expressed concern over the absence of the Public Service Commission in the seminar, given their critical role in the placement of graduates. The forum was assured that apologies were received and it was expected that representatives from PSC would attend the following sessions. The problem of bi-linguism was raised with a warning that illiterates are being produced in both languages. It was stated that there was a need for research into language learning in the first five years of education in Samoan.

23. Two decisions by USP were then questioned; first, the relocation to the Alafua campus of the Foundation Science programme, and second, the Extension Centre move to Alafua. The Pro-Vice Chancellor (Alafua Campus) and USP Centre Director replied to these queries saying that the relocation was based on the expressed needs of smaller island members such as Tuvalu, but it was expected that such courses would eventually be phased out once national institutions took over. On the issue involving the move by the Extension Centre, this was explained as due mainly to Government's inability to find a suitable site. It was hoped that a sub-centre in Savaii would be established soon. Several participants also expressed the concern raised in earlier sessions that USP was fast becoming a Fiji institution. The USP delegate gave the reassurance that the final decision regarding the status of the University was a matter for all member Governments to consider through the Council. It was unlikely that USP would become the National University of Fiji in the foreseeable future.

24. The final issues raised related to the important role of consultancy, and the need for Continuing Education to take on a more prominent role in adult education. The links between USP and inter-governmental agencies needed to be strengthened. After further discussions the following areas were identified as requiring attention as perceived by the public sector:

- (a) School facilities;**
- (b) Curriculum materials such as readers, textbooks, basic science equipment, Home Economics and Industrial Arts equipment;**
- (c) Written materials in the vernacular such as a monolingual dictionary and grammar text;**
- (d) Literacy and numeracy skills training of teachers at lower primary;**
- (e) Comprehensive training programme in development, production and delivery of high quality teacher and student curriculum materials;**
- (f) Promoting the use of formative and summative assessment;**
- (g) Benchmark testing in literacies;**
- (h) Developing core academic subjects and providing a comprehensive programme, both academic and applied, for all students;**
- (i) Widening the scope of the Curriculum Unit to include Year 12 and Year 13;**
- (j) Providing every secondary school with a library and a laboratory;**
- (k) Extending support to non-government schools through distribution of curriculum materials, participation in**

regional assessment and evaluation procedures, and their access to pre- and in-service teacher education;

- (l) Supplementing and supporting community initiatives in special needs education;**
- (m) Upgrading process of teacher education;**
- (n) Encouraging all teachers (both government and non-government) to upgrade qualifications through in-service teacher education;**
- (o) Addressing areas such management, literacy/bilingualism and multi-grade teaching techniques;**
- (p) Addressing the needs for bilingual individuals fully literate in both Samoan and English;**
- (q) Adopting a management structure that facilitates effective decision making, responses and actions to take place;**
- (r) Establishing effective management in individual schools by setting up partnerships between the community, teaching staff and the Department with regular inspections;**
- (s) Keeping a balance between scholarship and intellectual development on one hand and employment related skills development on the other;**
- (t) Science education;**
- (u) Technology;**
- (v) Addressing the link between learning and the workplace;**
- (w) Need for education to be compatible with culture;**

- (x) **Need for a career counseling and guidance service in schools; and**
- (y) **Special needs and early childhood education.**

Moreover, the following areas were promoted as requiring USP attention:

- (a) USP and emerging national post-secondary institutions of the region will now have a much bigger role to play in providing University education and they should be prepared to take on non-traditional university roles such as preparing students for the work arena and acquiring employable skills.
- (b) The training role of USP was acknowledged in terms of the large numbers of USP teaching graduates in Samoa. This role needed to continue in certain areas.
- (c) As far as general education in Samoa is concerned Mr Esera highlighted the following areas requiring USP attention:
 - maintaining Early Childhood Teacher Training and Special Needs education courses;
 - continuation of USP's role in curriculum assistance, literacy and assessment;
 - IOE/USP and WSTC/NUS to negotiate collaborative research work in areas of shared concern;
 - in the medium term, USP to continue to provide opportunities for students to pursue first degrees in all areas, a role ultimately to be taken up by national institutions as national capacities improve;
 - USP extension services to continue to be active in continuing education;

- USP to continue to develop post graduate programmes particularly in Education, Psychology, Literature and Linguistics; and
- the development of Course Accreditation between USP and post secondary institutions.

In concluding this session, the Chairperson thanked all participants for their contributions.

SESSION TWO

PRIVATE SECTOR PRESENTATION:

Michelle Meredith (Business Woman); Bill Barr (SBEC); Vaasilifiti Moelagi Jackson (Business woman).

25. The presenter for the private sector paper did not attend. The three panelists were therefore invited to make individual presentations. The following sections summarised the views and comments made by the above contributors. The first issue raised relates to the changes currently taking place at the global level affecting the business community generally. It was claimed that the past five or so years had witnessed the modification and redefinition of traditional boundaries under which businesses had previously operated. For instance, petrol stations were now not just selling petrol but have also become mini shops selling a wide range of conveniences. As a result, it was necessary for the private sector to modify and adapt its working practices. Second, it was important to take note of the changes taking place at management level with managers now required to possess a whole range of skills if they were to cope in the business world.

26. Underpinning these issues was the need for flexibility in not only business practices and ethics, but also on how education providers responded to the needs of the private sector. This response could be at two levels: flexibility in the institution's response to the needs of the community and the provision of relevant training to students to ensure closer links between theory and practical requirements. Finally, it was argued that rather than the market driving current changes in the business world, it was technology which was in fact driving these changes. It was further claimed that the comparative advantage of cheap labour was no longer a major consideration. Instead, the correct application of technology and efficient management practices had taken over as key factors for successful businesses.

27. The next presenter targeted tourism as one of the focal areas for concentration, viewed from the private sector perspective. Knowledge in and awareness of the important role of the environment in national development was promoted and highlighted. It was also said that USP needed to look at its qualifications very closely to ensure that they were responding to the real needs of the private sector. The presenter then

highlighted the need to focus on training courses directed at basic business concepts and skills including costing, marketing, accounting and advertising. On the issue of consultancy, it was argued that USP was ideally placed to assist member countries because of their experience and relevant expertise in the Pacific region. It was noted that inappropriate advice provided by many consultants' report had resulted in additional costs to the society.

28. The final presenter argued for closer links between all sectors involved in framing programmes and training courses relevant to local needs. One way in which this could be promoted was through attachments of students for work experience in industries, regional organisations and banks, where feasible. The need to expand and strengthen continuing education through the University Centre was raised and encouraged by participants. In addition, there was also an urgent and real need in the special education field.

29. A wide ranging discussion then followed at the end of which the following were identified as representing the needs of the private sector:

- (a) Appropriate courses and training programmes in the tourism sector to be developed.**
- (b) Urgent need for basic training in business concept and skills such as accounting, marketing, costing etc.**
- (c) Expansion and strengthening of continuing education offered by the University Centre.**
- (d) Closer ties and links between university education and the market place. Attachments to appropriate institutions for work experience to be promoted and implemented by training institutions.**

Wednesday 26 March 1997

SESSION THREE

NGOs PRESENTATION:

Maeava Peteru (Mapusaga o Aiga), Gisa Gaufa (SPREP), Rupena Muagututia (WSFHA), Vaosa Epa (Public Service Association) and Faatonu Faletose (Women's Committee)

30. The NGO presenter did not attend and there was no paper available for discussion. Because of this situation, the Chairman invited the panelists to make individual presentations. The following is a summary of their presentations which is to a certain extent very general, and in some cases not necessarily related to NGO needs.

31. The first panelist gave a brief overview of the work programme of the Family Haven or Mapusaga o Aiga. The organisation was formed three years ago to address the issues of domestic violence and sexual abuse. Its first priority since incorporation has been research on topics sometimes considered taboo. This work was completed in early 1996 with a national symposium held in March of the same year to present the research findings to the public and to seek views on what Mapusaga o Aiga can do. Its main thrust last year was on public awareness, with the organisation producing bilingual brochures on child sex abuse, domestic violence and rape. At the start of 1997, the organisation, with the assistance of a UK funded officer, began to offer training programmes on legal literacy with the aim of making family laws understandable to the lay person. The meeting noted that Family Haven was interested in USP courses in psychology and counselling. In addition, they were also interested in the law programme as they have a law graduate working part-time for them.

32. The next panelist expressed appreciation for the opportunity to be part of the whole education review process and said that this was her third such experience, although not all facilitated by USP. She was hopeful that this exercise would again provide the opportunity for Western Samoa to address pressing issues in education and come up with clear statements upon which the best approach, improvements, and strategies can be based. She posed the question of: "What kind of product Western Samoa wants?" She warned that the approach taken

should not be ad-hoc and piecemeal in nature as indicated by the lack of planning for this session (no paper and no presenter). She went on to lament the fact that no NUS staff member was present at the seminar, for she had expected them to be in the forefront as the seminar was about Western Samoas' needs in the education sector.

33. The third panelist gave an overview of the role of the Western Samoa Family Health Association. One of its functions was to educate the community on family health and to disseminate contraceptive and family planning methods. It conducts seminars in the rural areas for youths, adults, and colleges and high schools students. The Association also arranged seminars on family planning and sexual reproductive health, and with the growing AIDS problem worldwide, it has also integrated information on AIDS into its programmes. Although some sections of the community have rejected this saying it is not the right avenue, the Association has seen that there are problems and a need to address them.

34. The fourth panelist referred to the issues raised in the USP input paper (p25) as very important as they were the reality of the situation that needed addressing. She agreed that while a general education was fine, she questioned how far this general education could cater to the needs of all students. As such, she proposed that there was a need for students to specialise in their chosen fields of study early enough in their studies. For some students, she thought it appropriate for them to go back to the land and pointed out that the number of students taking land management and agriculture courses at USP was very low compared to those taking public administration courses. For USP, she proposed that it should conduct local industrial relations courses, and mount and strengthen counselling courses which were now important, given the downsizing of the public service. Finally, she said that educating parents was very important. The need for graduates to acquire communication skills and to be able to deal with every sector of society was felt to be important and should be part of their programmes of study.

PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION

35. The discussion during this session followed closely the issues raised by the panel members. The forum was, however, reminded of the need to address the fundamental question of what kind of education Western Samoa wanted and in that context, the expectations of NGOs. In response to a question, it was clarified that Western Samoa's Strategic Plan for education emerged out of wide consultation between the Department and various sections of the community. The influence of parents on the development of school curricula was noted.

36. The Pro Vice-Chancellor (Alafua) clarified that the decline in student numbers at Alafua was not directly related to the number of Samoan students enrolling for the agriculture programme. The decline was due mainly to the larger member countries establishing their own agriculture training institutions. It was also acknowledged that the USP could do more in advertising its courses and programmes for the information of the general public and prospective students. The packaging of such information was considered important. However, before USP could respond effectively and efficiently to the real needs of the country, it was crucial that Western Samoa should first identify its own needs and priorities. The desirability of mounting continuing education programmes directed at parents was also highlighted and promoted.

37. The importance and vital role of agriculture in overall national development was stressed. It was noted that Western Samoa needed qualified and experienced people in this area given the current problems (taro blight and African snail) faced by the country. The use of Internet in continuing education was raised and promoted as a possibility for the future. The crucial role of early childhood education to the country's development was also promoted and strongly supported. There was a view that while Western Samoa was coping with the retraining of teachers at the lower levels, there was equally a need for similar programmes aimed at the senior secondary level teachers. There was also a plea for tertiary programmes to include a course on how graduates could cope with change. The idea of staff exchange between NUS and USP was mooted.

38. A proposal was made for the University Centre to expand and strengthen its non-formal education programme to cater to the needs of the community. In this way, the Centre would be assisting in opening up opportunities for learning within the country. Delivery mechanisms for these courses should also be assessed to determine their suitability for such purpose. On the issue of competition and duplication between the activities of NUS and USP it was argued that there was room for competition and this should not be regarded as negative. It was important for everyone to accept that leadership in education should not be the sole responsibility of Government but that the private sector, parents and students, tertiary institutions, and the NGOs also had roles to play.

39. The discussion then turned to the desirability of courses directed towards making young parents more successful in their various roles. It was strongly argued that USP and other training institutions should seriously consider offering courses not only in parenting skills but in value education as well. For the NGOs, the training of trainers concept was also deemed a desirable and cost-effective way of responding to the NGOs' needs. The issue of special needs education was again highlighted and it was confirmed that where feasible, special needs students could attend mainstream classes.

40. After further discussions, the following were identified as requiring urgent attention as perceived by the NGOs:

- (a) Urgent consideration be given to making available relevant courses in psychology and counseling.**
- (b) Need for continuing education programme targeting parents and aimed at changing attitudes and perceptions about education generally.**
- (c) Need to mount early childhood education programmes suitable to local needs.**
- (d) Expand and strengthen activities at the USP Centre.**
- (e) Courses on parenting and value education be made available to the community.**

- (f) Training of trainers concept be encouraged and actively promoted and implemented.**
- (g) Urgent need to focus on special needs education.**

SESSION FOUR

POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS PRESENTATION:

Magele Mauiliu (CEO Polytechnic); Tauavamea Dr L Palepoi (Vice-Chancellor, NUS); Fulisia Aiavao (Director, School of Nursing), Fatu (Principal, Marine Training School).

41. The first presentation was made by the Chief Executive Officer of the Western Samoa Polytechnic. The main theme of the paper was for tertiary institutions, including USP, to seriously consider giving recognition through the award of formal credit for competencies gained through work and life experience. The full text of the CEO's paper is given in Appendix 2. The paper went on to define what is meant by 'recognition of prior learning' (RPL), the advantages involved, and the beneficiaries of such an approach. The paper concluded by observing that RPL is about equity, access and relevance. The concept, he argued, would have the effect of forcing tertiary institutions to make their programme offerings more relevant to the needs of industries. He concluded by challenging the USP to consider the possible adoption of this approach for the future.

42. The second paper was from the National University of Samoa and was presented by its Vice-Chancellor. In his opening remarks, the Vice-Chancellor thanked the USP for organising the seminar and the opportunity to participate in the exercise. Dr Palepoi said that in 1994, the NUS entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) with USP covering a range of cooperative measures designed to promote the interests of both universities. He reaffirmed the willingness of NUS to continue with this arrangement into the next millennium. The Vice-Chancellor then focused on the four principles contained in the MOA and commented on their continued relevance to NUS's future development. The full text of the Vice-Chancellor's presentation is given in Appendix 3.

43. The first of these principles covered the assistance provided by USP to all its member states in the areas of teaching, research, training and service to the community. The Vice-Chancellor reiterated the understanding that USP would only be involved in areas where national institutions lacked the capacity to respond in an effective and cost-efficient manner. Where national institutions were able to provide the

necessary service, then they should do so. The second principle encouraged the development of national institutions in areas such as teacher training, nursing and technical training especially in the larger member countries. The third principle recognised the need and accepted the responsibility for supporting and assisting the development of national post-secondary institutions in member countries. This principle was especially welcomed by NUS and Dr Palepoi further confirmed that the institution will continue to look to USP for assistance in this area. The final principle placed on NUS the full responsibility for its course design and further development.

44. The agreement, according to the NUS Vice-Chancellor, also provided for:

- exchange arrangements between staff of NUS and USP;
- programme of support by Institutes and Schools of USP for teaching programmes at NUS;
- cross-credit arrangements for courses in appropriate degree programmes;
- cultural, sporting and social links; and
- apportionment of costs when exchange arrangements are implemented.

The NUS paper concluded with the following “shopping list” for USP:

- (a) Act as one of the external assessors for some of NUS’s programmes;
- (b) Development of some joint degrees in areas where the capacities of NUS are limited, as in marine science, agriculture and counseling.
- (c) Collaborative ventures in research between NUS and USP.

- (d) Further extension of the agreement, with some modifications, between the NUS and USP when the current MOA expires in May 1997.

The Vice-Chancellor supported closer cooperation between the two institutions, although he acknowledged that in partnership there was bound to be some competition.

45. The School of Nursing and the Marine Training School then made their presentations. These were mainly for information purposes and they dealt with various courses and programmes currently on offer by both schools. Likewise the representative from the Don Bosco School was given the opportunity to provide some information on the type of training they offered for young boys from poor families who were not able to progress further up the academic ladder.

PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION

46. Several issues were raised, some of which had already been raised in previous sessions such as the need for special education courses to be included at all levels. The role of tertiary national institutions and USP in the upgrading and teaching of courses on information systems and information technology was seen as very important. To meet such demands, some of USP's major developments in this area were highlighted and plans for the future discussed.

47. Despite the claim that there was "minimal action" regarding full implementation of the MOA between NUS and USP, there were some reassuring comments from NUS staff. For instance, NUS had access to and were using USP extension laboratories, course materials, assessors from USP, exchanges, and networking at an individual level. There was a feeling that perhaps the time frame for the MOA was short, since so many things were happening at the same time, and that some of the decisions/actions taken at Council level were not filtering down to the grassroots level. Others felt that the problem could be due to a lack of a formal mechanism or machinery to encourage regular consultations and dialogue between NUS and USP.

48. With the presentation on RPL, some members of the public forum felt that there was merit in considering the adoption of this approach. The forum was again reminded that since this was a strategic planning seminar for USP it was important to understand the very basic facts, and the reality was that USP was a regional institution serving the interests of its twelve member countries. The shareholders of USP could influence this process through the Council, but there should be improved mechanism in place to hear the voices of its members. There was general consensus that the perception that NUS was inferior to USP and USP was inferior to New Zealand universities had to be addressed.

49. The seminar agreed that the following areas accurately represent the needs of the post-secondary sector as presented in the various papers and comments from the general public:

- (a) USP to accord full recognition of prior learning (RPL) experience towards its academic qualifications.**
- (b) USP to be one of the external assessors for relevant NUS courses.**
- (c) Development of joint degrees in areas such as marine science, agriculture and counselling be actively pursued.**
- (d) Encouraging collaborative ventures in research between NUS and USP.**
- (e) Exploring and promoting closer cooperation between NUS and USP in areas of mutual interest.**
- (f) Upgrading and teaching of courses on information systems and information technology be undertaken.**

Thursday 27 March 1997

SESSION FIVE

AID DONOR PRESENTATIONS:

Mr Chris Wheeler, AusAID; Mr Mike Walsh, Second Secretary, New Zealand High Commission.

49. In this session, Mr Chris Wheeler provided information on AusAID's financial support to USP and Western Samoa in the area of education and training. He then presented an overview of Australia's education and training policy and highlighted the changes that were being proposed for the future, in particular those affecting Western Samoa .

50. AusAID's education and training policy goal, according to Mr Wheeler, was aimed at assisting developing countries meet educational needs of their people in the following priority areas:

- (a) Basic Education
- (b) Vocational and Technical Education
- (c) Higher Education
- (d) Institutional Strengthening and
- (e) Distance education

The underlying principles were to increase access, to promote equity, to assist in the achievement of overall qualitative improvements, to provide education which was relevant to the needs of the individuals, and finally to facilitate the effective and efficient use of resources in the education and training sector.

51. The main change in policies that will affect Western Samoa was on more assistance towards education, preferably national and regional, and less on scholarships. This policy, Mr Wheeler said, had been accelerated and approved by the new Australian government. The result of this change would see more assistance being channeled towards capacity building and institutional strengthening both at the national and regional levels. It would also mean less money on scholarships, but not necessarily a reduction in the total number of students supported for training. AusAID's scholarship assistance

scheme would therefore shift from Australian institutions to regional institutions like USP and Fiji School of Medicine with a 25% reduction in new scholarships to Australia and an increase of 50% of new scholarships to regional institutions. The rationale for this shift was based on various factors such as cost, the relatively high failure rate of Pacific Island students in Australia, and support for national institutions capacity building. Finally, Mr Wheeler highlighted AusAID's support for on-the-job training, in-country short-term courses, and some of the innovative ways that they were promoting and encouraging in the education and training sector.

53. The New Zealand representative, Mike Walsh, outlined the strengths that NZODA sees in USP and the links between them. Such strengths included the relevancy of courses to the region, lower costs compared to other tertiary institutions, and a centre of excellence in distance education. The representative reaffirmed that NZODA has confidence in USP but urged USP to become an institution of excellence in learning. He also said that New Zealand expected excellence from its scholarship holders, and for USP to adopt a consistency of approach when dealing with students on scholarships. Mr Walsh also confirmed New Zealand support for the concept of partnership in relation to HRD.

PUBLIC FORUM DISCUSSION

54. Several queries were directed towards the two presenters and they included issues such as what constituted a regional institution. The AusAID policy of moving towards education and away from scholarships, it was claimed, was not a good policy given the need for flexibility in students being able to undertake studies in Australia and New Zealand. It was important for graduates to have different perspectives especially in the workplace. Despite this concern, the AusAID representative said that with the new policy now in place and the merging of ADCOS and the Government scholarships scheme, Australian funded scholarships for PhD studies in Australia will in the future be extremely rare. New Zealand does not offer any PhD scholarships. The USP representative pointed out that USP regarded the development of its staff as top priority. As a result, USP had set

aside some of its resources to support its staff undertaking post-graduate studies.

55. The pressing attitude problem and the perception by the general public that USP and NUS were inferior institutions compared to Australian or New Zealand institutions emerged once again. Mr Wheeler assured the forum that as far as he knew, there were no quality differences and already there was clear evidence to indicate that USP was as good a university as any in Australia. To combat this perception, it was for USP to work on building and enhancing its reputation nationally and regionally. The Chairperson also pointed out that for Western Samoa there was no difference in reward for graduates irrespective of whether they were from NUS, USP or Australia and New Zealand.

SESSION SIX

PARENTS AND STUDENTS PRESENTATION: Feturi Elisaia

56. The parents' and students' presentation was made by Feturi Elisaia. In thanking USP for the opportunity to be part of the seminar, Mr Elisaia also said that the twin purposes of the seminar were timely. He said that recent developments at the tertiary level throughout the region has meant that USP would need to redefine its role in meeting the requirements of the member countries at this level. The seminar also provided another opportunity for Western Samoa to reassess its own priorities in the education sector. The full text of Mr Elisaia's paper has been reproduced in Appendix 4.

57. The advantages of studying at USP as opposed to tertiary institutions elsewhere were highlighted. For instance, USP had been a place where long lasting friendships were formed, and understanding and tolerance of different cultures and values, nurtured. These contacts could prove useful in future working relationships with member countries. It was also argued that USP had "staying power" in that most of the graduates returned and worked in Western Samoa. He suggested that the current non-performance of students in overseas institutions could be related to several factors, including parent and peer group pressures.

58. On the issue of the worth of USP qualifications, it was pointed out that the real test of quality and relevance could only be gauged from the performance of graduates in the work place. Mr Elisaia then identified the following areas as of top priority as perceived by parents and students:

- (a) USP to work in partnership arrangements with national institutions;
- (b) That clear provision be included in USP's mission statement that it has an "obligation to assist new emerging national institutions";
- (c) USP to concentrate more on post-graduate studies, research and consultancy;

- (d) The need to further develop distant education offerings to cater to the needs of the local community;
- (e) Arrangement be established to facilitate cross-crediting between USP and NUS courses;
- (f) USP to promote and market its strengths and available programmes more effectively; and
- (g) USP to be more pro-active in its dealings with the requirements of member countries.

PUBLIC AND PANEL DISCUSSION

59. In response to a query, the Australian representative confirmed that as a rule USP could not apply directly for consultancy contracts but could do so as part of a consortium with Australian institutions. As far as New Zealand was concerned, USP could register with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs as a consultant and they would be considered alongside other tenders for education contracts. The need for vocational training was again raised and USP was strongly urged to consider how best it could respond to Western Samoa's needs in this area. There was also a passionate plea for graduates to assist in village development by sharing their knowledge and skills with the local community.

60. The twin issues of scholarship students' performance, and their selection were then discussed. The meeting was informed that the non-performance of students on scholarship awards could be attributed to two main factors; academic and social. With regard to the first, it was claimed that some of the factors involved include course contents, methods of teaching used in the host country, lack of study and learning skills, and institutional barriers. On the latter, it was observed that for many of these students this was the first opportunity for them to be away from home and parents. The freedom to make their own decisions was therefore a contributing factor. In some cases, students were reluctant to come forward and seek assistance with problems they might be experiencing. It was claimed that at the core of this problem was the need for proper information sharing and counselling of students.

61. In reply to a question, the Hon. Minister said that the current focus of Government's HRD plan was at the technical level. The training requirements of the private sector, it was argued, should also be considered in the allocation of scholarship awards. After further discussion the seminar agreed to recommend the following as requiring attention as perceived by parents and students:

- (a) USP to work in partnership arrangements with national institutions.**
- (b) Clear provision be included in the USP's mission statement that it has an "obligation to assist new emerging national institutions".**
- (d) USP to concentrate more on post-graduate studies, research and consultancy.**
- (e) Further develop distant education offerings to cater to the needs of the local community.**
- (f) Arrangements be established to facilitate cross-crediting between NUS and USP courses.**
- (g) USP to promote and market its strengths and available programmes more effectively.**
- (h) USP to be more pro-active in responding to the requirements of member countries.**

CONCLUDING SESSION

62. The following is a summary of the collective priorities and problems in education as identified by each of the sectors involved in the seminar:

- (1) School facilities.**
- (2) Curriculum materials such as readers, textbooks, basic science equipment, Home Economics and Industrial Arts equipment.**
- (3) Written materials in the vernacular such as a monolingual dictionary and grammar text.**
- (4) Literacy and numeracy skills training of teachers at lower primary.**
- (5) Comprehensive training programme in development, production and delivery of high quality teacher and student curriculum materials.**
- (6) Promoting the use of formative and summative assessment.**
- (7) Benchmark testing in literacies.**
- (8) Developing core academic subjects and providing a comprehensive programme, both academic and applied, for all students.**
- (9) Widening the scope of the Curriculum Unit to include Year 12 and Year 13.**
- (10) Providing every secondary school with a library and a laboratory.**
- (11) Extending support to non-government schools through distribution of curriculum materials, participation in**

regional assessment and evaluation procedures, and their access to pre and in-service teacher education.

- (12) Supplementing and supporting community initiatives in special needs education.**
- (13) Upgrading process of teacher education.**
- (14) Encouraging all teachers (both government and non-government) to upgrade qualifications through in-service teacher education.**
- (15) Addressing areas such as management, literacy/bilingualism and multi-grade teaching techniques.**
- (16) Addressing the needs for bilingual individuals fully literate in both Samoan and English.**
- (17) Adopting a management structure that facilitates effective decision making, responses and actions to take place.**
- (18) Establishing effective management in individual schools by setting up partnerships between the community, teaching staff and the Department with regular inspections.**
- (19) Keeping a balance between scholarship and intellectual development on one hand and employment related skills development on the other.**
- (20) Science education.**
- (21) Technology.**
- (22) Early childhood education.**
- (23) Addressing the link between learning and the workplace.**

- (24) Need for education to be compatible with culture.**
- (25) Need for a career counselling and guidance service in schools.**
- (26) Developing appropriate courses and training programmes in the tourism sector.**
- (27) Urgent need for training in basic business concept and skills such as accounting, marketing, and costing.**
- (28) Expansion and strengthening of continuing education programmes offered by the University Centre.**
- (29) Closer ties and links between university education and the market place. Attachments to appropriate institutions for work experience to be promoted and implemented by tertiary training institutions including USP.**
- (30) Urgent consideration be given to making available relevant courses in psychology and counseling.**
- (31) Need for continuing education programme targeting parents aimed at changing attitudes and perceptions about education generally.**
- (32) Expand and strengthen activities at the USP Centre.**
- (33) Courses on parenting and value education be made available to the community.**
- (34) Training of trainers concept be encouraged and actively promoted and implemented.**
- (35) USP to accord full recognition of prior learning (RPL) experience towards academic qualification.**
- (36) USP to be one of the external assessors for relevant NUS courses.**

- (37) Development of joint degrees in areas such as marine science, agriculture and counselling.**
- (38) Encouraging collaborative ventures in research between NUS and USP.**
- (39) Closer cooperation between NUS and USP in areas of mutual interest be explored and actively promoted.**
- (40) Upgrading and teaching of courses on information systems and information technology be undertaken.**
- (41) USP to work in partnership arrangements with national institutions.**
- (42) Clear provision be included in the USP's mission statement that it has an "obligation to assist new emerging national institutions".**
- (43) USP to concentrate more on post-graduate studies, research and consultancy.**
- (44) Further develop distant education offerings to cater to the needs of the local community.**
- (45) Arrangements be established to facilitate cross-crediting between NUS and USP courses.**
- (46) USP to promote and market its strengths and available programmes more effectively.**
- (47) USP to be more pro-active in responding to the requirements of member countries.**

CLOSING

63. In drawing the seminar to a close, the Hon. Minister referred to several major educational developments that were taking place in the country including, the merger between the NUS and the Teachers' Training College, and the move to their new facilities as well as the New Zealand School Certificate now being offered by Junior Secondary Schools. Hon. Fiame said that access was the main concern of Government in its current policy on education. She also re-emphasised, however, the important role of early childhood education and special needs education in Government's overall plan for the sector. The Minister then thanked all participants for their contributions before officially declaring the seminar closed.

APIA
28 MARCH 1997

SEMINAR TIMETABLE			
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TIME	TUESDAY 25/3	WEDNESDAY 26/3	THURSDAY 27/3
8.30 a.m	Official Opening	NGO's Presentation	Donors Presentation Parents/Students presentation
9.30 a.m	MORNING TEA	Panel Discussion	
10.00 a.m	Public Sector Presentation		MORNING TEA
10.30 a.m	Panel Discussion	MORNING TEA	Public Forum
11.45 a.m	Public Forum	Public Forum	
12.30 a.m			LUNCH
1.00 p.m	LUNCH	LUNCH	
1.30 p.m	Private Sector Presentation	Post Secondary Institutions Presentation	Plenary Session
2.00 p.m	Panel Discussion	Panel Discussion	
3.15 - 4 p.m	Panel Discussion	Panel Discussion	
4.30 p.m			CLOSING
6 - 8 p.m	COCKTAILS!!!!		

**NATIONAL SEMINAR
FOR
USP STRATEGIC PLAN**

Apia, Western Samoa

25 - 27 March 1997

LIST OF WESTERN SAMOA SEMINAR PARTICIPANTS
25-27 MARCH 1997

<u>Name</u>	<u>Organisation/Designation</u>
1. John Hall	Don Bosco Technical Centre
2. Antony Ygosse	Don Bosco Technical Centre
3. Sinapi Moli	Department of Education
4. Bob Phillips	Macquarie Research Ltd
5. Jim Pearse	PACTAF Department of Education
6. Mavis Pearse	Private Sector
7. Bill Parr	Director, S.B.E.C.
8. Maiava V.R. Peteru	Mapusaga o Aiga
9. Donjoe Bryce Fepulea'i	Mapusaga o Aiga
10. Chris Wheeler	AusAID Apia
11. Leigh Barbara Schwenke	USP Student
12. Mailo Pesamino	PREB (Blind Society)
13. Ruta Manuleleua	Peace Chapel Christian School
14. Lafi Sanerivi	Assistant Director, ED/CDU
15. Peina Fruean	USP Student
16. Mike Walsh	Second Secretary, New Zealand High Commission
17. Sina Va'ai	National University of Samoa
18. Asiata Va'ai	Private Sector
19. Richard C. Bishop	Principal, Robert Louis Stevenson School
20. Rev. Vaiao A. E. Eteuati	Director Methodist Schools
21. Tili Afamasaga	Principal, Western Samoa Teacher's College
22. Fatu Tiperio	Principal, Marine Training Centre
23. Leaula Tavita	National University of Samoa
24. Sunema Kolose	Western Samoa Polytechnic
25. Vaovai Tweedie	USP Student
26. Simaluaifou Mano	USP Student
27. Tuiolo Schuster	Australian High Commission
28. Ana Setu Kolia	USP Student
29. Falanika Salevao	Tutor, USP Centre
30. Soo Fauolo	Pre School Sauaialii, Vaoala
31. Peseta S. Isara	Education Department

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|---|
| 32. | Magele Mauiliu | Chief Executive Officer, WS
Polytechnic |
| 33. | Sala M Reupena | Principal, Congregational Senior
College |
| 34. | Vaosa Epa | Director, Public Service
Association |
| 35. | Vaasiliifiti Moelagi Jackson | Proprietress, Safua Hotel, Savaii |
| 36. | Ana Tuimauga | RHEMA |
| 37. | Emele T. | RHEMA |
| 38. | Palagi Faasau | Education Department |
| 39. | Gisa Salesa-Uesele | Environmental Education Officer,
SPREP |
| 40. | Marie Bentin-Toalepaiali'i | Education Department |
| 41. | Laititi Sua | Western Samoa Teacher's College |
| 42. | Epe Esera | Western Samoa Teacher's College |
| 43. | Lumaava Sooaemalelagi | Western Samoa Teacher's College |
| 44. | Neri Fepuleai | Western Samoa Teacher's College |
| 45. | Toomata Tua | Principal, Maluafou College |
| 46. | Prof. Bernie Wolff | National University of Samoa |
| 47. | Nick Levy | National University of Samoa |
| 48. | Tauavamea Dr L. Palepoi | Vice Chancellor, NUS |
| 49. | Fulisia Aiavao | Principal, School of Nursing |
| 50. | Tunumafono Aiavao | Savali- PM's Office |
| 51. | Judy A. Pouono | Hotel Kitano Tusitala |
| 52. | Ruta Afemata | Education Department |
| 53. | Tanielu Aiafi | Education Department |
| 54. | Faatafao Toia | Western Samoa Teacher's College |
| 55. | Dawn Rasmussen | Western Samoa Teacher's College |
| 56. | Faatonu Faletoese | President, Komiti Tumama |
| 57. | Karoline Fuatai | National University of Samoa |
| 58. | Fonoti Lafitai Iupati | USP, Alafua |
| 59. | Dr Mohammed Umar | IRETA |
| 60. | Feturi Elisaia | Hans Seidl Foundation |
| 61. | Namulauulu Dr G Tavana | Principal, Church College of
Western Samoa |
| 62. | Galumalemana N Petaia | Assistant Director - Education |
| 63. | Tupae Esera | Director of Education |
| 64. | Makerita Vaai | Centre Director, USP Malifa |
| 65. | Nuusa Faamoe | USP Centre, Malifa |
| 66. | Angie Alama | USP Centre, Malifa |
| 67. | Afioga Fiamē Naomi Mataafa | Hon. Minister of Education |

EDUCATION IS THE KEY

PREAMBLE

Education is about development and its about change.

We have come a long way from our own traditional and cultural learning through informal and non-formal settings of story-telling and learning through examples and role playing or modelling. Even in those earlier times, we recognised the value of care and the provision of a sound foundation for future learning through a service which extends and enhances family, community and village involvement.

The arrival of the Missionaries introduced a new method of learning and recording through reading and writing. This was the beginning of a semi-formal or organised learning through the Aiga-a-Faifeau or Reverend Minister's Schools. One learned to read, write, do sums, cook and sew and simple carpentry work.

FORMAL SCHOOLING - AN OVERVIEW:

Real formal schooling began when the Germans set up a school for their children in Malifa. This was adopted by New Zealand in their time and further developed it to include education for the local students. The New Zealand government extended the role of the state in the 1920's to setting up Primary Schools in villages around the country.

Today just about every village has a Primary School with some Missions also running Primary Schools. The Primary School participation rate in the 5-14 years age group (1996 figures) is 92 percent. Of course with the expansion of primary school provision and an increase output of primary graduates, secondary education and teacher training had to be addressed. Vaipouli College was created in Savaii in 1922 and Avele College in Upolu in 1924. Although both were in reality providing primary level education they were later developed into secondary schools. Samoa College was opened in 1953 which further opened up places for secondary education. Of course the Missions also started their own secondary schools which up to now

APPENDIX 1

still provides for the large majority of senior secondary students. In the late 1960's the demand for access to secondary placing made it necessary to create district high schools which have become known as Junior Secondary Schools. Currently there are 20 Junior Secondary Schools. With rising Primary School enrolment, teachers had to be trained. The Primary Teacher's College began its operations in 1939. In 1978, a Secondary Teacher's College was opened to train teachers for the Junior Secondary Schools. The two Teachers' Colleges were amalgamated in 1991. I am happy to say that today, all our Primary teachers are trained personnel and almost all our teachers in Junior Secondary Schools have gone through the Secondary Division of the Teacher's College.

Our Polytechnic which started as a Technical Training Institute in 1963 has become a fully fledged autonomous Polytechnic and is still undergoing upgrading in its course provision. The Polytechnic at some stage in the not too distant future will merge with the Marine Training College for sailors which is currently being run under the umbrella of the Ministry of Transport.

Late to come on the scene was the National University of Samoa (NUS). NUS started in 1984 with 45 students under its own Act doing a pre-university foundation year programme or University Preparatory Year programme. The University has grown since its early beginnings and will grow even bigger when it merges with the Teachers College late this year. The NUS is due to move to its new premises in September of this year.

NEW INITIATIVES:

Early Childhood Education and Special Needs Education though not new initiatives in Samoa, they are new additions to the mandate of the Education Department.

With regards to Early Childhood Education, consideration of teacher/care-giver education and training options, appropriate curriculum guidelines, regulatory mechanisms and the formulation of aims and policies to guide early childhood education is currently being done by a working party established under the advice of the Early Childhood Association. The Teachers College has also started preparatory work on courses to train early childhood teachers. There

APPENDIX 1

is also a Regional programme which was recently reviewed for an intended third phase which will include an Early Childhood Education component.

In the area of Special Needs Education, we have non-government organisations specialising in the provision of education to the special needs. These are the Loto Taumafai, Fiamalamalama, the Blind and Vaiala Beach School. At this stage there is no intention for the Education Department to take over the role played by these institutions. Rather we see our role in the medium term as that of support, advisory in where we can, and also in the area of teacher training. At present, the Teachers College is developing and teaching courses in Special Education with the assistance of the Loto Taumafai Principal and others.

ISSUES:

Education Development brings about its own unique difficulties. Quick expansion of education provision at all levels due to demand in an environment of inadequate resources can severely affect the quality of education provided. The Department with its new policy statements and strategic plan is now beginning to address the following areas of concern:

- School facilities, in terms of classrooms, furnishings and ablution facilities;
- Curriculum materials. readers, textbooks, basic science, equipment and Home Economics and Industrial Arts equipment;
- Written materials in the vernacular for schools, with the development of a monolingual dictionary and grammar text;
- Literacy and numeracy skills training of teachers of lower primary with supporting readers for schools;
- A comprehensive training programme in development, production and distribution of high quality teacher and student curriculum materials in all subject areas and at all

APPENDIX 1

levels. Emphasis in the medium term is on consolidating existing curricula by improving delivery methods and strengthening literacies and numeracy skills;

- A number of formative and summative assessment methods is promoted and used to measure student progress and evaluate teaching and learning programmes;
- Benchmark testing in literacies - Samoan and English and numeracy at Years 4 and 6 are in place and has been instituted nationally;
- The present dual secondary structure will be progressively merged into one five-year, single-stream, comprehensive system in which the same curricula and assessment requirements apply to all students. Emphasis in the medium term will be on developing core academic subjects and providing a comprehensive programme of both academic and applied subjects for all students;
- The scope of the Curriculum Unit will be widened to include Year 12 and Year 13;
- A quality secondary education requires access to adequately stocked and organised library and equipped and supplied laboratories. Every secondary school will be provided with a library and laboratory.
- The very important contribution by Missions and Private Schools in providing secondary education is acknowledged. The Department will continue to extend support to non-government schools through the distribution of curriculum materials, participation in regional assessment and evaluation procedures, and access to pre and in-service teacher education;
- The Department will make very effort, and within the resources it has to share the responsibility for special-needs children by supplementing and supporting community initiatives in special education. The particular learning needs and residential locations of Special Needs students

APPENDIX 1

will be identified to allow for planning strategies to address their needs;

- It is beyond dispute that the quality of teachers has much to do with the overall quality of an education system. It is critical that the upgrading process of teacher education which began in 1991 will be strengthened and consolidated. The intended status of the Teachers College as the Faculty of Education in the merger with the National University will ensure consolidation and strength to programmes and delivery;
- All teachers (Government and Non-government) will be given the opportunity and encouragement to increase their professional knowledge and pedagogical skills in meeting new curriculum and assessment objectives and to upgrade qualifications through participation in-service teacher-education programmes;
- Aid assisted projects have given us valuable opportunities to address areas like management, literacy/bilingualism and multi-grade teaching techniques;
- Language is a fundamental factor in the interplay between education and culture. A national policy which considers current language practices and needs within the social and cultural context is of critical importance. The prime objective for the Education System is the production of bilingual individuals fully literate in both Samoan and English;
- Management is critical to proper supervision and implementation of programmes. The Department has recently been re-organised into a more flattened structure shortening the lines of communications and producing quicker decision making, responses and actions;
- A severely under-resourced system has been aggravated by inconsistencies in management and resourcing, procedures at school level. A quality education system requires effective management in individual schools. We have

APPENDIX 1

developed a school-based management package that is based on a partnership between the Community, teaching staff and the Department. The School Management will therefore be shared between the Department and School Committees. All schools registered with the Department will be open to regular inspection under clearly defined review procedures;

- The national post-secondary system is concerned with the advance of knowledge, scholarship and intellectual development on the one hand and employment related skills development on the other. Over the next couple of days, you will be entertained by two presenters on this aspect of the Education Sector in Samoa.

ROLES FOR USP:

1. USP has always had a manpower training role in the Region, always trying to provide appropriate levels of education and training responsive to the well-being and needs of the communities of its member countries. Samoa, and I am sure in all member countries, the majority of people employed in key positions in every sector are USP graduates. With the reorientation of scholarship awards that will come in the near future, there is no doubt that USP and emerging National Post Secondary Institutions of the region will have a much bigger role to play in providing University education. Universities, USP and National Institutions must therefore be prepared to take

on non-traditional universities roles, that is to say, the Regional University and others in the region will need to look seriously at whether their programmes prepare students for the work arena. Consideration, as to what extent employable skills are already part of their offered programmes must be monitored.

2. As already mentioned, Samoa has received great benefit from USP intervention. A large number of USP trained graduates are staffing our Junior Secondary Schools, Senior Colleges, Teachers College, Polytechnic and our National University. This training role will continue to be needed in certain areas in the medium term.

APPENDIX 1

3. The following areas need attention from USP as far as general education assistance is concerned for Samoa:

- maintaining of Early Childhood Teacher Training and Special Needs education courses;
- continuation of USP role in curriculum assistance, literacy and assessment;
- IOE/USP and WSTC/NUS to negotiate collaborative research work particularly in areas of shared concern. Currently, WSTC in collaborating with IOE in research, looking at the nature of teacher education programmes and the extent of cultural influence in such programmes;
- USP should continue to provide opportunities for students to pursue first degrees in all areas in the medium term. Obviously as national capacities build up students will naturally enrol in their National Institutions;
- USP extension services should continue to be active in continuing education as these are useful to the needs of the Samoan Community;
- USP should continue to develop its post graduate programmes particularly in Education, Psychology, Literature and Linguistics;
- Course Accreditation. This will no doubt be raised strongly by our post-secondary paper presenters and so it will be appropriate for this issue to await discussion until then.

CONCLUSION:

The issue of education and its importance to a quality existence demands a much longer presentation in order to properly address areas of concern so that appropriate interventions can be made from relevant institutions. However, time limitations makes it necessary to restrict

APPENDIX 1

my time into giving an overview in the hope that it will provoke fruitful thoughts and discussions.

SOIFUA.

Education Department
March, 1997.

RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING
PAPER
PRESENTED AT THE USP STRATEGIC
PLANNING SEMINAR
WESTERN SAMOA POLYTECHNIC 25-27 MARCH 1997

Magele Mauiliu Magele
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Western Samoa Polytechnic

INTRODUCTION

Matalena is forty years old and has three teenage children. She left school at seventeen and worked in a bank as an accounts-clerk. She is interested in business and management and assists her brother with accounts and a business plan for the expansion of his furniture manufacturing business. Her recent activities included treasurer for small credit union, secretary of the women's committee, chairperson of the Parent Teachers Association and member of the Manufacturers Association. She has worked in her current job as office manager for a computer company for ten years and is proficient at using spreadsheets, wordprocessing and database. She has attended several short computing and business courses to develop her skills and has taught four of her staff the application of computer software.

From next year Matalena has negotiated a half time position with the same company. She is considering returning to study in order to get a formal qualification and hopefully a more interesting position and a secure salary. She is considering enrolling in a Bachelor of Business degree course and feels confident that she has a good working knowledge of several of the basic subjects as a result of her experiences.

Matalena wonders if any of this will count towards her qualification. Should it? Recognition of prior learning is designed for people like

Matalena who wish to have their experience-based learning count towards academic qualifications.

WHAT IS RECOGNITION OF PRIOR LEARNING (RPL)?

Recognition of prior learning is the procedure awarding adults formal credit for competencies gained through work and life experiences.

RPL IS A FORM OF ASSESSMENT.

- RPL treats each person individually taking account of their backgrounds, relevant experience, current skills and knowledge.
- RPL usually relates to informal learning, such as a result of work or life experience.
- RPL generally relates to long-term learning.

RPL HELPS A PERSON.

- to gain entry to a training course
- to get credit for part of a training course
- to get a certificate and/or qualification.
- to improve positions at work.
- to gain self esteem
- to help clarify training plans and career plans.

IS RPL NEW?

USA

RPL is very advanced in the United States. Operating for over 20 years. There are over 1700 tertiary institutions acknowledging and giving credits for relevant adult experiences and learning acquired outside formal educational institutions.

UK

Since the 1980s many universities and Polytechnics in the UK have implemented these practices and there is growing use of this concept in industry and the public service.

AUSTRALIA

RPL concept is growing in popularity in Australia. Many universities and TAFE are now restructuring their training programmes to give credit for skills and knowledge acquired in the workplace.

NEW ZEALAND

Seamless education strategy developed over the past 5 years gives due recognition and credit for knowledge and skills acquired in the workplace.

WHO BENEFITS FROM RPL?

Benefits to Trainees

- it is wasteful to require students to repeat learning acquired in another setting whether it be theory or practical. For students, reduction in fees is a major factor of RPL.
- positive self esteem, intrinsic motivation heightened when competencies acquired on the job are acknowledged and credited.
- access to second chance for individuals who were unable to pursue their education.
- a recognised, portable qualification.
- career development opportunities.
- improved income and access to further learning.

Benefits to Academic Staff

- presence of experienced adults adds richness to courses for all and are keen to retain them in their classes.

Benefits to Educational Institutions

- Closer links with industry and client groups as a result of joint reviews of courses to facilitate RPL.
- Higher graduation rates (productivity) when credit for RPL is awarded.
- Scarce resources might be directed to higher level subjects.

Benefits to Employers

- RPL enhances relationships with accrediting educational providers through joint industry/education ventures.
- Industry training may be upgraded to meet entry requirements and assists employees access to tertiary education.
- More efficient and effective use of skills already in the workforce.
- Fast tracking training which means employees can be fully competent as quickly as possible.
- More confident and motivated employees.
- A way of giving credit to their experienced employees.

WHAT'S DRIVING RPL?

Technological

Technological changes embrace a wide variety of ways in which Educational institutions design and deliver their training programmes.

Communication technology in particular has had an impact in the past few years.

Globalisation

Closely related to technological. Access around the globe is faster and easier with advances in transportation. Educational institutions will be under pressure to establish cross-crediting mechanisms for verification of qualifications.

Customisation

Educational institutions will be under pressure to provide education and training that meet "customer needs." They will be forced under competition to clearly seek out and identify who their customers are.

Social Justice

Many people have not had the opportunity of formal education or training. Their skills are not recognised by qualification or acknowledged by their employers. Their aspiration is a chance for a new opportunity.

National Policies

Governments' strategies for sustainable economic growth hinges on a skilled labour force. RPL provides an option for many experienced people to get credit towards a formal qualification.

Conclusion

RPL is about equity, access and relevance. RPL is a powerful equity tool. Many people have skills and knowledge which have never been formally recognised. If these skills and knowledge acquired on the job can be credited by Institutes such as USP, these people could re-enter the workforce or do formal study. RPL is also about access. Opportunities should be considered for disadvantaged groups (social and economic). There is also the first-line and middle manager, teachers and principals who are unable to take extended leave for

studies towards formal or higher qualifications. RPL will fast track them into recognised formal qualification.

RPL will force Tertiary institutions to look more closely at their programmes for relevance, and to establish and maintain linkages and networks with industry. RPL promotes partnerships which benefit the trainees, workers, the employer and the educational institution. It recognises the value of education and training whether delivered in an educational institution or the workplace.

RPL is widely used in the United States, Britain and recently Australia and New Zealand. It is happening right at our doorstep. Will USP take up the challenge?

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**PRESENTATION MADE AT THE:
NATIONAL SEMINAR FOR THE USP STRATEGIC PLAN -
Apia 26 March 1997**

Introduction:

I wish to commend the University of the South Pacific for the foresight in organising this series of seminars around the region. It is right that the owners of USP, who are the twelve member states in the Pacific should be consulted regarding the continuous development of the USP. The National University of Samoa and the WSTC (soon to become the Faculty of Education of NUS) are proud to be part of this consultation. I have a shopping list about what I would like the USP to do for NUS but before I go on to that I wish to clarify the perspective from which I speak.

In May 1994, a memorandum of agreement (hereafter known as 'the agreement') was signed between the NUS and USP whereby provisions was made "for a range of cooperative measures designed to promote the interests of both universities". I wish to affirm that, from the point of view of the NUS, the spirit of cooperation and collaboration is very much alive and we would wish for this to continue into the next century.

What are our expectations of the USP?

I wish to answer this question by taking the approach of stating each of the principles and some of the provisions of the agreement between NUS and USP and commenting on each one.

Principle 1.1

The USP provides, and will continue to provide, a wide range of teaching, research training, research and development activities for the South Pacific generally and for the twelve USP member countries in particular, of which Western Samoa is one of the larger participants outside Fiji.

Comments

USP must respond to twelve countries with a wide variety and different levels of educational, economical and social needs. It is expected then that USP will continue to provide as stated above. There will be programmes that because of the economies of scale will not be viable at NUS. The USP should continue to provide opportunities for students who wish to pursue first degrees in all areas but fully acknowledging that as national expertise and capacities improve in certain priority areas then students will enrol at national institutions.

Principle 1.2

The larger member countries of the USP family have the need, and the legitimate expectation, to develop their own national post secondary training activities, especially in fields such as teacher training, nursing and technical education, as well as in general studies beyond secondary school Form 6 (year 12) including the preparation of students for University level study and certain country specific activities.

Comments:

Even outside of this agreement, the WSTC has had a continuing relationship with the Institute of Education (IOE) at USP in particular and the School of Humanities in general. This relationship was fostered through the Principals of Teachers Colleges consultations and through direct contact with IOE where the IOE provided the external assessment of the WSTC Diploma of Education programme for many years. Since 1995, the School of Humanities has accepted for cross-crediting towards their Bachelor of Education three courses in the WSTC Dip Ed. These are ED 101, ED 102, and ED 105.

Professor Wolff (HOD-Commerce) has also been negotiating and discussing with various people in the USP, the possible cross-crediting of other NUS courses to relevant programmes of USP. It is my fervent wish that courses from our B.A. programme, our Commerce program and others will be recognised for cross crediting purposes. It is expected that collaboration in this area will continue to develop.

Principle 1.3

USP recognises the need and accepts the responsibility to support and assist the development of the national post secondary institutions of its members countries.

Comment

This is a gratifying aspect of the agreement. As a fledgling university NUS looks towards USP as a mentor towards attaining its full potential to meet the needs of Samoans and Samoa. In the past eight years, the NUS has been developing the Bachelor of Arts degree from having one major of Samoan Studies to what it is today with majors also in History, English and Mathematics. The Commerce area also has been developing with the joint work of the Western Samoa Society of Accountants and the Faculty of Commerce at NUS so that in 1998 the Bachelor of Commerce would be launched. In July of this year also, the WSTC and NUS will be amalgamating and it is anticipated that a Bachelor of Education will start at NUS in the next year or two. The faculty of Nursing merged with the NUS in 1994 and is currently offering a Diploma in Nursing. The NUS Council has just approved the launching of the Certificate of Science, following that a Bachelor of Science will begin in the future. Each of these programmes have its own particular areas of needs. NUS will look towards the USP to help in the consolidation of these programmes.

Principle 1.4

The NUS has the responsibility to ensure that its courses are designed and developed so as to:

- meet the national needs and priorities of Western Samoa
- make full use of the possibilities of collaborative arrangements with USP and other universities and colleges.

Comments:

The NUS is striving to do just that; fully aware of the fact that the resource base it has is not the same as many universities. It will take time for NUS to assess its resource and refine its roles and

programmes after the opening of the new campus this year.

The Provisions of The Agreement

The Agreement provides for:

1. Exchange arrangements between staff of NUS and USP as part of their respective staff development programmes.
2. Programmes of support by the institutes and schools of USP for teaching programmes at NUS.
3. Cross-credit arrangements for courses in the appropriate degree programmes.
4. Cultural, sporting and social links.
5. The apportionment of costs when exchange arrangements are implemented.

Comments:

It would be clear from what has been said that the arrangement signed in 1994 already provides for much of the NUS expectations from USP. Since the signing of the agreement however, the activities of collaboration have been minimal. With a better campus and improved capacities the NUS will be in a better position to plan and implement collaborative ventures with USP for mutual benefit.

The Shopping List

This is not exhaustive and by no means comprehensive. This is also drawn from some personal convictions and not from a collaborative view of the NUS.

1. I would like to see the USP become (or one of) the external assessors for some of our programmes.
2. I would like to see the development of some joint degrees

APPENDIX 3

where the capacities of NUS are limited as in Marine Science, Agriculture, Counselling etc.

3. I would like to see some collaborative ventures in research between USP and NUS. I believe that WSTC staff is already working in one such type of research with IOE/USP.
4. I would like to see an extension of the Agreement (with some modifications) between NUS and USP as the current agreement will expire in May 1997.

CONCLUSION:

1. The USP in developing it's corporate plan for the next decade must not ignore national institutions like the National University of Samoa and thus should promote a very close working relationship. It is in the interests of USP that these national institutions be made stronger despite the fact that, it is humanly inevitable that even in partnership there is some competition.
2. Thus USP in it's long term vision for the future directions of the regional university must reaffirm not pay lip service and to the idea of co-operation, while continue to build up their own castle in a very limited national sphere we have in Western Samoa.
3. The USP as the major tertiary institution in the South Pacific has a responsibility to foster higher education that includes national institutions of higher learning such as NUS in its corporate strategy; that is, it must minimise duplication of programmes, and must accord priority to the interests of the National institutions. In other words an essential part of a development plan for USP for the next millennium requires a closer and meaningful working association with national institutions.
4. One will only take a look at the new campus and accept the fact, that NUS is here to stay.
5. I predict that USP will eventually become National University of Fiji - when that takes place - you will then remember your

APPENDIX 3

own kind and thank them for a vision of establishing the National University of Samoa; **"where there is no vision, the people perish...."** Proverbs 29:18

Faafetai

(Signed)

Tauavamea Dr L. Palepoi

VICE CHANCELLOR

NATIONAL UNIVERSITY OF SAMOA

PAPER PRESENTED AT USP STRATEGIC PLANNING
SEMINAR
APIA, WESTERN SAMOA, 28 MARCH 1997

(from a perspective of a former USP student and parent)

INTRODUCTION

Madam Chairman, Pro Vice-Chancellor of Alafua Campus, Friends and Colleagues, Ladies and Gentlemen.

The concept of "marriage" between educational institutions has been mentioned twice already in the course of our seminar, firstly by the Principal of the Marine Training School and as recently as yesterday by the Head of the Western Samoa Teachers College,

Consequently, let me by way of introduction state that the marriage between USP and Samoa back in 1968 was a "pre-arranged" marriage of "convenience". On reflection, it probably made sense then, what with USP been the newest and only single guy on the block.

Naturally, the expectation was for the union to be a permanent one as long as the partners remained faithful to each other and the relationship based on mutual trust and respect.

Yet barely two decades down the line, the USP, much to its surprise, suddenly found itself in the presence of other eligible bachelors in the National University of Samoa (NUS) and the Western Samoa Polytechnic (WSP) both of whom are locally bred and raised and have been making repeated advances to try and win over Samoa's complete attention. Compounding USP's discomfort of course is the fact that Samoa is openly flirting with both suitors.

Thus the current "soul-searching" exercise by USP to salvage what's left of the marriage with Samoa came as no surprise at all. In fact USP's action validates my belief that about the only time the marriage certificate has any real significance to both partners is when things aren't going smoothly and one of the partners is threatening to opt out of the relationship altogether.

Having made these observations, let me, like the previous speakers add my own congratulations to USP on a number of fronts, viz:

- 1 for making a genuine attempt to try and save the marriage from heading towards dissolution, a marriage if one might add, that has produced some fine offspring's who are now beginning to mark their in all spheres of life;
- 2 in being open-minded about the developments to date and trying to re-define the roles respectively of USP and Samoa vis-a-vis the emerging new players on the scene;
- 3 for providing Samoa, albeit unintentionally, the first ever opportunity to bring together a wide cross section of our own people to start focussing on the same issues that USP is now trying to grapple with.

STUDENT'S PERSPECTIVE

Even at my primary school days, I had wanted to study in New Zealand for no apparent reasons. But why not? After all, our colonial past moulded us to regard everything "New Zealand" as superior, our "adopted" education system actively ingrained this fallacy into our minds, even our culture's "measure of success" demand adherence to this belief, and worse still, our parents dreams and aspirations are built on it.

Thus when I applied for a government scholarship to study abroad, I naturally expressed a clear wish to study in New Zealand.

You can well imagine my disappointment therefore, when I fronted up for the scholarship interview and never once was I asked about my stated preference. Instead, I was simply told to go and study for a "liberal arts" degree at USP. I felt cheated, powerless and let down. But then what can one do? My parents were "nobodies" and could not influence the decision making process. It was much a case of "beggars" can't be "choosers".

So that was my "reluctant introduction" to USP, the institution that

was later to change me and my perception of life totally. You see, USP became my home for 4 years. Significant still, it took me as a "student" and turned me out as a "parent".

AFTER USP

Returning to Samoa armed with a "piece of paper" as evidence of four years away from home, one was immediately confronted with the revelation that the same degrees were being paid different salary scales depending on the countries where the universities are located. While felt betrayed, the incident gave me and my other USP colleagues a renewed sense of commitment to perform well in our respective jobs.

PARENTS PERSPECTIVE

Parents by definition (within the context of deciding courses for their children to pursue at tertiary level) at times can be very irrational, emotional and downright stubborn, - that is usually, it is the so-called "educated" parents and those with political clouts who are the most difficult to appease.

WHY? Because most want their children to pursue courses of the parents choices, rarely those of the children.

Preferred course of studies include law, medicine, aviation, accounting etc. to be undertaken in Australia (since latter began offering scholarship awards to Samoa), New Zealand and then Fiji in that order. There have been cases of students deliberately opting for lower level courses to facilitate acceptance in tertiary institutions in Australia and New Zealand even if they have been assured of placements for degree studies at USP. Still, some parents have declined government sponsored places for their children at USP so that they could send them elsewhere under private funding.

Thus this "attitudinal problem" with all its inherent ramifications, persists to this day. The generation gap with parents imposing their wishes on their children continues. Regrettably, this has led, in a number of instances, to a mismatched of parents aspirations with the students abilities to deliver, resulting in the unnecessary wastage of

opportunities, which are really "privileges" and not "rights" as some would like us to believe. Parents dreams therefore remain largely unfulfilled and students become disillusioned and despondent.

USP CONTRIBUTION

Against such a scene, what has USP to offer to the region and its member countries?

Firstly, USP has the "staying power" which guarantees that a high percentage of the students will return upon the completion (or termination through disciplinary measures or unsatisfactory progress) of their studies to serve in their respective countries. The same can not be said of those attending tertiary institutions in other countries where immigration laws are perhaps more relaxed and accommodating.

Secondly, USP since its inception has continued to provide fertile training ground for nurturing and developing potential policy makers for our part of the world. I always find it uplifting and a sense of joy to go to international conferences and meet up with the multitude of people who had come through the USP system. One needs to look at the various decision-making levels of the member countries, the political and spiritual arenas included, to really appreciate USP's input to date. Because a lot of these links and friendships were forged much earlier on during times at USP, discussions are conducted expeditiously and the meeting outcomes reflect a high level of trust and openness.

But according to the "Carpenters" band, the "times, they are changing" and USP like other forward looking institutions, cannot completely insulate itself from the happenings around it.

Which inevitably leads me, Ladies and Gentlemen, to ask the most pertinent of questions, **Now, Where to From Here?**

THE FUTURE

For what it's worth, the following is offered as food for thought as USP and its shareholders jointly try to chart a course for the

university to follow as it approaches the 21st century.

USP's Mission Statement

USP's Mission Statement of 1994 should be extended further to impose a clear obligation on the university to ensure that in the pursuit of its goals and aspirations, due and full consideration be given at all times to developments in tertiary education, (current or projected) in the region that may impact on the university's objectives. As it is, the mission statement is quite explicit in terms of the goals it wants USP to pursue but is silent on a corresponding obligation that will make it mandatory for the university to look at both academic excellence, costs considerations and the developments taking place on the ground in the various member countries.

But Why The Mission Statement?

Because the mission statement provides legitimacy for USP's existence and the mandate for the achievement of its goals.

School of Agriculture (SOA)

Course offerings at SOA should be re-looked at with a view of providing short term courses that are more practical oriented with less emphasis on the theoretical aspects. This will allow for students who are not academically gifted but are practically inclined to contribute to the improvement of agriculture production which we constantly claim to be the backbone of all South Pacific economies. In fact very few of our SOA graduates, if any, end up in the villages on the land dirtying their hands and making a living out of farming. The way I see it, most of the graduands/diplomates etc end up occupying positions within the department's head office with some going overseas for further training to enhance their prospects of being employed in some overseas or regional organisations.

General Science Courses

General science courses should be made more "student and environment friendly." They should not be taught strictly on conventional methods but where appropriate local resource materials from within our environment could be substituted for some of the scientific materials required for experiments

etc. This will make science easily adaptable, meaningful and relevant to real life situations rather than the former being just a technical laboratory-based subject.

University Extension

Given the likely trend in the future for national governments to have their own tertiary institutions, the role of the extension service will become all the more important as a vehicle for USP's presence felt around the region. Because it caters to a different clientele not covered by the national institutions, its survival is not threatened. Consequently, more continuing education courses should be offered to reflect the diverse needs of the wider community. More bridging courses would be in line with perhaps some cross crediting arrangement between USP and NUS for some of the more basic certificate courses both institutions provide. Summer schools that had been conducted in Samoa in the past had all been well received and proven very effective. They should be continued.

The establishment of a sub-centre in Savaii to cater for the needs of the people there who are not reaping the full benefits of the various services USP provides, is long overdue. This kind of arrangement is already in place and working well in Fiji and Tonga and should also be extended to include Samoa.

Research and Consultancy

While I'll be the first to admit that one of USP's potential strength lies in its research and consultancy capabilities, by the same breath I'll readily concede that this remains largely unknown outside of the confines of USP itself. The University should be more pro-active in its approach and market its services more aggressively worldwide than has been done to date. USP should not wait for the donor community etc to come to them with research or consultancy offers. Instead, the onus should be on the university to acquaint and update the donor countries/organisations continuously of its potential in these vital areas to at least guarantee that they will be running for research and/or consultancy funding. This is one area where USP is uniquely

placed to make a substantial contribution to the South Pacific region in the years ahead given the inevitable trend of national governments moving to establish their own tertiary institutions.

A word of caution however, USP should ensure that the spread of researches by its staff are not confined to just one country. Wherever possible, researches undertaken by the university should directly benefit the member countries concerned, and not as an exercise in itself to enhance just the researchers c.v.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Fiji's Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara coined the phrase "the Pacific Way" and the Pacific Forum Line and USP are living proofs of this sentiment.

One or two speakers have already foreshadowed the demise of our university. They cautioned that USP will ultimately become the University of Fiji in a few years time. This is being very pessimistic. My own gut feeling is that USP will continue to have a role to play in the educational needs of the South Pacific countries. A lot of the specialised courses taught at USP cannot be offered by some of the national institutions because of cost considerations alone. The magnitude of the resources required to mount some of these programmes will be phenomenal and beyond the capacity of member countries to do a decent job of it. Additionally, the establishments of the various Schools respectively in Agriculture, Law and Marine which are priority areas for our part of the world ensures that USP will continue to co-exist side by side with other tertiary institutions, old and new around the region.

In closing, let me thank publicly for the first time the then Secretary to Government in 1972, Karanita Enari who was really instrumental in introducing me to USP. Thanks mate, I have no regrets whatsoever.

Faafetai.