



National University of Samoa

HISTORY

By Professor Le'apai Lau Asofou So'o
Deputy Vice-Chancellor Institute of Higher Education

The end of the Second World War in 1945 started the process of de-colonisation worldwide. Seventeen years later, Western Samoa became the first Pacific Island nation to gain independence. Nation building required more access to post secondary training than that which had already been made available to them in the home countries by their former colonial masters.

Against this backdrop, the University of the South Pacific was established in 1968 to cater for the needs of the South Pacific region.

However, along with the wave of de-colonisation came the realisation among some of the Pacific Island countries that in order to be true to the democratic principle of self determination, each country must have its own institution of higher learning. It would be the function of such institutions to cater for the identified needs of their respective countries.

Western Samoa was among the first Pacific Island countries to entertain that dream. The idea had always been around since independence in 1962. It was given more meaning following the establishment of the University of the South Pacific, and especially with the setting up of its Regional College of Tropical Agriculture in Samoa at Alafua.

It was another two decades before Western Samoa tried to make her dream a reality. In April 1983, Cabinet revisited the issues of the resource and manpower needs of the country and the problems faced by Samoan students undertaking tertiary training overseas. What came out of this Cabinet meeting was an agreement in principle to set up a Samoan university.

Thereafter, the Minister of Education was tasked to convene an ad-hoc committee whose terms of reference were to recommend to Cabinet ways and means of implementing Cabinet's decision. In mid-June 1983, Cabinet reaffirmed its intention to establish a national university. It also approved the ministerial paper which set out the basic thinking, philosophy and issues associated with the proposed university. The ministerial paper was referred to the ad hoc committee for detailed work. The Minister of Education and the ad hoc committee approved the broad framework for the establishment of the national university towards the end of June.

Their recommendations were accepted by Cabinet and the National University of Samoa was established in 1984 by an Act of parliament. That Act was replaced by a new Act in 1997. Among the changes was a reduction in the number of overseas members on the University Council and their replacement by locals appointed by the Head of State.

From its small beginnings, of 45 students in the only class - the University Preparatory Year (UPY) in 1984, the National University of Samoa has developed in leaps and bounds. Its first degree, the Bachelor of Education - although a one-off programme, was launched in 1987. A year later, the Bachelor of Arts programme was taught. The first graduates in both programmes were awarded their degrees in the 1990 graduation.

Shortly thereafter, the existing business-related night classes administered by the Samoa Society of Accountants came under the umbrella of the university. Later it became the Faculty of Commerce. The Faculty of Science was also established. The existing School of Nursing of the national Health Department amalgamated with the university in 1993 as the Faculty of Nursing.

The Western Samoa Teachers' College amalgamated with the university in 1997 as the Faculty of Education and in the same year, the university moved from the compound at Malifa to its new Le Papaigalagala campus at Vaivase which was constructed with grant assistance from the government of Japan.

The Institute of Samoan Studies was finally established in 1999 after years of planning. Thus the National University of Samoa, situated in its new campus comprised not only the UPY programme, but five fully



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fledged faculties and the Institute of Samoan Studies. All faculties now offer courses towards Bachelors degrees in their respective disciplines. The University Preparatory Year programme has changed to the Foundation Year with programmes offered in the five Faculties as well as a General programme.

On March 8th, 2006 the National University of Samoa and the Samoa Polytechnic were merged to form the present institution with an Institute of Higher Education and an Institute of Technology. This was the culmination of the merger plans for tertiary education which was enunciated by the Government of Samoa in 2001. The Samoa Polytechnic was established in 1993 by the Act of the Fono as the successor to the Western Samoa Trade School and incorporated the Maritime Training School. In addition to the certificate and diploma programmes in the Schools of Business and General Studies, Engineering and Maritime Training, the Polytechnic offered programmes in Hospitality, Journalism and Tourism.

The new NUS Act 2006 came into force on June 1st, 2006 and on November 10th the Government of Japan officially handed over to the Government of Samoa the newly completed Institute of Technology campus, which formed part of the JICA Project for the Upgrading and Extension of the former Samoa Polytechnic. The new NUS through the Institute of Technology, the Institute of Higher Education, the Centre for Samoan Studies and the Oloamanu Centre provides over sixty academic, vocational and professional programmes including the first ever Master of Samoan Studies approved by Council in September 2006.

More info about the National University of Samoa can be found on www.nus.edu.ws.



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