

Group surveys satellite set up at USP Alafua



TEAM: Frances Tavaiqia, Shinya Murakami, Leatuaolevao Ruby Va'a, Dr Kader Hiroshi and Kisione Finau.

The University of the South Pacific (USP) Alafua Campus and the USP Centre Savai'i hosted a four-member team from Fiji, last week.

The team, comprising of prominent Dr. Kader Hiroshi Pramanik, Satellite Communication Expert/ and Special Advisor; Shinya Murakami, Project Coordinator/ and Associate Expert for JICA USP-ICT Project; Kisione Finau, Director for IT Services from USP; and Frances Tavaiqia. They work in the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) office in Fiji.

The group was in Samoa to assess the potential of installing the Ku-band Satellite Network in Samoa, under the USP-JICA ICT for Human Development and Human Security Project.

The USP-JICA ICT project is funded under the JICA technical cooperation programme with project funds of about US\$4million.

The Project was initially organized and planned by USP Fiji in order to broaden and improve the borders of distance learning across the Pacific.

USP has already applied the same programmes with Tonga, Solomon Islands and Vanuatu.

If the satellite is installed in Samoa, it is expected to derive several advantages for Samoa, especially students at USP.

Among the advantages include low



The USP satellite.

cost solution for the expansion of USPNet throughout the region. The idea is that remote islands with limited resources for distance learning will be enhanced with ICT for distance education and learning, and will also provide broadband internet services to the remote islands which will further boost the expansion and improvement of tertiary education delivery in the Region.

Furthermore, if in coordination with the Island governments, the system may be utilised as a communication infrastructure for emergency communication and disaster management.

In fact, the Ku-band ingenuity at USP does

provide for the mitigation of the current Digital Divide in the Pacific.

Through this USP Project, JICA is assisting on a regional basis to deliver improved communication systems for distance learning.

With this project also a Masters and PhD programme will be offered under the Government of Japan Scholarship to coincide with the communication and technology sector development for the region.

USP hopes that the project will cover its campuses across the Pacific in Samoa, Fiji, Vanuatu, Tonga and Solomon Islands with small satellite nodes in other remote centres across the Pacific region.