

An analysis of the role of the National
University of Samoa (NUS) to culture and
pre-university qualification

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I Project Proposal and Methodology

1. Proposal

TOPIC: An analysis of the role of the National University of Samoa(NUS) in relation to culture and pre-university qualification

This project is to make a qualitative analysis of the role of the National University of Samoa(NUS) in the area of culture and pre-university qualification. Central to this project is the concept of relevancy. How relevant is the NUS to Samoa? What meaning does the university have for the Samoan people? Does NUS represent Samoan society? Does NUS reflect the national interests? These are some of the key questions this project will try to address.

This topic is chosen because of a historical interest in the University and also because it is an institution which has come under many criticisms, some of which are founded on the current state of secondary and primary schools, within which exist numerous problems. Resources, argue some, should be spent on solving these problems, and achieving quality education in primary and secondary schools rather on a university. Moreover, not every child has access to an education because primary education is neither free nor compulsory. These should be given priority.

In the primary schools, problems include poor school facilities, equipment are non-existent or in poor conditions, curriculum materials and textbooks, particularly those written in the Samoan language are not readily available and low numeracy and literacy skills in both Samoan and English languages in particular among boys. Further, instructional times for the various subject areas are not clearly laid down, with the result that some teachers concentrate on subject areas which they are most comfortable with

and neglect others (Education Policies and Strategies 1995 – 2005 p: 16). These problems therefore need to be addressed.

Likewise, problems are numerous in the secondary schools. These include limited access to senior secondary education – only about 25% receive any senior secondary education and only about 15% complete Year 13(ibid), poor facilities and inadequately trained teachers in the junior secondary system. Also libraries, science laboratories, home economics and industrial arts room are either non-existent or inadequately supplied. Furthermore, the quality of performance throughout the secondary system is questionable. External examination results are more reflective of failure than success, with a 30% Samoa School Certificate pass rate and only 10% of Year 13 students gain the Pacific Senior Secondary aggregate required for entry into the NUS University Preparatory year(UPY). Secondary education also lacks relevance to village life and labour market needs (ibid).

Resources in the education sector therefore according to some should be spent improving these lower sectors of education. The University as a result has been accused of siphoning public money away from primary and secondary schools(Gannicott: 1990). These are relevant concerns but it is my opinion, these should not take away the need for a higher institution, which could help to alleviate some of these problems.

The University has also been criticised as a ‘second chance and lower standard’, providing degrees to those who have not been accepted overseas(ibid). The question which arises is, Whose standard? If standard here means the standard of New Zealand and Australian universities, Samoa would never have a university because those standards would be difficult to achieve.

Furthermore, the concept of a national university for Samoa was not supported by major donor agencies namely Australian and New Zealand governments because of the presence of the University of the South Pacific (USP) - the regional university to which they were and are still committed in terms of aid in education and training. But USP is not meeting all the manpower needs of the country. Also, only a selected few could have access to USP because of its location, thus making USP education costly.

Criticisms of the university in its initial years from the public and students were expressed in newspapers. These criticisms reflected doubts and cynicism. 'There should be at least 3 years planning put into this university. Are we going to be guinea pigs?,' some of the first year students wrote (Observer: Feb 14, 1984). One viewer wrote: 'A National University at this point is nutty', (Observer: June 16, 1984).

These criticisms question the relevancy of NUS to Samoa. What is the role of this institution? At question also is the credibility of the university. The non recognition of the expertise available in the University by the public and private sectors is a concern to some staff members.

I would like to argue that the role NUS is playing is relevant to the needs of Samoa, despite contradictions which may appear. To present this argument, this project will first explore the political and economic factors behind the establishment of the university. Secondly, it will explore the first two functions in the mission statement of NUS which are:

- to retrieve, analyse, maintain, advise and disseminate knowledge of Samoa through Samoan language and culture and therewith develop a centre of excellence for Samoan Studies

- to provide and maintain a University Preparatory Year (UPY) course.

Relevant in this context means the role and place of the University in society, its functions with regard to teaching, research and the resulting services, as well as in terms of its links with the world of work in a broad series (UNESCO: 1995). The need for relevance UNESCO further states:

Has acquired new dimensions and greater urgency as modern economics demand graduates to constantly update their knowledge, learn new skills and with the qualities to be not only successful job seekers but also job creators in continuously shifting labour markets (p 8).

The role of NUS to Samoan language and culture is chosen because this is one of the first priorities of the University and also because the fa'asamoa (the culture, beliefs and traditions of the Samoans) is supposedly to be the heart of the National University. It represents the nationalistic aspirations of the Samoans.

The UPY programme is chosen because it was the first programme of the University and it is a programme which satisfies the desire by the Samoans for an internationally recognised programme. In a way UPY represents NUS internationally. It is also a programme which dances to the tune of Australian and New Zealand governments as they are the main sponsors of scholarships awarded at the successful completion of the programme. It's a programme which meets manpower needs. UPY also represents western knowledge and values.

The outcome of this project would hopefully contribute to the curriculum, improving the curriculum by revisiting the courses thus making them more relevant to the needs of the community.

It would add more to the literature on the university, at least from a local perspective.

It would also help to cast more light on the current plan to phase out the University Preparatory Year Programme.

The functions of the University in the 1997 National University of Samoa Act are:

- (a) The establishment of a centre of excellence in the study of Samoa, the Samoan Language and Samoan Culture.
- (b) The acquisition and transmission of knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research.
- (c) The encouragement of intellectual independence and training responsive to the needs of the people of Samoa.
- (d) The promotion of the economic and social development of Samoa.

The major goals or functions of the University set out in the mission statement are:

- To retrieve, analyze, maintain, advise and disseminate knowledge of Samoa through Samoan language and culture and therewith develop a centre of excellence for Samoan Studies.
- To provide and maintain the University Preparatory Year (UPY) course as a means to assist students for entry into first year courses at NUS and other universities in the South Pacific, but placing priority on student placement within the country.
- To offer training and study in fields and at levels commensurate with national resources, priorities and manpower needs, notably in the areas of accounting, nursing and teacher training.

- To retain and to further develop institutional links with other higher educational institutions which relate to the university's current and future activities.
- To provide a system of continuing education where adult learners can be educated in courses and fields relevant to the country needs.
- To develop the capacity to undertake research and development of direct relevance to the needs and priorities of Samoa. (NUS Calendar : 2000)

The functions show that the university is momentous to the country. This is endorsed by the review of the National University of Samoa Support and Development Project 1995 to 1999. It states that the university is important because:

- It provides more cost effective education and training for a greater number of people.
- It prepares people well to undertake university studies overseas or in Samoa.
- Its training of teachers and nurses is essential. .
- The university is socially and economically important to Samoa.

My data sources will be:

- Parliamentary debates
- Speeches
- Departmental papers
- Act
- Calendars
- Reviews on NUS
- Consultancy reports

- Interviews of key players – students, staff members, graduates, and members of the public. A limitation of this project is the unavailability of some of the reports on the university. These could not be located where they should be housed. Another limitation is the unavailability of books by inter-loan.

A delimitation is a personal bias I may have towards some of the aspects in the University, and this may influence my judgements. However, this has not prevented keeping an open mind and weighing up the evidence in a fair manner. I am convinced, fairness has prevailed through out this project.

2. Methodology

My project is a qualitative analysis of the influence of NUS on culture and pre-university qualification. There were two approaches taken to make this analysis. First, was a historical approach. Secondly, an examination of the objectives or the goals of the mission statement and how these are being met by NUS.

In taking the historical approach, the political and economic factors behind the establishment of the university were explored. The following questions formed the framework for the political relevance section of this project:

- What were the political factors behind the setting up of the university?
- What national interests do the university represent?
- What is the Samoan notion of a national university? How feasible is this notion?

For the framework of the economic relevance of this university the following questions formed the basis.

- How economically feasible was NUS?
- What costs would be involved?
- What are the economic advantages of having a national university versus a regional institution?
- Are there other Pacific islands which have set up their own universities and for what reasons?
- What are the views of the donor agencies towards the university?
- Could Samoa sustain the university?

The answers to these questions were sought from the Hansard, seminar papers, speeches, annual reports of the university and reports of the adhoc committee appointed to set up the university, memorandums and correspondences. There is very little material on the economic justification of the university. The most detailed document on this project is a paper by Meleisea and Crocombe. It is why this paper is drawn on heavily. The people interviewed were the Secretary of Foreign Affairs, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the Head of the Samoan Department and the Registrar of the National University of Samoa.

The second approach is an examination of the objectives or goals of the mission statement of the university. Because of the word limit, only two objectives were examined.

- To retrieve, analyse, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoa through Samoan language and culture.
- To provide and maintain the University Preparatory Year.

These are treated as case studies. They are treated as such for the following reasons.

It is the most flexible of all research strategies (Robson 1993, Burns: 1997, Hakim: 1987). This is the strength of this method. A case study can provide descriptive accounts which can be exploratory if relatively little previous research exists on the topic. This description is usually qualitative in order to elicit images (Merriman: 1988). It is from these descriptions that the interpretation is based which could be new meaning, the extension of experience or the confirmation of the unknown.

Case Study is also inductive in nature (ibid). That is new relationships, concepts and understanding are discovered through the examination of data.

It is also particularistic because it focusses on a particular situation. This intensive focus enables a holistic view of the situation to be taken (ibid).

Another advantage is that Case Study is a multi-method strategy. It adopts a variety of data collection methods. These range from observation, interviewing and analysis of documents. This use of multiple sources of evidence allow case studies to present more rounded and complete accounts.

Case Study however, has a weakness and that is, a potential for bias.

Interviews were conducted in the Samoan language to enable the free flow of information. Interview questions were open-ended to elicit information and to gain insight into a person's perception in a situation. Some questions were asked to confirm what was in the written records and my own observation and notions.

In the University Preparatory Year Case Study, the interviewees were the past and present UPY Co-ordinators, some UPY graduates, and some lecturers in the UPY programme and other NUS programmes. UPY graduates were selected from the first group of students (1984) and students in the early 1990's.

UPY graduates were asked the following basic questions:

- Year attended UPY?
- Course taken?
- What skills did you learn at UPY which help you in your university studies overseas?
- Were there any deficiencies in the UPY programme in the academic preparations of students?
- In what ways did UPY prepare you to cope on the social side?
- Do you think UPY should be maintained?

Ten graduates of the UPY programme were interviewed. Three(3) were from the first group of the UPY programme. They were in the 1984 intake. The rest were from the 1991 and 1992 intakes. All these graduates had successfully completed undergraduate degrees at universities in Australia and New Zealand and at the University of the South Pacific. Different intakes were chosen so that a comparison could be made in the performance of the programme over the years.

Ten (10) staff members were interviewed. Five(5) were lecturers from the UPY programme, and five(5) were from the faculties of Science, Commerce, Arts and Education. These range of lecturers were chosen so that views could be more representative on how UPY graduates are impacting on these programmes. The basic questions put to them were

- What views do you have on the UPY programme?
- What are the pros and cons of the programme?
- How has the UPY impacted on their faculties?

Ten UPY graduates currently enrolled in diploma and degree courses at NUS were also interviewed. They were picked at random and the main question put to these students was:

- Do you feel as failures because you did not get a scholarship to study overseas?

In addition to interviews, the literature on the programme was also examined. This literature consists of reviews of the programme carried out mainly by overseas academics and overseas consultants. The reports were on the academic performance of the programme and the direction it should take. Other sources consulted were the annual reports of the programme. Questions asked, through which I sought answers from these reports were:

- Who is actually influencing what is being taught in the programme?
- What does this programme mean to the nationalistic aspirations of the Samoans?
- Whose needs does this programme fulfil?
- Is there a Samoan input into this programme?
- Is the programme elitist? If it is, isn't this a continuation from the lower levels of education?

My second case study is the Samoan Studies Programme. The key players interviewed were the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, under which the programme is taught, the Head of the Samoan Studies Programme, and lecturers of the programme. The basic questions asked were:

- Have the recommendations in the reviews of the programme been implemented?
- What are some of the potential areas for the programme to expand into?
- How is the programme meeting the needs of the university?
- Is it meeting the mission statement?
- What are the weaknesses of the programme?

The questions put to the students were:

- What do you see as the weaknesses and the strengths of the programme?
- What courses would you like to see included in the programme?
- What is your opinion on the study of Samoan language and culture at this level?
- What are your reasons for studying Samoan language and culture?

The literature on the programme was also reviewed and the following questions were in mind:

- How is the programme meeting the mandate on culture?
- What should be the emphasis of the programme?
- What kind of courses should be taught to meet the needs of the Samoans?
- What are the weaknesses of the programme?

Two different sets of questionnaires were also distributed. My sample for one set of questionnaire was sixty (60) students. These students were from the UPY programme. They were all enrolled in the Samoan Language and Culture course in the UPY programme. Students from the UPY programme were selected because from my observation over the years, this particular group of students had a negative attitude

towards the study of Samoan language and culture. This attitude was also reported in the Review of the National University (1988). The purpose of the questionnaire was to find out if this negative attitude still persisted and to gather views on the study of Samoan language and culture. All the questionnaires were returned.

My sample for the second set of questionnaires was also sixty(60) students. They were chosen from students enrolled in two or more Samoan courses at the degree and diploma level. The questionnaire was to gather views on the Study of Samoan language and culture and improvements students would like to see happening in the Samoan programme.

These questionnaires were in English. This however was criticised by some students. They were of the opinion that the language used in the questionnaire should have been Samoan. Perhaps, I would have elicited more information from the students if their own language had been used. This was a valid criticism.

The students, lecturers and all those interviewed were informed of the purpose of the project and that all information would be treated with confidentiality. It was explained to the lecturers of the Samoan Studies Programme the reasons why I was doing a project on their programme. My project was not attempting to denigrate the Samoan Studies Programme. Rather it should be seen as assisting the programme.

The information from this project would be used to argue the merits of UPY programme and that it should be maintained as a separate programme. For the Samoan Studies Programme, the information collected could be used to revisit the courses in the programme.

II Literature Review

1. Cabal, AB 1993 *The University as an Institution UNESCO Publishing, Paris.*

Cabal identifies the basic functions or roles of the university to be:

First, there are the intellectual functions. These are specifically research and teaching. These are related to the educational mission of the university – the ‘cultivation of the mind’ and the transmission of basic ideas and concepts.

Secondly, is the social function of the university. The social function or the social role of the university is through service. This social function links the intellectual and educational roles of the university and the development of society.

These roles are interactive and reflect the original essence of universities which is the corporate management of universal knowledge.

Cabal also says that to carry out these roles, the university needs to maintain its autonomy.

Research function is done for various reasons – technological, development etc. The teaching function is not limited to teaching the visible curriculum – which is the teaching of courses offered by the university but also teaching the ‘hidden curriculum’ which in the words of Cabal underlines ‘the university education commitment....the undefinable and imprecise task of providing profound and full learning’ [p104]. Thus learning is to develop the intellectual and creative capacities of students, learning to coexist with others and nature, learning to adapt and learning to become leaders.

The social function of the university is service. This service can be service to culture through the professions, through university extension services, through institutional relations and to the future of the university as an institution.

Culture as defined by UNESCO is nowadays to be considered as the 'cluster of different spiritual, material, intellectual and affective traits that characterise society or a social group' (p.131). In addition to the letters and arts, it includes lifestyles, the basic human rights, the systems of values, traditions and beliefs.

This service to culture can be expressed or is related to the teaching and research and in some universities, the function is to preserve the cultural heritage of a society and provide a forum for objective debate about pressing philosophical and ethical issues.

In third world countries, culture is not only included in the university curriculum but its a basis for research and education. Culture is also seen as a tool to create a national awareness. This service to culture is a well-accepted function of higher education institutions.

Service through the professions is based on the belief that 'people are not only the users but the builders of cultural values. Universities are therefore seen as training of human capital' (p 134).

One of the services is through University Extension Service and this is providing non-formal education or life-long education. This service is based on the theory that education continues throughout one's life, as Plato said "to educate oneself is what everyman must do without fail throughout his life and as far as his strength permits him." (p 164). Another service is inter-institutional relations. This service is important in strengthening cooperation among universities and academic mobility. Relations are

beneficial as they could lead to the establishment of sister universities and links in disciplines, library links, distance education and training of academic personnel.

2. UNESCO 1995 Policy Paper for Change and Development in Higher Education.

UNESCO in this paper states that higher education which includes university education, should be relevant to the needs of societies. Higher education should meet the needs of economics, updating of knowledge, skills and providing lifelong learning and training. It is the role of higher education to:

- produce graduates for the work-force in modern economies which have become increasingly knowledge intensive.
- provide an update knowledge and skills needed by modern economics
- maintain its traditional role of the overall training of secondary school leavers in the various academic disciplines on which further professional training could be based.
- provide lifelong learning for all which is gradually replacing the prevailing model of selective, concentrated learning and study for a limited period.
- produce graduates who could be successful entrepreneurs and job creators to ensure greater chances of employment for graduates.

The report also confirms research as one of the major functions of higher education. Research is a mean by which the academic community could be partners with businesses and industries.

The Report also makes the point that higher education should reinforce its role in enhancing 'ethical and moral values in society and to focus attention on developing an active participatory civic spirit among future generations'[p 25].

Furthermore, universities and other higher educational institutes have a responsibility towards other educational levels. This role is expressed through the responsibility for the training of teachers for primary and secondary education. The report notes that today, these levels of education demand the qualities and skills of university level training. The university therefore has a role in the professional development of teachers.

An important recommendation the Report makes, is that the university is to be a pro-active institution. A pro-active university according to UNESCO is a place:

- offering high quality training
- devoted to the advancement of science,
- involved in the development of technological innovations and inventions
- offering training for social development
- cooperating with the industry and service sectors for economic progress
- identifying debates and addresses local, regional, national and international issues
- to which governments and other institutions can go for scientific and reliable information needed for decision making.
- devoted to issues of human rights, democracy, and social justice.
- adapted to contemporary life
- promoting tolerance and peace.

3. Papers presented in a series of seminars organised by the university to gather views from the Samoans on the roles or functions of the National University of Samoa. These papers do not reflect the views of a cross section of Samoan society. Rather, they reflect only the views of the different government departments. The papers reflected the needs of the different departments. What is significantly lacking was the view of the private sector.

(a) *Wilson, E. 1984 'The NUS – Economic Consideration' A planned Series of Development Seminars, Vol. I, NUS.*

This paper criticises the prioritized responsibility of the University set out in the 1984 Parliamentary Act - to preserve Samoan language and culture. Rather, it argues that the university should play a vital role in meeting the development needs of the country. These needs as outlined in the paper are: the training of technicians and personnel to meet the employment market demands, computer training, and meeting the objectives of the national development plans.

Wilson also cautions against NUS repeating functions currently being carried out by the University of the South Pacific.

(b) *Alama, T. 1984 'NUS Role in Health' A Planned Series of Development Seminars, Vol. I, NUS*

Alama in this paper would like to see the university playing an important role in the provision of trained medical personnel and continuing medical education and professional development. The university if it would fulfil this role, would help to solve the problem of a severe shortage of medical personnel currently being

experienced. Alama also expressed that this training if provided locally would be more relevant.

Alama sees the role of the university as that of training manpower to meet the local needs and providing training which is relevant.

(c) *Tamati, P. 1984. 'The Growth and Development of Education in Developing Countries' A Planned Series of Development Seminars, Vol I, NUS*

Tamati in this paper expresses the view that the establishment of the National University of Samoa would provide the opportunity for more Samoans to obtain a tertiary education. At the time this paper was written, only a selected few who went on scholarships or afforded tertiary education overseas had this privilege. A local university according to Tamati would also have the advantage of providing an education relevant to the needs of the Samoans.

(d) *Afamasaga, T. 1984. 'Teacher Education in W.S. What is the possible role of the National University of Samoa' A Planned Series of Development Seminar Vol 1, NUS*

Afamasaga expresses the view that the role of the university in relation to teacher education should be

- to provide refresher training programs
- to carry out research in teacher training and in languages
- to offer degree programs

Afamasaga would like to see the university expanding its role rather than restricting itself to that specified by the Parliamentary Act of 1984. The University should play a very vital role in the improvement of education in Samoa

in terms of research and providing further training for teachers. Also, the university should offer degree courses.

(e) Betham, T. 1984. *'Possible Role of the National University in Developing Accountancy in Western Samoa'. A planned Series of Development Seminars NUS*

Betham sees the NUS role in

- Developing the curriculum for Accounting
- Offering degree courses in Accounting
- Offering financial assistance to the Society of Accountants
- Providing overseas relevant contracts which would be useful in providing resources, professional development in the area of accounting
- Updating knowledge and skills in accounting especially that of computer technology.

4. These are reports of reviews done on the execution of certain roles of the National University Of Samoa. These were reviews on the service to culture and the pre-university qualification function of the University.

(a) *National University of Samoa, 1995. Review of the Samoan Studies Programme, NUS Apia*

This review was carried out by a committee appointed by the University to review the aims and objectives of the courses in the Samoan Studies Programme, staffing qualification, course content and assessment. This was done to find out how best NUS was carrying out its role of disseminating knowledge of Samoan culture and language.

The findings of the review show the importance of this role of the university and confirms the view that this is an important function of NUS.

The review finds consensus amongst the people interviewed that Samoan Studies should be a central focus of the National University's teaching, research, publication and consultancy programmes.

Also, NUS needs to fulfil an official need in the area of language. The Samoan Studies Programme needs to be strengthened so that government officials would improve their Samoan and to overcome the attitude that English is the more important of the official languages.

The importance of the programme is also shown by the support given by the donor countries, which are willing to support any programme, not offered at the regional university.

NUS in the view of the Review has a role in the international academic field through the Samoan Studies Programme by contributing to universal knowledge. The Margret Mead/Derek Freeman debate was cited as an example.

The Review, finds that this service to culture is not being administered efficiently and satisfactorily. The Samoan Studies Programme should not isolate itself from other departments such as history, sociology, and economics. Courses have also been found not conducive to analytical and critical thinking. There is too much emphasis on historical but little on contemporary issues which are important in shaping the future of Samoan society and culture.

The Review was also critical of the single language policy – the use of only the Samoan language in the teaching of course. This would not serve the purpose of

disseminating knowledge to non-Samoan speakers. In addition, the resources on Samoa are written in English.

The Review Committee also presents its view on research – a basic role of the university. To carry out this function of the university, an Institute of Samoan Studies be set up to teach and do research on Samoan language and culture. The Institute would become ‘the premiere research institution in the country’. The institution could be commissioned by both the public and private sectors and even overseas institutions and organisations to do research on any aspect of Samoan society. This research function would help to forge closer links between the university and the community.

(b) New Zealand Overseas Development Assistance (NZODA), 1994. Review of the University Preparatory Year Programme

UPY reflects the teaching function of NUS. This review was carried out if this function/role was successfully being discharged by NUS. The following were findings by the Review Committee.

- The quality of the programme is adversely affected by operational and physical constraints.
- High learning order skills needed to be emphasised if students were to do well in their studies overseas.
- Some aspects of courses offered in the programme needed to be made more relevant.
- Quality and up to date resources needed to be obtained for most of the UPY courses.

- Staff need to be more involved in professional bodies - local and overseas, doing this would update knowledge in one's field of expertise and research.

III Roles and Functions of a University

1. General functions and roles

Each higher education institution should define its mission according to the present and future needs of society and base it on an awareness of the fact that higher education is essential for any country or region (UNESCO: 1998, p 22).

The institution of the university is a Western idea and it has its roots – intellectually and organization in medieval Europe. The medieval term for a university was ‘stadium generale’ which actually means a ‘a place where students from all parts are received’ (Meek and Jones: 1988, p4).

The basic roles or functions of a university identified by Cabal (1993) are: research, teaching and service. Research and teaching are the intellectual functions of a university while service is a social function. These same functions and roles are endorsed by UNESCO in its World Conference on Higher Education in 1998.

Research is a ‘precondition for the social relevance and academic quality of the university’ (Article 5 World Declaration on Higher Education: 1998). This article states further:

The advancement of knowledge through research is an essential function of all systems of higher education. Research must be enhanced in all disciplines including the social and human sciences, education etc.(p 8).

In the university, research is done broadly at 3 levels: by graduate students for the fulfillment of their degree requirements, by individual scholars for fundamental knowledge and discovery and by teams of researchers working together on a project.

Higher education institutions, specifically the universities, are expected to serve as ‘brain trusts’ and ‘think tanks’ for their respective societies in undertaking research, training

research workers and disseminating results for the development of a society (Singh: 1986).

In most developing countries, university based research has not advanced nor contributed much. Singh states this is a consequence of many factors - an excessive emphasis on the undergraduate programme, heavy teaching load for lecturers, lack of financial support and paucity of libraries, laboratories and other facilities (ibid). This is very true of NUS. NUS has yet to fulfil this role.

Singh also cautions against the wholesale adoption of research paradigms and approaches of the industrialized countries. Instead, these should be adapted to the specific needs and context of the country. Moreover, clear research policies need to be formulated in consultation with various organization and private enterprises. I endorse these requirements.

A very important area research plays an important role in, is the improvement of the education system. The university is the appropriate institution to undertake educational research since it is at the apex of the education system and representing a pool of highly qualified staff. For NUS this view was endorsed by the current Dean of Education in a paper in 1984. At the time, she expressed the view that NUS should play a vital role in the improvement of education in Samoa, although, this was not provided for in the NUS Act.(Afamasaga : 1984)

Research is a major function and it can be a means by which the academic community could be partners with businesses and industries (UNESCO: 1995). As mentioned previously, this role of NUS has not yet developed. Its research arm has been set up but it is only in its infant stage. But the University expects greater things to come. Research

must be relevant to the needs for the Samoan society and knowledge from research should help to solve the social problems, problems in education, economic problems and contribute to development.

Research in the view of some Samoans should not be merely academic propositions, but should have practical value. It should contribute to national development and offer solution to social problems. The outcome of research should be made public. Samoa is one country which has been the subject of countless research by outsiders, the outcome of many of these, have not been made known to the Samoans. Samoan researchers, should not fall in this trap.

Teaching and training are the main roles NUS is performing. These are done through the different faculties within the University. The University has a range of courses that are socially and economically important. For example, courses in basic education, teacher training, nursing, commerce, computer studies are of obvious benefit to the whole community and to individuals. The Review of the National University of Samoa Support and Development Project 1995 – 1999 has identified three well established programmes. These are the UPY programme, the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Nursing. NUS through this function is meeting the manpower needs of the country and in the upgrading and teaching of new skills relevant to jobs. The training of nurses and teachers are essential roles of NUS. The Commerce programmes are closely linked to the commercial life of Samoa.

However, there is a general feeling among academic staff members that NUS must keep abreast of the latest teaching and training methods in overseas universities. Because of isolation, NUS staff members feel that they need constant upgrading of their skills either

through attachments in overseas universities or workshops conducted by overseas academics. New Zealand Overseas Development Programme has been responsive to this need. Lecturers have testified to the benefits of some of the workshops held for this purpose and the experiences of their attachments. From their comments, it can be said that NUS is lagging behind in new developments in teaching and training.

Its social role is expressed in the study of Samoan language and culture which at the same time serves an intellectual function. A role that has constantly come under reviews. This role is treated in a case study, because this was the first priority of the university at its inception.

This service to culture is important if Samoan culture is to survive. Some people have however, argued that this should not be a priority for the University because Samoan culture is still strong. However, there is the other argument that small cultures such as the Samoan culture are in danger from what Teasdale (1992) calls 'the process of cultural standardisation' due to modern technologies and mass communications which are enabling the rapid spread of western culture. A consequence of this is 'cultural dilution' and 'eventual destruction'. The main values spread by Western culture are individualism, competitiveness and consumerism (ibid).

The impact of this on small cultures is the loss of cultural identity which according to Teasdale is at the heart of many of the educational and social problems in small indigenous cultures. These problems include low self esteem, feeling of disempowerment, failure at school, dysfunctional behaviour, suicide etc. Western cultures which are facing cultural crisis however can learn from the spiritual values and life systems of these small cultures which are based on interdependence, family solidarity

and harmony. These are the values that the western cultures need because 'their family relationships are breaking down, their sense of community is lost and selfishness and greed characterised personal relationship' (Teasdale: 1992).

Cultural identity is therefore important and the education system has a role in preserving the knowledge, skills and values in the past (Power quoted in Teadsdale:1992).

However, it is important to achieve a balance between western and traditional knowledge in the classroom (Thaman: 1992). Also it is the role of education to develop positive attitudes towards one's language and culture. Western knowledge and values are more admired now especially among the young people. One could only look around to make this observation. It is the role of NUS to ensure that the best of Samoan values, skills and knowledge are perpetuated.

National University of Samoa. A Brief History

The National University of Samoa(NUS) was established in 1984 by an act of Parliament which has since been replaced by the 1997 National University of Samoa Act. The establishment of NUS was seen as inevitable since Samoa gained independence and after development of the secondary school education system in the country. The concept of Samoa having its own university therefore had been mooted since independence (NUS Calendar: 2000). The establishment of the University of the South Pacific in 1968 checked this aspiration but the feeling of having its own university was still strong amongst the Samoans and other larger members of the USP.

A National University of Samoa was approved in principle by Cabinet in April 1983. The matter was then referred to an adhoc committee which recommended the aims of the university to be:

- The immediate aim and purpose of the University would be the maintenance, development and conservation of Samoan Language and Culture.
- The meeting of Samoa's needs for trained manpower by sending students overseas is very expensive and the costs would be reduced considerably if they were trained in the national institution.
- The national institution would be able to provide continuing and adult education short courses which would benefit the local community.

(Adhoc committee Report: 1983)

On February 14, 1984 NUS was opened by the Prime Minister, the Honourable Tofilau Eti Alesana. In his opening speech, he endorsed the above aspirations of the University. These aspirations expressed the national needs of the country. These were duly legislated as the functions of the University in the 1984 National University of Samoa Act.

- to retrieve, analyze, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoa, the Samoan language and Samoan culture.
- to maintain, advance and disseminate other knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research.
- to provide facilities for university education and training responsive to the needs of the people of Samoa.
- The University shall provide and maintain a course of study approved by the Senate to be called University Preparatory Year.

NUS was however, an institution established with haste. It had no development plan, nor a programme in place for its first students and was allocated only five tala(dollars)\$5 in

the budget. To meet the need for a curriculum, NUS adopted wholesale, the Foundation Programme of the University of the South Pacific (USP), and students were registered as USP Extension Students.

It was clear from the adoption of the USP curriculum the future direction NUS would take. It was not going to be a 'national' or a Samoan institution. It was and still is, based on the western model. This is of course inevitable because a university is a foreign import. The curriculum was not a Samoan curriculum although, included was a Samoan course – which is the study of Samoan language and culture. This course however, did not count towards achieving a scholarship to study overseas and it explained why it was not studiously pursued by students. This place of the study of Samoan language and culture was just token and paying lip service to the first priority of the university. The function of the University in this initial phase was the preparation of students to study overseas and since New Zealand and Australian governments were and are still the main scholarship donors, it was clear that these two governments influenced (and still do) greatly how the programme was and is run. The purpose of the University Preparatory Programme (UPY) was to prepare students to meet the entry criteria of Universities in New Zealand and Australia. Samoans have no quarrel with this. In fact, as long as the programme has this international link, it has high standing in the eyes of the Samoans. It will continue to do so, as long as the programme sends students overseas.

The first undergraduate programme started in 1987. This was the Bachelor of Education in partnership with the United States International University (USUIU) based in San Diego USA. This programme was however, slammed by the 1988 Review Committee on the National University of Samoa. The Committee reported:

By all accounts and review of the contents of this course, there is general consensus that the course is not up to the standard of a degree level course when assessed in comparison to the same degree at USP and in New Zealand. Its quality and standard is suspect (p 6).

The Committee also recommended that the Bachelor of Education be awarded as a Certificate of attainment, not as a conferred degree of the University and that the programme be curtailed.

In 1988, the Bachelor of Arts started offering majors in Samoan Studies, History and English. Continuing education courses were also offered in Commerce, Samoan as a Second Language and 'Fa'amatai' (Chiefly System). These continuing education courses fulfilled the needs in Samoa except the Faamatai Course. This course was strongly criticized because the course content was limited in detail and description and it did not have the approval of matai (Samoan chiefs). Thus, it was recommended that it be deferred. This course is no longer in existence.

Since then, other undergraduate programmes have been added. These are the Bachelor of Science and the Bachelor of Commerce. In the year 2001, the Bachelor of Education will be offered. The University is also offering Diplomas and Certificates of Arts, Nursing, Science, Computing and Mathematics.

Thus from the different programmes, it is evident that the main role of the university is teaching. This is not surprising because it is a young university and Samoa is a developing country. An Institute of Samoan Studies has been set up in mid 1999. This will be the research unit of the University.

IV Political and Economic Relevance of NUS

The National University of Samoa is not the first university to be established in Samoa. Already in existence at 1984 was the University of the South Pacific Agricultural School established in 1977 and the USP Extension Centre and the Congregational Christian Church of Samoan's university – Iunivesite of Samoa in 1976 which became defunct in 1984.

The concept of a National University of Samoa was first discussed in 1983 and was given priority in the same year. This was expressed in a ministerial paper in 1983 by Le Mamea Ropati who was the Minister of Education at the time:

In April 1983, Cabinet in considering the problems and needs of education and those at the tertiary level in particular, agreed in principle to establish a National University....Mid 1983, Cabinet reaffirmed the intention to establish the National University of Samoa. Government is now fully committed to the idea that the cultural identity of the Samoan people should be perpetuated and protected and has now decided to establish a tertiary institution whose first responsibility is to teach the Samoan language and culture and to protect and conserve the values and philosophy of the Samoan people.

Thus was the commitment of the Human Rights Protection Party government to the concept of the national university. This commitment was further voiced by the Minister for Education Hon. Le Mamea Ropati at the graduation ceremony of its first group of students when he said "The National University of Samoa was perceived as a necessary progressive step to further education here" (1984).

This commitment however, was not matched by deeds. There was no comprehensive development plan and only \$5 (five dollars) was allocated for the University in the government budget.

The establishment of NUS was suspected by some people of serving the political interests of the Human Rights Protection Party. This haste in the establishment of the university was highlighted in a local newspaper (Observer: Feb 22, 1984).

Take the so-called national university. Right to the last minute, the government was looking around for tutors. Who did they end up with but a couple of volunteers and local tutors yet to be appointed....The university is also faced with the question of funding for it only has \$5 (five dollars). Such a gigantic institution requires years of planning in terms of our manpower needs, student numbers, staffing and facilities. The latter, involves choosing a proper site, buildings, accommodation facilities and all other amenities for students and staff.

The political reasons behind the establishment of the university are expressed in the Parliamentary debate on the university. Some members of the Human Rights Protection Party rose to the defence of the university, appealing to emotional and nationalistic feelings rather than to rationalism. For example, some members viewed the establishment of the university as politically correct, since Samoa was the first Pacific nation to gain independence. Furthermore, a university was a symbol of a progressive country (Polataivao, Faaso'otauloa: 1983). Another member of Parliament Le Tagaloa (1983) viewed the establishment of a university as "shedding off colonial shackles and opposition to the establishment of a university should be taken as sympathetic to colonialism as it was a common practice amongst colonial powers to oppress educational opportunities of those they colonised." These sentiments were endorsed by the other members of Parliament who rose to speak on the subject. The language used was purely emotional but it served its purpose. In a way, it is also a reflection of ignorance on the issue. There was no reference by any member of an investigative study into the issue debated. There were no facts presented at all.

Such were the nationalistic feelings which typified the pro-university debate in Parliament. This nationalism was also present in the opening address by the Prime Minister (Hon Tofilau Eti) at the opening of the university. Nationalistic sentiments are effective tools usually employed by politicians to persuade public opinion, especially in a country which was once under colonial rule. To establish its own university, Samoa would be free from dependence on New Zealand and Australia for tertiary education. The establishment of the university extended further Samoa's independence in the eyes of the Samoans. These sentiments urged Samoa to go ahead with the establishment of the university despite warnings from the World Bank economists and donor agencies' consultants about the high costs and the risk of sub-standard outcomes (NUS Calendar 2000). This step was strengthened also by the fact that the first responsibility of the university was the maintenance and development and the conservation of Samoan language and culture.

There are people who, however question whether Samoan language and culture is at a level of being threatened to make it a priority in the university. These people feel that Samoans are living their culture and therefore do not need to learn it in school. For example, the majority of people still live in villages and practice Samoan culture.

However, some of the cultural practices and ceremonies are increasingly coming under criticism, as causing hardship and poverty. This feeling is expressed strongly in an article in a local newspaper – titled 'Cultural Excesses Create Poverty' (Newsline 11th Oct, 1998). The article calls for a re-evaluation of cultural practices in the light of modern day economy and the kind of society Samoans are living in now. Samoans must also accept that culture, if it is to survive, will have to accommodate changes. These are important

issues which could become part of the dialogue in intellectual discussion at NUS.

Courses should reflect these issues.

Another argument put forward for the establishment of NUS is that, it would meet the manpower needs of the country (Le Mamea: 1988, Galumalemana, Petaia, Alama: 1984).

Linked to this argument was the high failure rate of Samoan students on scholarship overseas. The high failure rate had resulted in a shortage of doctors (Alama, 1984), and engineers. This poor performance of Samoan Scholarship students was also referred to by Gannicott (1988). Alama who presented a paper from the Health Department stated that a total of 44 doctors were serving a population of 160,000, a ratio of 1 doctor to 3,633 people. There has however, been an improvement in this figure recently. One of the reasons given for this shortage, was a high failure rate amongst Samoan medical students. A rate of 75%. Another reason for the shortage was brain drain. A national university offering medical courses could be a solution to this problem. Alama however, accepted that a medical course would be costly. This suggestion has not been realised and it is unlikely that NUS would offer medical training. Samoa will in the long run continue to rely on overseas universities to meet this manpower need.

The Department of Education also highlighted its shortage of manpower. Again the high failure rate amongst scholarship students was the main reason for this problem. Also highlighted was the relevancy of the education system in Samoa which was modelled on a foreign education system. Moreover, students sat exams which were controlled from overseas. As a result only 02% of the students who sat University Entrance passed in 1982 and this figure declined to 01% in the following year. The Department was of the opinion that the establishment of the university would help Samoa to be more in control

of its education and alleviate some of its problems. This is a role the university is attempting to fulfil. One of the problems in senior secondary schools is a shortage of qualified and trained staff in Maths, Science, Accounting and English. Schools are dependent on expatriate and/or untrained staff to teach these subjects (Education Policies 1995 – 2005). Some faculties in the university are addressing this problem. The Science Faculty, for example, holds workshops to discuss issues in science subjects and maths for secondary school teachers. By offering a Bachelor of Science, it gives opportunities to those already in the service to upgrade their qualifications. Likewise, the Bachelors of Arts and Commerce, also give the opportunities to teachers of these subject areas to upgrade their qualification as more Samoans can now access university education with the establishment of the National University of Samoa. With some university lecturers as examiners of Years 12 and 13 Examinations and their involvement in the curriculum writing of primary and secondary schools the university is keeping in touch more and more with the lower levels of education in Samoa, and there is the likelihood of the expertise available at NUS being utilised more in these respective sectors of the education section.

Accessibility of more Samoans to university education was another reason to justify the establishment of the university.

And every Samoan – young or old – Roman Catholic, Protestant or Orthodoxy should be given the opportunity to enter the National University, and to drink therefrom without let or hindrance. The decision of Government to establish the University of Samoa is the most important and timely pedagogic innovation in our lifetime (Adhoc Committee: 1983, p2)

The establishment of NUS is doing just that. It has given many Samoans the opportunity to study at a university – either in the formal programmes of the university or continuing

education. This opportunity was limited or not available for the majority of Samoans before the existence of NUS. The choice was limited to an overseas university education which only a few were selected and could afford or to the local USP Extension centre of which only a limited number of courses were available and unaffordable by many Samoans. Although NUS has been branded as a 'second chance and a lower standard' university, providing degrees to those who have not been accepted overseas, (Gannicott: 1988), NUS is here to stay. It will continue to serve its own special clientelle. Those already in the workforce could upgrade their qualifications while still being employed. Moreover, courses at NUS are cheaper than those at USP Extension Centre and overseas. The establishment of Samoa's national university was an inevitable step (Crocombe and Meleisea: 1988) because regionalism in education which is manifested in USP is in question for these reasons. One is the uneven distribution of benefits amongst the Pacific islands which are members of the USP. The host country of the main campus, Fiji, is accused of gaining more benefits because of locational advantages. It benefits in terms of jobs for her people, finances and educational opportunities (Short: 1988, Maenu'u: 1988). Thus USP is being viewed more and more by member countries as a Fijian institution. Crocombe and Meleisea estimated that Fiji receives 80% of the estimated benefits from USP while the rest of the countries gain only 2%, yet they all contribute equally to the budgeted costs of the university.

Of the estimated \$20 million worth inputs to the university in 1987 (i.e. recurrent budget, capital works, gifts in cash and kind, aided staff etc) the Fiji government paid \$6.6 m but it received F\$2.4m in direct taxes, and its economy received \$1.2m in superannuation deposits, \$.2 million in insurance perhaps \$10 million in staff, student and miscellaneous expenditures in Fiji.....The Fiji economy probably gained over F\$20 million from the university in 1987 (p 371).

Crocombe and Meleisea also claimed that:

Resources belonging to and those intended to benefit the smaller poorer countries have through USP, instead subsidised the largest and richer by many millions of dollars. This has been a factor in their exploring national alternative(p 372).

Furthermore, they claimed that university education at the regional level was costing dearly the GDP of the Pacific islands. They claimed that in Australia, degree level enrolments involves 2% of the population and costs 1.13 of GDP. For the same proportion of Tongans at USP, it would cost 11% of Tonga's GDP or ten times more (p 373).

This is very strong support for the move towards the establishment of national universities by some islands. Crocombe and Meleisea also claimed that the capital costs of the smaller national universities were likely to be lower as they would involve fewer or no residential students and would not offer courses in engineering, law, medicine or advanced science which would involve high capital costs.

Criticisms of USP also came from other members of the USP. The Cook Islands and the Solomons expressed their disappointment with USP for not meeting the foremost needs of their countries, particularly that of technical manpower (Short, Maenu'u: 1988). USP has been viewed as becoming more academic, and producing bureaucrats rather than graduates who would meet the pressing needs of its member countries.

The existence of USP is the reason why the establishment of NUS was not supported by Australia and New Zealand. Although New Zealand and Australia are giving support to the university, they are still committed to the idea of a regional university. 1984 the New Zealand High Commissioner Mansfield in a memorandum to the government of Samoa (30th March), made clear the stand of his government:

- (a) New Zealand remains firmly committed to the idea of a regional University s embodied in the USP.
- (b) New Zealand would be disappointed if Western Samoa were to withdraw its support from this concept.
- (c) As the hope has been expressed that New Zealand would be willing to extend aid to a national university, my government feels bound to respond that it has major reservations about the financial, academic, and developmental impact for Western Samoa of such a university.

A similar stand was also expressed by the Australian High Commissioner in a memorandum to the government of Samoa on the 27th March 1984. Australia agreed to pay 15% of the Foundation Year but the funding to go to USP and USP to pay the government of Western Samoa.

Opposition against the establishment of the university was also due to other reasons. The deplorable state of primary and secondary schools of the country was a reason given in Parliament by some Opposition members.

This state of primary and secondary schools in the country was also voiced by the World Bank (Gannicott, 1990). The Luker, Bailey and Bishop Study (1983) quoted in Gannicott (1990) described the quality of the physical environment in junior high schools.

The junior high schools are almost totally devoid of materials of all kinds for the teaching of agriculture. Junior secondary high schools lack trained agriculture teachers and the necessary range of facilities, equipment and materials. Science has no laboratory or sufficient equipment for teacher demonstration of the most elementary kind. The other junior high school subjects are similarly served in regard to the availability of anything other than a basic classroom with a chalkboard. Storage spaces are in very short supply, and visual materials and equipment are not available nor are up to date texts and reference books.
(p 32 & 33).

From a political point of view, NUS is an endorsement of the nationalistic aspirations of the Samoan politicians. To establish a university was perceived as politically correct. Although Samoa is an independent country, it is in many areas not independent. An example is the education sector. It is still dependent on New Zealand, a former colonial power in Samoa, and Australia to provide higher education and to meet most of her manpower needs. The establishment of NUS was seen as freedom from this dependence. Because university education was available only overseas before the establishment of NUS few people were selected. Thus, only an 'elite' were selected to go overseas. A local university, meant more people having access to higher education.

V Cultural Relevance

Samoan Studies Programme

The Study of Samoan culture and language is one of the functions of the National University of Samoa, in the 1984 National University of Samoa Act . This Act was amended in 1997 and this special role towards culture is maintained and extended further by providing for the establishment 'of a centre of excellence in the study of Samoa, the Samoan language and culture' The mission statement of the National University of Samoa states that:

- The mission of the National University of Samoa is to provide the people of Samoa with learning opportunities that are culturally relevant and accessible....
- The University is committed to the following: to retrieve, analyze, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoa through Samoan language and Samoa culture and therewith develop a centre of excellence for Samoan Studies. (The National University of Samoa Calendar 2000, p 3).

This legislated role of the National University of Samoa makes it obligatory for the university to include the study of the Samoan language and culture in its curriculum. However, the treatment of the study of Samoan language and culture in the initial phase of the university did not reflect the spirit of the Act and the philosophical justification of the university.

First, the curriculum adopted by the university in the initial period was that of the University of the South Pacific. This curriculum had no place for the study of Samoan language and culture as a course on its own, since it is a regional institution.

Second, the attitude towards Samoan language and culture which persisted in lower levels of education continued on to University. From my own experience as a student and as a teacher in secondary schools, students placed very little importance on the study of Samoan language and culture because it is not the language of success, the language of employment nor the language of learning. This, compounded with the fact that Samoan language and culture did not count towards achieving an overseas scholarship at the time contributed to the low esteem students gave to Samoan language and culture. An instructor hired to teach Samoan language and culture to the University Preparatory Year students in the initial phase of the university recalled the cynicism openly displayed by students and one student was downright rude by questioning her over the usefulness of the knowledge they would receive. (Aiono: pers com, 1998). Non-inclusion of Samoan language and culture towards achieving an overseas scholarship at the time, did not go hand in hand with the spirit of the act. Its inclusion in the UPY curriculum was merely paying lip-service to this role of NUS. Students in my view could not really be blamed for displaying this attitude. Why would they take a subject which would not contribute towards achieving a goal which was and still is, to gain an overseas scholarship. This was and remains the aim of the UPY programme – to prepare students for university education which at the time could only be available overseas, for the majority of students. The following statement by a former graduate of the UPY programme was also echoed by other graduates who were interviewed.

Many students did not think the Study of Samoan language and culture was that important. There was this attitude, why spent time and energy in a course which had no value in achieving an overseas scholarship, which was our main aim. Going overseas was a longtime dream and we wanted that dream badly. Samoan language and culture was not a compulsory course anyway. So there was very little inclination on our part to

attend it. Looking back now, that was short sightedness on our part. It was a poor attitude to take. (Malua: pers com, 2000)

Unfortunately, it was not only the students who took this attitude towards Samoan language and culture. The review Committee (1988) which was headed by a Samoan matai (chief) and also an academic, and consisting of other six members – 3 of which were matai recommended against the inclusion of the study of Samoan language and culture in the University Preparatory Year. The following reasons were given for this recommendation:

- (a) The University Preparatory Year is the most critical year in the life of the Samoan student. After spending some 13 years going to school, culminating with success in Form 6, the student now enters this one special year. Future success and/or failure is now contingent on this UPY. Every concentration at this level must now go into those subjects on which success in overseas universities is dependent.
- (b) The students have had 'Samoan language and culture' classes all 13 years to Form 6. Omitting it from the UPY will not result in their being denied anything Samoan (Review Committee: 1988, p10).

These views were endorsed by students and parents according to the Committee.

The Committee, students, parents and the public at large by expressing and endorsing this recommendation were participants to the downgrading and de-emphasizing of the Samoan language and culture. This recommendation did not reflect the spirit of the National University Act. By recommending that Samoan be dropped from UPY's curriculum in my view was excluding Samoan from a very important programme of the university and

denying the opportunity to students who had the genuine need to learn the subject.

Worse still, it reaffirmed in the students the notion that Samoan was not important.

However, this attitude has changed. The questionnaires which were distributed to current UPY students indicated that the majority of students were in favour of the inclusion of Samoan language and culture in the UPY curriculum. 90% of the Social Science students for which Samoan is a compulsory subject indicated that they would still take Samoan language and culture, even if it wasn't compulsory giving the reason that they were happy they now have the opportunity to study Samoan language and culture. One could conclude therefore that not all secondary schools in Samoa teach the subject. Also, they feel that they need to learn more about their own language and culture. Thus, there is a need for this course in the UPY programme, for other reasons apart from the fact that it counts towards achieving a scholarship. 98% of the same students agreed that NUS should continue to teach Samoan language. The most common reason given was, because Samoan language and culture needed to be preserved. This is an endorsement of the importance of the role the university will continue to play to culture.

The establishment of the discipline of Samoan Studies at the University was the fulfilment of one of the functions of the university – “to retrieve, analyze, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoa, the Samoan language and Samoan culture” (NUS Act, 1984). The first chair of the university was in Samoan Studies which was approved by the University council in 1986 and in 1988 Dr Aiono Fanaafi was appointed. An appointment which was surrounded by controversy because of the political involvement of the appointee.

The importance of Samoan culture and language in the university curriculum is further enhanced in the Ward and Ward Report (1987). Ward and Ward who carried out a review of the Social Science programme of the National University of Samoa made the recommendation that the Social Science programme of NUS should have a strong orientation towards Samoa. They also made the recommendation that 'Samoan Studies must be conducted at the highest level to meet the standards of both fa'asamoa and universities generally' (p iii). A recommendation was also made for the establishment of a centre of Samoan Studies to 'retrieve, analyze, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoan language and culture' Ward and Ward were reminding and endorsing the analytical role of the university in the study of Samoan language and culture. This analytical role would require the Samoan Studies Programme to carry out research into Samoan society – into its government, environment, its system of beliefs and ideas. This recommendation has been incorporated into the aims and goals of the Samoan language and culture programme.

Samoan Studies as the central focus of NUS's teaching, research, publication and consultancy programmes was also endorsed by the 1995 review of the Samoan Studies Programme. Further endorsed in the review was the notion, that if 'the university was to make its mark in the international arena, it should logically be in the area of Samoan Studies' (Review of Samoan Studies: 1995, p 6).

The Review Committee, however, was critical of the manner in which the Samoan Studies Programme was executing this role to culture.

One was the emphasis of the programme. The Committee found the courses being offered gave far too much emphasis on the historical aspects of Samoan Society and

culture. The programme was therefore fulfilling a repository role. To fulfil the analytical, advancement role of the university to culture, contemporary issues which are important and influential in the shaping of future Samoan society which have been given little emphasis should be included. This concern is also echoed by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts.

The Samoan Studies programme is far from accomplishing its objectives. Courses content need to reflect a more analytical approach. More research needs to be done and the language component needs new theories and extension.
(Va'a: pers com, 2000)

The 'Samoa as a classroom' approach of the programme was found wanting by the Committee. This concept, the Committee found was not handled professionally. There was too much reliance on 'oral histories' and oral traditions and because it was used extensively by both students and lecturers, it had resulted in the programme having a narrow focus.

This approach had resulted in little use of the written sources. The use of the written sources was not encouraged by some of the lecturers because since they were written by Europeans, they were seen as carrying wrong notions of Samoans and their society. The Committee felt this was not the right attitude to take. For the programme to have any credibility at all, lecturers and students should make use of the numerous written sources available on Samoa.

The single language policy of the programme also came under criticism. The single language policy was adopted for the following reasons.

- this was the case in other countries e.g.: Japan, England, France, using their own language to teach about their cultures and histories.

- English would perpetuate colonial mentality and attitudes which give low regard to Samoan language and culture.
- allow many Samoans who are unable to speak and write English to take Samoan courses.
- a way of promoting the Samoan language (Review of Samoan Studies: 1995, p 19).

The Committee accepted these views as being relevant but this policy would be limiting. It would not give the opportunity to people who were unable to speak the Samoan language from taking courses. It may also have an effect on the credibility of the programme. For the programme to have international recognition a bi-lingual policy should be at least adopted. The Committee pointed out advantages of a bi-lingual policy. One, it allows a wider cross-section of people such as expatriates living in Samoa, overseas based Samoans, business people and overseas scholars to enrol. These people in turn would be useful in advertising and publicising the programme overseas. The policy was also unrealistic since most of the books on Samoa are written in English. In order to understand this literature, students taking or wishing to take this programme should be proficient in the English language. The Committee also advised against nationalistic feeling as this could only hinder the development of the programme.

This review also examined the Samoan courses offered by the university to the Nursing School and the Teachers College. The Committee was told by the nurses that the course they were taught did not completely meet their needs. The course, covered the cultural aspect – the standard Samoan protocol and etiquette and appropriate forms of the Samoan language to enable nurses to communicate effectively with the community. The nurses,

however, would like a course which would help them to translate health and medical terms. A course which would advance their profession.

Teachers College also found the course being offered to their students as limiting and inadequate. To the review committee, the course required should be linked to the national curriculum for Samoan in schools.

An important recommendation of the committee was the provision for continuing education. Continuing education is based on the theory that education continues throughout one's life. Plato said: 'To educate oneself is what every man must do without fail throughout his life and as far as his strength permits him' (quoted in Cabal: 1995). It is described by Knowles (quoted in Cabal) as 'not restricted by the time, and space, open, descholasticized and deinstitutionalized, it is massive, democratic and popular'. This role of the university in continuing education was also recommended in the 1988 Review Report. By providing for continuing education, the university:

Would reinforce its image as a centre of intellectual achievement and provide a focus for people wanting to extend their abilities or interests. Courses such as art appreciation, Pacific literature, Samoan literature, myths and legends, English as a second language, poetry and drama, examination of Pacific governments and political systems (Review Report: 1988, p 14).

Continuing education will meet the needs of the people who have low level skills in the English language, allowing Samoans to take courses in Samoan Studies. This would give the opportunity to Samoans who have little English to study informally and also those who think they have lost touch with Samoan culture and traditions.(Review:1995).

In 1988, there were 200 students who enrolled in continuing education courses. These were Diploma in Accounting, Certificate in Commerce, Certificate in Samoan as a Second Language and Certificate in the Fa'amatai. Certificate in the Fa'amatai came

under criticism because it was a course that the Review Committee (1988) felt had not been confirmed by matai(chiefs). The Committee expressed doubts as to whether adequate research had gone into it. This course came to an end by a recommendation of the committee. The other courses are continuing. Two new courses in Samoan Studies have been added in the Continuing Education Programme. These are 'Nafa o Tamaitai' – Roles and Responsibilities of Samoan Women' and 'Lauga ma Ava' – 'Samoan Oratory and Rituals'.

These courses have proven very popular with people working in town (Amosa: pers com, 2000). These are run for ten weeks, three hours a week. 'Nafa-o-Tamaitai' started in the second semester of 1999 and attracted 60 women. No man enrolled in the course. The course is a practical one, teaching women their traditional roles in Samoan Society. The following is a personal impression of the lecturer who taught the course.

The majority of women were from the urban area but have links to villages where they have to meet their traditional obligations. A few of these women hold matai (chiefly) titles. The majority of the women work in the public and private sectors. A few were housewives.

The feedback I received was very positive. It was recommended by some women that the hours be extended and more activities such as the production of cultural goods be added. Others suggested a field trip be added so that they could experience the real life situation.

Others expressed the excitement of actually studying in a university setting at a matured age.

I gather from the remarks of these women that older Samoan women are no longer carrying out their responsibilities of teaching the young women their traditional roles and responsibilities in the community. I feel it's a role that NUS can teach in the continuing education mode. It's a course which would be popular for women working in town and not living in an extended family.

(Temese: pers com, 2000)

Likewise 'Lauga ma Ava' has been very popular. It attracts 70 people every time it is offered. It is a beginners course and it has attracted mostly public servants (Amosa: pers com, 2000). At the time of this writing, there is plan by the Department of Samoan Studies to take the course to Savaii (the other main island of Samoa). There is a also plan to introduce an advanced course in 'Lauga ma Ava'.

The Department of Samoan Studies, has also been approached by some members of the public to offer courses in traditional dancing and the production of cultural goods such as ie toga (fine mats), mats, siapo (tapa cloth).

There is scope therefore for courses of such nature and it seems the market for these is the people working in town who are increasingly being divorced from Samoan culture. There is a possibility that the Department of Samoan Studies would play a big role in promoting the teaching of the Samoan language and culture in government and mission schools. On the international scene the University will be the leading authority in Samoan language and culture. It will play a consultative role in this area. Evidence of this is the New Zealand Teachers of Samoan language and Culture Association first conference of the new millennium being held at the university. This role will be strengthened with the establishment of the Institute of Samoan Studies. At the time of this writing, the Institute has been established for only a few months. Currently there is a proposal to merge the Department of Samoan Studies and the Institute.

The following is a list of courses currently offered by the Samoan Studies Programme.

1. Introduction to Samoan Language and Culture.
2. Samoan Social Organisation
3. Samoan Cosmogony

4. Samoan Oratory and Ava Rituals
5. Artisans and Trade Skills
6. Fine Mats and Ava
7. Semantics
8. Spatial Relationships
9. Samoan Numbering System
10. Traditional Healers and Medicine
11. Traditional Sports and Recreation
12. Family System and Guilds
13. Evolution of Samoa's Constitution.

From the list of courses one could see that there is an imbalance in the courses being offered. There are too many courses on culture but a few language courses. This is a criticism by some people of the programme. Language courses are being demanded by the different professions such as the teachers, nurses and government officials. Language is also becoming an important issue as the finding of a recent survey, which has not yet been publicised, is that Samoan students in the UPY programme are more proficient in writing English than in their own language. Moreover, this would also meet the language needs of the Samoans living overseas. These are some of the great challenges the programme will face. With the proposed merger, there will be great developments happening in this particular role of NUS.

The goals and aims of the Samoan Language and Culture Programme are:

- retrieve, analyse, maintain, advance and disseminate knowledge of Samoa through Samoan language and culture.

- provide a programme of continuing education where adult learners can be educated in a course relevant to their Samoan way of life or related purpose.
- provide a foundation programme which will provide a basis for students wishing to pursue advanced studies in Samoan, either locally or overseas.
- provide a programme relevant to cultural and social needs of the individual and the Samoan community.
- enhance the identity of the Samoan and affirm the concept of the faasamoa.
- effect an education which will sustain and strengthen Samoan language, culture, values and beliefs in rapidly changing world.
- prepare the Samoan for the cultural, social economic and political changes in Samoan Society and how to cope with these.
- enhance awareness of other cultures and people who are most likely to have an influence on the Samoan way of life.
- identify and analyse crucial contemporary issues and their impact on Samoan society. (NUS Calendar 2000 p 32 + 33).

VI Relevance to Pre-university Qualification.

The University Preparatory Year(UPY)

The University Preparatory Year (UPY) was the first phase of the National University of Samoa. For a number of years it was the focus of the University because of the acquisition of overseas scholarships to study overseas at the successful completion of the programme. Providing a UPY programme was a legislated function of the university in the 1984 Act. This function was legislated in article 43 of the National University of Samoa Act 1984.

1. The University shall provide and maintain a course of study approved by the Senate and to be called the University Preparatory Year Course
2. The University shall as far as practicable, provide students enrolled in the University Preparatory Year Course with tuition which will prepare them for university study at an undergraduate level.

By legislating this function of the university confirms the preference of government to offer the UPY instead of sending students to the Foundation Programme at USP (Fiji) or the Seventh form (Form 7) in New Zealand. Furthermore, it reconfirms that Government prefers the UPY approach to having Form 7 in the secondary schools.

Students, parents, teachers and the public in general prefer and approve of the UPY approach to having Form 7 in the senior secondary schools. But at the same time, this same clientelle categorically reconfirm that the UPY programme is to prepare students who have passed form 6 level, so they will succeed at degree studies in overseas universities. (A Review of the National University of Samoa: 1988, p 8).

Preparation of students for university studies overseas was one of the primary roles of the University. When the act of the University was amended in 1997, this role was not mentioned specifically. The programme is however existing still. It has been the subject of several reviews and consultancies. The outcome of these is a quality programme which has won credibility and recognition in overseas universities.

UPY was part of the Human Rights Protection Party's policy decision to better prepare students for university life. This policy was adopted because of the increasing failure rates of recent years in overseas universities and also to lessen cultural shock (Annual Report of the Founding Year: 1984).

However, it was a programme founded in haste. This consequently made NUS adopt the full Foundation Programme of the University of the South Pacific because NUS had no programme in place and the USP Foundation Programme was a credible programme overseas in New Zealand and Australia as a pre-qualification for entry into university and other tertiary level training (Annual Report Foundation Year Programme: 1984).

The first students were in reality enrolled in the USP's Foundation Year Programme – USP providing course materials, evaluating students assignments and student counselling.

NUS's counterpart was provision of tutors, facilities for lecturing and tutorial, laboratories, student amenities and allowances. A course in Samoan language and culture was also offered to fulfil the provision of the NUS Act but the course was not part of the formal academic package as it did not count towards achieving a scholarship. About 47 full time students made history by being the first students of NUS.

Students were also given preparation on the non-academic side. They were given the opportunity to govern their own affairs and present their own interests into a Students Association. They were also given the opportunity to be responsible in making their own decisions – such as whether to or not to have a uniform or to parade on Independence Day. They were also given the opportunity to manage their own finances by giving them

allowance for stationery items, maintenance and transport on a monthly basis. Students were given adequate non-academic preparation.

The 1988 of the National University however found the programme not satisfactorily fulfilling its role. Also, it was critical of the Act by providing specifically for the UPY programme. The review notes that 'pre-university preparatory studies do not form part of the normal responsibilities of a university.

It goes on to say that:

There is strong evidence to indicate that while the UPY programme is developing satisfactorily, in the main, when the students go to overseas universities, they are not performing up to the desired levels. Reports confirm that the situation is particularly serious with UPY science students (p 15).

Despite this damaging evidence, the Review Committee still had faith in the programme as a pre-university preparatory course by recommending that the preparation of students for degree studies be undertaken at NUS in the UPY, instead of Form 7 in the secondary schools. It also made the recommendation that the focus of NUS be on UPY in the next 3 to 5 years to ensure that students succeed in universities overseas and that the New Zealand Form 7 be the principal reference criteria for the quality of the programme. It also made the recommendation that Samoan be dropped from the programme.

A further review of the programme was carried out in 1994. The review team comprised of academics from USP and New Zealand. They further exposed the weaknesses of the programme.

A weakness of the programme was the narrow focus of the courses. There was a tendency of some courses to focus on content rather than on high order activities – skills like analysis, synthesis, evaluation etc, the competencies most valued at university level.

Whilst the coverage of the course contents of the UPY programme is currently assessed to be similar to the USP and New Zealand Bursaries standards, there is an urgent need to establish policies and procedures for the systematic adjustment and development of courses which in turn should improve consistency and maintenance of standards. The depth of the course contents could be improved by widening the range to concentrate on, in developing higher skills 'such as analytic and independent thinking, rather than the present emphasis on lower level recall and knowledge.[Review of the UPY Programme: 1994, p 8]

These findings by the Review Committee resulted in a series of workshops in curriculum writing and assessment. Attachments for UPY lecturers in New Zealand schools and universities were also sought. These workshops and attachments were found to be very rewarding and beneficial. These resulted in much more improved course outlines, assessments, evaluations and lecturing. (Review of the National University of Samoa 1995 – 1999: 1999).

It also resulted in a tracer study on UPY graduates studying in New Zealand and Fiji.

The study came up with some interesting results. This tracer study by Field (1997) showed that UPY graduates studying in New Zealand continue to do well.

Field noted that:

- Both men and women have shown improvements in grades attained since the 1995 analysis, and failed papers make up only 15% and 13% of papers sat for men and women respectively. This is a drop from 23% for men and 20% for women.
- Of papers sat in the first year of study only 12% for men and 9% for women were failed. In fact, 48% of the papers sat by male Samoan students, and 50% of the papers sat by female Samoan students, achieved either 'A' or a 'B' passing grades.

Furthermore, the study found that the major problems faced by Samoan students in New Zealand and at USP are mostly social. The following problems are being experienced by USP students:

- general cultural shock, including homesickness, food, environment etc.
- dissatisfaction with courses, leading to disinterest and failing grades.
- inadequate information before leaving Apia, both during the UPY year and immediately pre-departure about what to expect at USP.
- shyness. Students are well aware of the support services available to them at USP but do not make use of them.
- lack of management skills, particularly in relation to managing time and money.
- being treated like children
- too much freedom
- too much peer pressure
- subject difficulties – relate mainly to accounting and computing (Field: 1997)

New Zealand scholarship students produced a similar list.

- cultural shock
- homesickness
- racism – palagi students look down on Samoan Students
- difficult to link palagi ideas to Samoan ideas
- approaching palagi academic and support staff
- living with family
- understanding accents of lecturers
- high costs of living
- peer pressures
- budgeting time and money

Some of these problems, the programme has attempted to address during the students' course of study. However, some of the issues raised are beyond the scope of the Programme. These are issues relating to non-academic preparation. A way the UPY programme attempts to address these problems is by inviting returning UPY graduates to give talks on their overseas experiences during orientation. These talks have been useful to some students and have guided their stay in New Zealand.

Talks by returning students made us aware of what to expect overseas – the freedom we would be experiencing, and that we would have total control of our lives. It is up to ourselves to make our studies successful. (Graduate I)

Personally, I was motivated by the fact that these students succeeded in their studies overseas. There my goals were set. I was determined if I was to go overseas, I would succeed. Success I realize then, would depend on myself
(Graduate II)

UPY is now a well established programme within the university. It is a programme which is fulfilling its role and this is stated in the Review of the National University of Samoa Support and Development Project 1995 – 1999 – ‘it prepares people well to undertake university studies overseas or in Samoa’ (p 48). It goes on to say that ‘students express confidence in the integrity and the appropriateness of the UPY’ (p 21). UPY has also been identified with the Faculty of Education and the Faculty of Nursing as three well established units within the university. It is a programme which attracts a number of students – 200 per year. Returning graduates have also spoken favourably of the programme. A returning UPY graduate has this to say:

UPY is a worthwhile programme. Academically, we students were well prepared in skills such as note-taking, essay writing, and in tutorial participation. Because we were well grounded, it was quite unnecessary for us to repeat a course in these areas in overseas universities. Also, we found the UPY lecturers approachable, this taught us not to fear asking lecturers. I think, social factors are the real reasons for the failure of students.

The onus is really on us(students) to succeed.(Wulf: pers com, 2000)

The above opinion of the UPY programme has been endorsed by the UPY graduates who were interviewed and by Field (1997). Field in his study, made the observation that students studying at USP appear to be better equipped academically than in previous years and the only academic difficulties they seem to be experiencing was in accounting and computing.

The UPY programme has been shown up as a credible programme not only overseas but also locally. Graduates who are not able to gain a scholarship to study overseas are now

feeding the various degree programmes. They have been found by the lecturers to be generally academically better than the mature entrance students. They have therefore raised the standard of students intake of the degree programmes. A lecturer has this to say:

Students who have gone through the UPY are more responsive in class discussions. They generally do better in assignments and tests than other students. They have no problems in taking notes, and understanding the course material. They are equipped with the prerequisite skills necessary for undergraduate programmes (Matalavea : pers com, 2000)

The above statement has been endorsed by other lecturers interviewed. Despite the success of the programme there is a move to do away with the programme. The Strategic Plan for the National University of Samoa 2000 – 2004 (1999) has stipulated that:

- From the year 2001, students will no longer be required to enrol in the UPY programme. Instead, all new students will enrol in faculties of the University depending on their field of studies.
- All courses currently taught in the UPY level will continue to be taught by relevant departments of the University.
- The main focus will be on faculties of the University and all available study programmes rather than on any one programme.
- Students who are not successful in securing a scholarship for overseas studies will continue to pursue studies at the University but will no longer have the stigma of being labelled as failures (p 5).

The reasons stated in the Strategic Plan for the reorganization of the programme are fleeting. The programme has been dubbed as ‘elitist’ and fostering segregation rather than integration within the university. Further, it has made students who are unsuccessful in obtaining a scholarship for overseas studies labelled as failures. This is a view negated

by some of the UPY graduates currently studying at NUS. 100% of the students interviewed stated that they don't have that feeling at all. The change, however, has been seen to 'allow equal competition between students entering direct from secondary schools and those admitted as mature students' for scholarships. This proposed move has not been accepted by the office of the UPY Co-ordinator and lecturers of the programme. Their views were not sought by the consultant concerned, and they feel that more discussion needs to be done on this issue.

The criticism of the programme as 'elitist' and an 'impediment' to integration has come from other quarters of the university, in particular programmes in competition with the UPY programme for students intake. The fact that the UPY programme takes all the top students from the secondary schools makes it an elite programme. Students who do not qualify for the UPY programme enrol in the other programmes of the university. The students in these programmes, according to this view feel that they are 'second best'. Thus, by continuing the present practice perpetuates this feeling. This 'status' feeling among the programme has been enforced by separate uniforms for the different programmes.

As a result, programmes which hope to recruit students from UPY, are not able to do so because students simply do not want to enrol in 'second best' programmes. The merge of the University with the Teachers College at least has made the problems more acute according to one lecturer. Being present on the same campus, has made students more aware of the status of their programmes in relation to UPY. The UPY students likewise, according to this view are very much aware of their 'elitist status'. This explains why since the merger the Faculty of Education has only been able to recruit one student from

UPY, a student who enrolled unwillingly. Perhaps that is too simplistic a view. I think there is another factor why students are not attracted to teaching and that is the low 'status' of teachers in Samoa, due to the poor wages.

It cannot be denied that UPY is a quality programme. It has credibility overseas and locally. It is a vital programme for feeding the other programmes of the university. The reviews and the number of UPY graduates returning qualified testify to the success of the programme. The programme satisfies the desire by the Samoans for an international standard course.

VII Analysis and Statement of Outcome

The political and economic debate on the need for a university show a historical need for a university and its relevancy. From the political debate, one learns that the University in a country which has been under colonial rule serves a political purpose. As a result, the university became part of the political rhetoric. To the politicians, Samoa having its own university endorses Samoa's independence. It would free Samoa from dependence on the former colonial powers for higher education. In a sense the University is an expression of anti-colonial sentiments and the desire to stand on its own two feet. Tied to these sentiments and aspirations was the preservation of Samoan language and culture. These sentiments and aspirations may seem to be appealing to the emotions and nationalistic feelings, but they provided a strong argument for a nation to have its university, which was fulfilled. The political argument was therefore important in the establishment of the university.

However, the institution Samoa established was far from being anti-colonial. This is not surprising because first, Samoans do not have any tradition or pre-requisite of university education and secondly, the university is a western institution. In this case, there is no option for Samoa but to draw on the western institution for its model, more specifically British traditions as it was once under New Zealand rule.

Adoption of a western exemplar would mean the perpetuation of the colonial system of education. It also purported dependence of NUS ON overseas institutions for future direction. NUS is therefore a contradiction. It does represent contradictions within Samoan society. On one hand, it exemplifies the aspirations of the Samoans to keep their traditional culture and language but at the same time represents their desire to succeed in

the modern capitalist world. These two systems have not been found to accommodate each other. Instead, Samoan language and culture are being marginalised by western culture. The role of NUS in this area should be one of objectivity so that western and Samoans knowledge and values would reinforce each other. The two knowledge and value systems should be made partnership.

Another paramount national interest is meeting the manpower needs of the country. NUS is doing that in areas of commerce, education, nursing, humanities, science and computing. These in the past, have mostly been met by sending Samoans for training overseas at very high costs. The following table illustrates this cost of university education in 1984.

Table I

Estimated Costs for Training for one Student		
USP	-	\$7,500
NZ	-	\$5,500
UPNG	-	\$6,500
AUSTRALIA	-	\$8,000
USA	-	\$6,000

Source: Crocombe, R and Meleisea, M. 1988, Pacific Universities, p 214

(* All inclusive, that is, airfares, allowances etc)

These figures in comparison to education at NUS are exorbitant. NUS costs are considerably lower. In 1984, it was \$50 per course. Today, Samoan citizens pay only \$60 per course.

Missing from the literature, however, was the cost of setting up an institution, and whether Samoa at the time could afford a university. There was no study carried out beforehand to estimate the cost of such a venture and whether the economy of Samoa

could sustain such a project. The initial budget for the university was five tala (Samoa dollars)\$5 and this has shown the hastiness in which the university was established. It also earned NUS the nickname – the \$5 university. Missing also was a development plan which only was drawn up in 1993, 9 years after the setting up of the university. For this task, NUS had to rely on Australia expertise in the form of Kenneth Back. It was this development plan which convinced the Japanese government to build a new campus for NUS.

Although a university has been established, the training it is offering is limited. Samoa still sends its students overseas for training in the areas of law, medicine, management, engineering, science, administration and accounting. Also in the area of teaching; despite the fact that NUS provides teacher training. NUS also provides a degree in accounting but the best students of the country are sent overseas, privately or sponsored. This reflects partly, the attitude that an overseas education is the best education. As long as the scholarship scheme exists, the first option would always be an overseas university rather than NUS. It is unlikely that Samoa for a long time to come could afford to offer courses in engineering, law, medicine which involve high overhead costs. Currently NUS is barely surviving on the financial handout by government which is the major source of funding.

It is also an accepted fact that the development of NUS will be impeded by the availability of economic resources from the donor countries and government. Thus NUS will:

Continue to rely on USP and Australian and New Zealand universities for much of its degree level education. It is important therefore that NUS be developed so that what it does most effectively meets internal needs and compliments what is available elsewhere. In this regard co-operation with USP is most important (Review of NUS 1995 –1999: 1999(p 45))

Links with USP and other universities will therefore continue simply because the economy of Samoa cannot afford highly specialised programmes which involve high capital costs. The politicians' aspirations for complete independence in the area of education has not been realised and with globalisation rearing its head in almost every aspect of Samoan society, it is unlikely Samoa would ever achieve complete independence. With computers, access to knowledge is only at the fingertips and this would expose Samoa more to western culture.

The University's role to Samoan language and culture is vital and important. The inclusion of Samoan language and culture is a move to present the Samoan face of the University and is linked to the nationalistic aspirations shared by some of the young generation and some members of the public. Others see it as merely an idealistic proposition because the language increasingly used by Samoans is English and Samoan Culture is greatly modified. For example, although English and Samoan are the official languages of Samoa, there is preference for the English language. This is the language of the University. So much for 'shedding off of colonial shackles'. NUS in my view is the 'modern face of colonialism'. Evidences of this is stamped all over the university – physically and in its curriculum. English is the language of signs around the university. No Samoan versions of these are provided. It is the language heard over the intercom. It is the language of the meetings of the departments although the staff members may be all Samoans, council and senate meetings, although only two may not understand Samoan.

Memorandums are written in English by Samoan staff of NUS to other Samoan staff of NUS. It is the language of instruction. Lectures are given in English by Samoan lectures to Samoan students. It is the language NUS uses to communicate to the community, through notices and advertisements. If NUS is to promote the Samoan language and be the leading authority in this area, it must either make the Samoan language equal emphasis with the English language or the Samoan language be the language of the university. These are the options NUS is faced with if it is to play its role to Samoan language and culture.

The inclusion of the study of Samoan language and culture is an expression of the concern over the threat to small cultures in the Pacific by western culture:

All cultures and cultural values are assaulted by powerful forces of standardisation. These homogenise, dilute and relegate diverse cultures to ornamental or marginal positions in the modern world. These standardising forces include the spread of languages and the culture of these languages (especially English); technology (especially mass media) and with it the values of individualism; self-gratification and consumerism and the ascendance of the market model (and its associated world view) over other politico – economic models of development (Teasdale: 1992, p16)

The concern expressed by Teasdale is a concern in Samoa. This is a concern that NUS should take a leading part. This concern should be reflected in the Samoan Studies programme. But at the same time the students' awareness of other cultures should be enhanced so that they could be objective in their view of the two worlds. To do so is a fulfilment of one of the stated goals of the programme which is to develop a holistic approach to education with the aim of developing a well-educated individual who is at home simultaneously both in his/her natural and social environment. Western values and knowledge are now part of this social environment of a Samoan and this must be

accepted. However, it is important that these value systems enhance each other not contradict. A multi-disciplinary approach is an attempt to address this problem, but there are complaints that some of the courses of the programme offered by the other disciplines do not have a Samoan component. Thus it is important a comparative study be made between the two cultures.

Analysis is a difficult skill for the Samoan students. Part of the explanation is cultural. Children do what they are told to do. But it is important that Samoan language and culture be studied objectively. This would foster critical and analytical thinking required by university education. If the Samoan students are analytical and critical in their own language and with their own culture, this skill would be easily transferred to the English language and other subjects. It is important that the Samoan Studies courses encourage this skill. NUS should not be just a disseminator of Samoan language and culture.

NUS's role in retrieving Samoan language and culture needs to extend to Samoa's heritage housed in overseas museums and other places. A start has already been made when New Zealand's Turnbull Library gifted to NUS old photographs of Samoa. These have been publicly exhibited and the public interest was immense. NUS with the absence of an archive should take the lead in retrieving written records, photographs, and artifacts, from overseas. Retrieving is also in my view, recording the oral history, the living memories and making the different documentaries on the different aspects of the lives of the Samoans.

Another weakness in the programme is the imbalance between culture and language. It has been suggested by some lecturers that the programme needs to develop its linguistic component, an area difficult to meet at present because of the lack of expertise in the

department and in the country. The most crucial debate at present is over a model for the teaching of Samoan language. Others have suggested that NUS, should take a lead in this area. It is an area the Samoan Department, the English Department and the Faculty of Education should collaborate in. This is an important issue because of the low literacy rate of the Samoa children in the Samoan language according to a UNESCO survey which the Department of Education has rejected and a recent survey (not yet published) has found that students (UPY) have been found to be more proficient in the English language than in Samoan. These findings are a concern. NUS therefore, must be in the fore in these issues. It should meet its mandate to the language and culture of the Samoans.

To advance knowledge, NUS must take the lead in research into Samoan issues. NUS must become the researcher, not merely a data collector for overseas researchers!

Samoan Studies has been rightly pointed out to be an area, NUS could sell overseas. It must be the leading authority on Samoan Studies, not the University of Hawaii or any other overseas universities. NUS must be seen as the custodian of Samoa heritage. At the moment, this role has not yet been effected, but it will be a promising one.

Knowledge on Samoa could be further advanced and disseminated by translating the written work on Samoa which are written in German and English to Samoan. Doing this work NUS would truly serve its role as the disseminator of knowledge on Samoa by making this knowledge accessible to Samoans. This would also enrich the literature on Samoa.

Continuing education courses is another potential area NUS could expand into. However, NUS would need to identify courses it needs to offer.

NUS therefore has yet to fulfil many of its roles as set out in the mission statement and in the 1984 and 1997 legislations regarding culture and language.

UPY programme portrays the international or the universal character of NUS. In the main UPY meets the academic needs of overseas universities and overseas donor agencies. Because of this nature of the programme, it is a quality programme. It has fortunately been a recipient of many workshops compliments of New Zealand aid to lift the programme to international standard.

The success of the UPY programme illustrates the competent manner NUS is executing its teaching role, which at the moment is the main role of NUS. It prepares the students well. NUS itself will become dependent on it to feed its other programmes. It is therefore rather perplexing why the programme will be phased out. The 'elitism' the UPY programme has been 'slapped with' is only a perception and has been voiced by a minority. The critics of the UPY programme will need to come up with well founded reasons. More perplexing is that the decision has been made on a recommendation by an overseas based consultant and without consultation with the key players within programme. The lecturers in the programme were not consulted of their views. Neither did they know there were plans to phase out the programme. In the final analysis, UPY is not the issue. The issue is that the other programmes will need to lift their profiles to attract good students, not making UPY a scapegoat. It seems the very success of the programme will be its own demise.

Through the UPY, the University is carrying out its traditional role of the overall training of secondary school leavers in the various academic disciplines on which further professional training could be based.

This project is of the view that NUS is a vital institution in the country. It is meeting the needs of the community, thus fulfilling the mandate it has been trusted with. Thus, it is very much relevant to the country.

However, its role to Samoan language and culture leaves a great deal to be desired. The mission it has been trusted with is a long way from being fulfilled. The courses it is offering in its Samoan Studies Programme need to be revisited. The programme needs to include more language components. A challenge to the programme is to develop a model for teaching of the Samoan language. It is also a challenge to the programme to ensure that both English and Samoan are emphasised in the university. The programme should also push for more written resources in the Samoan language. One way of doing this would be to translate the existing vast literature on Samoa in English to Samoan. This would require tremendous work but what other option is there available?

The programme needs to develop courses on contemporary issues in Samoa. These would make the programme more relevant and also foster analytical and objectivity skills required by university education. This would fulfil the mission statement.

To fulfil the mission statement on Samoan language and culture, there must be a genuine commitment by NUS. Any future developments in the programme must be determined by the Samoans themselves.

On the UPY, it is a programme which must be maintained. NUS is fulfilling its mission to this pre-university qualification competently. It is a programme recognised internationally, at least in New Zealand and Australia, therefore it should be allowed to continue to exist.

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