

SINU VC appointed Foundation Fellow of the Pacific Academy of Sciences

The Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is proud to announce that Vice Chancellor, Professor Transform Aqorau, has been appointed as a Foundation Fellow of the newly established Pacific Academy of Sciences.

This prestigious appointment recognises Professor Aqorau's significant contributions to the field of fisheries law, regional governance, and his enduring commitment to the advancement of scientific research in the Pacific region.

The official launch of the Pacific Academy of Sciences took place today at the National University of Samoa during a side-event of the 2024 Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting in Apia, Samoa.

The Academy has been created to promote the study and application of natural and social sciences, humanities, indigenous knowledge, and technology, with a mission to address the challenges and opportunities of the Pacific Islands region and beyond.

Professor Aqorau's induction as a Foundation Fellow comes as part of the Academy's vision to build a network of distinguished scholars who will guide and lead regional collaboration on scientific research for the benefit of Pacific Island communities.

This fellowship highlights Professor Aqorau's role as a key advocate for the integration of indigenous knowledge systems with modern science to enhance policy development in the Pacific, particularly in areas related to fisheries governance, sustainability, and economic development.

The Prime Minister of Samoa, Hon. Fiame Dr Naomi Mata'afa, highlighted the importance of such regional collaboration in her remarks delivered by Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Tuala Tevaga Iosefo Ponifasio: "Today's challenges transcend borders. They require international collaboration among scientists and experts of all disciplines to curate knowledge and scientific evidence that can inform public policy and guide our actions."

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In her congratulatory statement, Professor Aqorau remarked: "It is both a humbling and exhilarating honour to be among the Foundation Fel-

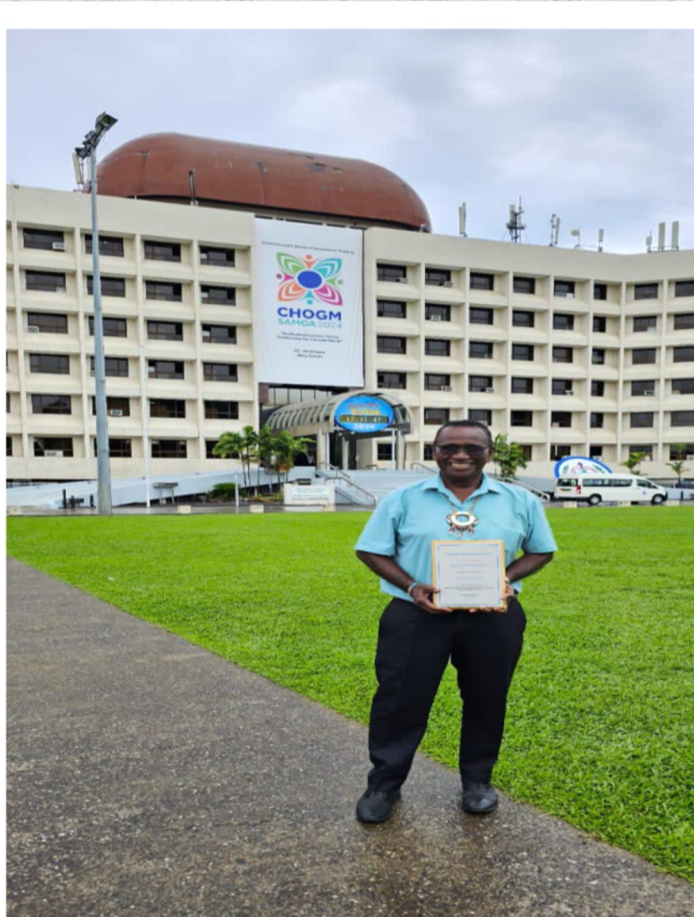
lows of the Pacific Academy of Sciences. I am committed to using this platform to strengthen the role of science, indigenous knowledge, and policy innovation in the Pacific. This will undoubtedly have a transformative impact on our young scholars and leaders across the region."

In addition to Professor Aqorau, eleven other eminent scholars from across the Pacific region have been elected as Foundation Fellows, representing a wide range of disciplines including the natural sciences, humanities, and social sciences.

The Academy will work closely with regional institutions, international bodies, and local communities to ensure that scientific research is aligned with the unique needs and priorities of the Pacific.

As the Vice Chancellor of SINU, Professor Aqorau's appointment as a Foundation Fellow further strengthens the University's position as a leading centre of learning and research in the Solomon Islands and underscores its commitment to contributing to regional and global conversations on science, policy, and governance.

The Pacific Academy of Sciences is headquartered in Apia, Samoa, and will provide opportunities for emerging and established scholars in the region to collaborate on key research initiatives that can drive sustainable development, foster innovation, and inspire future generations of Pacific scientists and policymakers.



SINU VC Professor Transform Aqorau shows his certificate of appointment as Foundation Fellow of the Pacific Academy of Sciences.

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New PVCA Dr. Eric Kaovai address to SINU staff

Dear Members of the Solomon Islands National University Community,

As I assume the role of Pro Vice Chancellor-Academic at SINU, I am honoured to be part of the shared vision to transform our institution into a premier university of choice within the Pacific region, recognised for meeting the needs of our local communities and upholding the highest global standards. I also want to express my unwavering support for our Vice-Chancellor's vision for the university, which aligns with our collective goal of advancing SINU's excellence and impact through good governance, program accreditation, and entering academic rankings.

Over the next five years, my strategic focus will be on enhancing academic excellence through innovative learning, advancing research development, and forging strong international partnerships. These pillars will serve as the foundation upon which we will build an institution dedicated to shaping the future leaders of the Solomon Islands, empowering them to excel in an ever-evolving world.

We must envisage a campus environment free from fear and manipulation, a place where freedom of expression is encouraged and upheld with collegial respect. This must be an institution where staff and students alike are excited to pursue learning and create new knowledge through active research. We must see an increased attendance in research seminars and vital university dialogues, signalling a vibrant academic community dedicated to lifelong learning and knowledge creation.

A key aspect of our efforts will be ensuring good governance, as this is critical in maintaining transparency, accountability, and ethical leadership. By fostering a culture of integrity, we will build a solid foundation for our institution, ensuring that our strategic decisions and policies support our mission and long-term goals.

In addition, we will prioritize the accreditation of our programs, aligning them with recognised national and international standards to guarantee quality and relevance. Accreditation is not just about meeting requirements; it is about providing assurance to our students, staff, and stakeholders that our programs are of the highest calibre and that SINU graduates are well-prepared to contribute meaningfully to society and the global workforce.

We also envision a campus where students and staff are drawn to spend their days, enriched by a vibrant campus life that includes non-academic activities catering to the physical, social, and spiritual needs of our community. This dynamic environment will foster a sense of belonging, making SINU a place where everyone is motivated and proud to be a part of.

Finally, we are committed to elevating SINU's presence by entering aca-

democratic rankings. This requires a concerted effort to build our reputation through research excellence, quality teaching, and robust international collaborations. By setting our sights on achieving competitive standing within academic rankings, we will not only highlight the university's strengths but also attract greater opportunities for partnerships, funding, and student enrolment.

However, these aspirations require a concerted effort from the entire academic community—faculty, staff, and students alike. We must work together in unity, embracing this vision as a shared goal and recognizing that each of us has a vital role to play. By aligning our personal priorities with the professional standards we seek to achieve, we will lay the groundwork for sustained success.

As we embark on this journey of transformation, I encourage every staff member and student to be part of this exciting journey. Transformation is possible if we remain dedicated and open to growth. I believe that with faith, dedication, and the right priorities, we can overcome any challenge that may come our way. The obstacles we face will not define us; rather, it is our commitment to finding solutions that will lead to our success.

There will undoubtedly be challenges and setbacks, but I have unwavering faith that there are always solutions. Our task will be to work together to identify the best possible paths forward, relying on our collective wisdom and experience. Together, we will rise to meet these challenges and build

a stronger, more resilient institution.

I would like to extend my heartfelt gratitude to the University Council for entrusting me with this important role. I pledge my full commitment to working alongside the Council and Administration to ensure that SINU becomes not only a university of choice for students and academics in the Pacific region but also a beacon of excellence recognised across the world.

Let us now set our hearts and minds to this task, knowing that together with the right priorities and God's guidance, WE WILL SUCCEED.



UNDP-Funded Digital Democracy Governance Initiative Workshop held successfully at the Solomon Islands National University

The University of the South Pacific has successfully held a four-day workshop from September 9-12, 2024, at Solomon Islands National University (SINU) as part of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)-funded "Digital Democracy Governance Initiative" (DDGI).

This initiative aims to bolster digitalization efforts in Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and Federated States of Micronesia through a human rights-based approach.

The workshop brings together a diverse group of participants from various government ministries across the Solomon Islands to enhance their skills and knowledge in digital governance.

Led by Professor Sushil Kumar, Director Research at USP, along with Dr. Subhash Appanna, Ms. Margret Kensen, and Ms. Shailin Mala, the workshop is designed to support Solomon Islands in advancing its digitalization strategies and strengthening state-society relations.

Honourable John Tuhaika Jr., Minister for Public Service, opened the workshop with remarks emphasizing the program's focus on improving citizen engagement, access to information, and government accountability through digital technologies.

He highlighted the initiative's role in addressing the Solomon Islands' unique challenges, including cultural diversity and geographic dispersion, by promoting inclusive digital solutions that respect privacy and freedom of expression.

Dr. Raluca Eddon, Deputy Resident Representative for Solomon Islands, stressed the workshop's importance in fostering a more inclusive and effective digital landscape. She noted that digital transformation is not just about technology but about enhancing

people's lives and ensuring no one is left behind in this rapidly evolving world.

Professor Sushil Kumar reaffirmed the workshop's goal to support Fiji, Tonga, Solomon Islands, and FSM in advancing digitalization while focusing on human rights. The training will equip government and civil society leaders with the tools to deepen their understanding and commitment to digital rights and development priorities.

Dr. Hugo Bugoro, Director of Research at SINU, emphasized the significance of tailoring digital solutions to the region's unique needs. He highlighted the workshop's potential to develop innovative strategies and overcome barriers to digital democracy, ensuring every voice is heard and valued.

Dr. Billy Fitoo, USP Solomon Islands Campus Director, described the workshop as a critical step forward in leveraging digital technology to enhance democratic processes.

He emphasized that the insights and strategies developed will help reach remote communities, engage citizens in innovative ways, and safeguard democratic institutions.

The workshop will focus on building participants' capacities to design and implement people-centered, gender-sensitive, and rights-based digitalization initiatives.

It offers a platform for sharing regional and global best practices, aiming to enhance digital governance and create value for society. By fostering collaboration and promoting innovation, the workshop aims to establish a supportive environment for digital governance in the Solomon Islands, laying a strong foundation for future initiatives and advancing digital democracy across the Pacific.



Participants and facilitators of the Digital Democracy Governance Initiative Workshop gather for a group photo

SINU takes bold stand against corruption as it suspends staff over forged certificate

Solomon Islands National University (SINU) has suspended its Admission and Enrolment Officer at the Student Administration Services (SAS), following an internal investigation that uncovered his involvement in the forgery and unlawful issuance of academic certificates and transcripts.

The investigation, conducted by the University's Internal Audit Office, has revealed that the suspended staff had accepted payments from students with outstanding fees in exchange for unauthorised certificates and academic transcripts, which is in direct violation of SINU's policies and ethical standards.

The fraudulent actions came to light after reports were received from both internal and external sources, including the Ministry of Education and Human Resources (MEHRD), which identified discrepancies in the academic records. The investigation confirmed that the certificates and transcripts issued to certain students had been falsified, with forged signatures and fabricated details.

In response to the findings, SINU Vice Chancellor, Dr. Transform Aqorau, emphasised the seriousness of the issue and re-

affirmed the University's commitment to practicing good governance.

"It is deeply concerning when a member of our staff misuses their position to engage in corrupt practices that not only harm our institution but also undermine the trust placed in us by the wider community.

SINU is committed to upholding the highest standards of integrity, and we will continue to take firm action against any abuse of office," said Dr. Aqorau.

Dr. Aqorau added that the University takes its role in shaping the future leaders of the Solomon Islands very seriously, and any actions that compromise the credibility of its academic processes will not be tolerated.

The fraudulent issuance of academic certificates and transcripts poses significant risks to both the University and the community at large. These practices can lead to unqualified individuals entering the workforce, potentially diminishing the value of SINU's qualifications and eroding the public's trust in the institution. Additionally, such acts undermine the hard

work of students who earn their credentials legitimately and may contribute to broader systemic corruption within the education sector.

Following the staff's suspension, a number of members of the public have come forward with further allegations involving other staff. SINU assures the public that all reports will be investigated thoroughly, and appropriate actions will be taken where necessary.

Dr. Aqorau concluded, "We will not hesitate to hold those accountable who engage in unethical behaviour. SINU is committed to maintaining an environment of integrity, transparency, and accountability in all aspects of its operations. We urge all staff and students to adhere to the highest ethical standards and help us protect the reputation and mission of the University."

The University calls on anyone with information related to these matters to come forward and assist in ensuring that SINU remains a respected institution of learning, free from corruption and malpractice.



SINU VC Prof. Transform Aqorau

Staff Profile

Name: Markmaster Pae Hamata

Province: Western Province

Age:35

Work station: FAFF, Kukum Campus

Department: Department of Agriculture

Job title: Assistant Lecturer in Farm Management

Qualification: Bachelor of Agriculture

How long have you been working here? 7 years

Tell us about your job: As an assistant lecturer my responsibilities are to assist in Course Review and Development, Plans & delivers learning experiences to meet course objectives, Develops instructional materials, Involved in Student Consultations, Assesses and Maintains students records, Liaises with Authorities and Industry, Carries out research and is involved in Distance Education in my field of expertise



What do you like about SINU and your job?

The Solomon Islands University (SINU) offers a unique and rewarding role as an assistant lecturer. The university's rich cultural heritage fosters an inclusive environment, allowing educators to directly influence the region's future.

As an assistant lecturer, the role offers opportunities for professional development, research, and engaging with passionate students. The university's student-centred learning approach and innovative teaching methods, such as community-based learning and technology integration, make teaching a rewarding experience. The university also contributes to the nation's development by shaping the workforce in areas like health, engineering, agriculture, and business. Collaborations with industry and local businesses align curricula with community needs and job market needs. Overall, being an assistant lecturer at SINU offers a challenging yet rewarding experience in teaching, research, and community impact.

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Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is the Prime and ONLY National University of Solomon Islands.

Founded in 2013, SINU is striving to be one of the Best Education and Research Institute in the Region.

Our VISION: "A quality National University, raising Standards of education and applied research in the

Pacific Region."

Our Mission: "Championing the pursuit of knowledge, skills, academic inquiry and applied research to transform lives through higher education and training, inclusive of diverse communities, while providing relevant solutions for the Solomon Islands.