

Memorandum for: MFEM

USP Indigenous Pacific Studies Campus Proposal

Introduction

As discussions are currently underway to consider alternative industries to support the Cook Islands economy due to COVID19 experiences, I would like to put back on the table a Cook Islands Government and University of the South Pacific initiative that gained momentum in the early 2000's, but never eventuated.

In 2006, the Government of the Cook Islands and the University of the South Pacific signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) to locate a Pacific Studies campus in the Cook Islands. The MoU was endorsed by Cabinet (CM (06)71) on 16 May 2006. The proposal outlined in the MoU was subsequently incorporated into the Education Sector Plan. Under the terms of the MoU, the University undertook to develop and staff a Pacific Studies Campus delivering internationally respected courses in Pacific Studies, Pacific Arts and Pacific Natural Resource Management for local, regional and incoming international students. There were also considerations of relocating the Department of Tourism and Hospitality to the new campus at the time.

Land for the campus development was approved by the Land Court in December 2006. Fifteen acres at Tuikatoti with perpetual rights of renewal were granted giving legal effect to the gift of land to the University by the late Papa Tangaroa and Mama Ngamata Te Amaru (as of August 2020, she continues to support the campus proposal as does her Power of Attorney Charles Makea). In turn, the University undertook to dedicate part of the campus to an 'Are Mārama Nui for the preservation, maintenance and advancement – through teaching and research – of Cook Islands and Pacific Indigenous knowledge, culture, language, arts and natural heritage. Key to this proposal is the recognition of the Pacific *ta'unga* and incorporation of their knowledge into the University curriculum.

The South Pacific region has been a focal point for some of the world's most important debates, which include climate change, overfishing, deep sea mining, ocean pollution, whaling, natural resource management, and economic development. The Cook Islands – in the central Pacific region – holds a great deal of appeal as a destination for its natural beauty, history and cultural heritage. These factors make it an attractive and important region for overseas students. By committing itself to entry into the study abroad market, the Cook Islands and USP can put themselves on the map as a desirable foreign study destination (Appendix A). In addition, the establishment of a campus may help address some of the depopulation drivers our country faces, especially with students pursuing tertiary education abroad and not returning after completion of their studies.

The potential benefits go well beyond the inflow of overseas tuition dollars, and include economic flow-on effects in the local community, a greater participation of overseas academic talent in the life of the island and with local students, and the dissemination of a better understanding of Cook Islands culture and society overseas. Courses will also benefit local students for emerging culture-based and creative

industries in the Cook Islands and support the achievement of key indicators in multiple strategic plans within the Ministry of Cultural Development, Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Education.

The subject areas for which USP might attract the largest enrolments are informed by, but not limited to, the Cook Islands' geographical position, its local population, and its economic and political status in the Pacific region and in the world. Many of the world's most important environmental issues involve the Cook Islands directly, such as global warming, the depletion of fish stocks, loss of habitat and ecosystem services, the debate on whaling, and pollution of the oceans. The Cook Islands are also facing concerns around depopulation, loss of culture and language, the ever increasing tourism and related development projects, and the growing involvement of China and other countries in economic and political affairs in the region. Proceedings from these topics the campus could consider the following subject areas as a basis for the establishment of an academic programme:

- Pacific studies
 - Cook Islands Studies
 - Language
 - Arts (visual and performing; music)
 - History
 - Navigation
 - Traditional medicine
 - Conservation
- Development studies
- Indigenous studies
 - Pharmacognosy
 - Traditional voyaging and navigation
 - Cook Islands Māori language
- Agriculture
- Aquaculture
- Natural resource management
- Climate change
- Marine science
- Conservation and ecology
- Geology / earth science
- Hospitality and tourism
- Anthropology
- Geopolitics of the Pacific
- Linguistics
- Pacific Arts

Whilst not an exhaustive list of possibilities these topics can serve as a taste of possibilities. This is an opportunity that USP and the Cook Islands should embrace, however this would require investment in infrastructure, information dissemination, and personnel.

Indigenous Pacific Studies Campus Concept Design by Architects Pacific (2007)

Architectural drawings for key components of the new campus on associated leased land were completed and are attached (Appendix B & C). The main building was designed to represent a voyaging canoe. One hull, the 'Are Mārama Nui represents Indigenous Pacific knowledge. The second hull represents Western knowledge. The two hulls are symbolically linked for the shared journey of scientific discovery.

- Gross Floor Area of the Proposed Buildings – approximately 1166 square meters – 9 buildings
- Site Coverage (Area of building as a percentage of land) – less than 2%
- Total Estimated Project Costs (Design & Construction) – TBA (Appendix D)

Key Development Principles and Objectives for the new facility

- Accessibility – Disabled persons' access
- ICT leveraged learning maximizing the Manatua Cable potential
- Green building codes adhered to, creating an exemplar university with minimal environmental impact and sustainable energy and water efficiency
- Functionality and flexibility to meet changing demands and cater for multiple uses

Operational Costs

The University proposed to operate an International studies programme to help finance the operational and maintenance costs of the new campus. While the data prepared at the time is a little out of date, it provides prospective of potential income once the campus is operational. Since the time of conception, the Cook Islands has also significantly improved its connectivity with the installation of the Manatua Cable, which in turn significantly improves the capabilities of exporting education to the international market should international travel be an issue. It is anticipated that international flights will be restored by the time the campus is constructed. The fact that Cook Islands is one of the few countries in the world with no Coronavirus also provides a drawcard.

The consultant recommended a competitive international fee – at the time NZ\$10,000 per student for an eight-week summer programme. The campus expected to attract 150 international students a year generating NZ\$1.5 million in fees including \$506,000 towards the campus' ongoing operational costs. The number of students was expected to rise in subsequent years. The potential for international student income has seen phenomenal growth in New Zealand and Australia. NZ revenue from the export of education to international students was NZ\$5 billion in 2018, and the fourth largest export for the country. Current (2020) international student tuition fees at USP stand at FJ\$18,000 per year (NZ\$12,600 / AUD\$11,600) for full time; overseas partner tuition fees at USP would look attractive from a financial perspective for international students.¹

¹ To compare with Australian and NZ universities: Australian National University – tuition between AUD\$28,000 and AUD\$48,500 per year; University of Sydney – tuition between AUD\$36,000 and AUD\$57,000 per year; University of Queensland – tuition between AUD\$2,500 and AUD\$46,000 per year; University of Auckland – tuition NZ\$25,900 per year.

An additional source of potential students comprises of overseas-born Cook Islanders and Pacific Islander students living in Australia and New Zealand seeking immersion in their language and culture. Income will also be generated by cultural programmes, operated by the University and/or at times, possibly in partnership with the Ministry of Cultural Development, drawing in educational and cultural visitors; plus, a commercial programme of short courses and programmes directed at Elder Hostels, Global Volunteers, cruise ships, the tourism market, local residents, etc. The campus would additionally incorporate studies allowing visitors and students to interact with, and learn from, visiting artists, scholars, *ta'unga* and writers.

Outcomes

In developing an Indigenous Pacific Studies campus in the Cook Islands, the University seeks to:

- Establish the Cook Islands campus as a gateway in the region to learning and researching about Indigenous Pacific Studies
- Offer a space on campus for organizations to establish a full immersion culture-based school. For example, local NGO Kōrero o te 'Ōrau is in the scoping process to establish ECE, primary and secondary schools that merge culture-based and scientific learning in the Cook Islands.
- Work towards reestablishing the much needed teachers training college (formerly under the Cook Islands Ministry of Education) to support the teaching of a local-based curriculum (e.g., Cook Islands Māori language, culture, and history) in primary and secondary schools throughout the Cook Islands.
- Pursue the vision to be a centre of excellence in pursuit of knowledge and wisdom in the service of Pacific communities, and to be an active partner in the social, economic, and political development of the Cook Islands and other Member countries.
- Develop a body of Indigenous Pacific *ta'unga*, recognised by the University as leaders in their fields, employed as sessional faculty of the Indigenous Pacific Studies campus and providing master classes to local and overseas students in Pacific Arts, Languages, Cultures, Histories, Philosophies, Technologies, Sciences, etc.
- Assist in developing the Cook Islands campus as a major international cultural destination, with visual and performing artists' workshops, galleries and performing spaces providing an annual program of artists', writers, and music festivals, workshops and performances for overseas visitors and students
- Generate a critical mass of students, sufficient to sustain a significantly larger number of locally taught degree programmes at the Cook Islands campus, permitting Cook Islands students to study at the tertiary level while remaining at home in the Cook Islands.
- Generate an ongoing source of income for future campus growth including the redevelopment of the existing Takamoa Campus, which will remain the focus for distance studies.
- Provide opportunities for Cook Islanders to study overseas; a scholarship scheme, funded from international student fees, will allow Cook Islands students the opportunity to spend at least one semester at a participating international university.
- Generate significant local economic multipliers both on Rarotonga (through accommodation and related costs) and in the Pa Enua (through a well-managed system of outer island internships that add value for both students and host communities).

In the MoU, the Government of the Cook Islands undertook to identify and secure the funds required to cover the capital costs of the new campus. Capital costs were estimated by the architects (in 2007) at NZ\$5 million. Costs for 2020 construction are NZ\$6,236,340 (see Appendix D).

Financing options to be considered

- i. Cook Islands Government & Development Partner Joint Funding (For example: the Australian Infrastructure Financing Facility for the Pacific <https://www.dfat.gov.au/geo/pacific/development-assistance/Pages/australian-infrastructure-financing-facility-for-the-pacific>)
- ii. Pacific Region Infrastructure Facility <https://www.theprif.org/what-we-do>
- iii. Cook Islands Government & USP Capex Joint Funding
- iv. Development Partner & USP Capex Joint Funding
- v. USP Capex and Private Sector Investor Joint Funding

Appendix A: Report from Kevin Martin, International Programs, Boston University, 2006

Summary

The USP's Cook Islands Indigenous Pacific Studies campus has a strategic opportunity to participate in the expansion of overseas studies. The burgeoning study abroad industry has largely overlooked the entire South Pacific region as it has crowded more and more students into traditional foreign study destinations, and at the same time begun to venture into less traditional ones.

The USP holds a unique and dominant position in the South Pacific as the only transnational tertiary education provider in the region, and enjoys excellent working relationships with the governments and communities of the diverse island nations. The university can source top academic and scholarly talent both from its own faculty ranks and beyond, and has a strong administrative support structure in place. It has the ability to create customized study programmes of variable lengths and in a variety of locations, to suit the needs of overseas study groups, in a safe and cost efficient environment. USP's commitment to establishing a new study centre in Rarotonga will provide a natural hub for the development of a new business direction in the supply of educational services for study abroad students.

The region itself holds a great deal of appeal as a destination, for its natural beauty and with its history and societies. The region is also a focal point for some of the world's most important debates over global warming, whaling, natural resource management, population management, and economic development. These factors make it an attractive and an important region for overseas students. By committing itself to entry into the study abroad market, the USP can put itself on the map as a desirable foreign study destination. This will require investment in infrastructure, information dissemination, and personnel. The potential benefits go well beyond the inflow of overseas tuition dollars, and include economic flow-on effects in the local community, a greater participation of overseas academic talent in the life of the island and with local students, and the dissemination of a better understanding of Cook Islands culture and society overseas. This is an opportunity that USP and the Cook Islands should embrace.

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Finance

Start up investment will be required to get this project underway and it will take some time to achieve significant full time equivalent enrolments in the range of 150 EFTs a year.

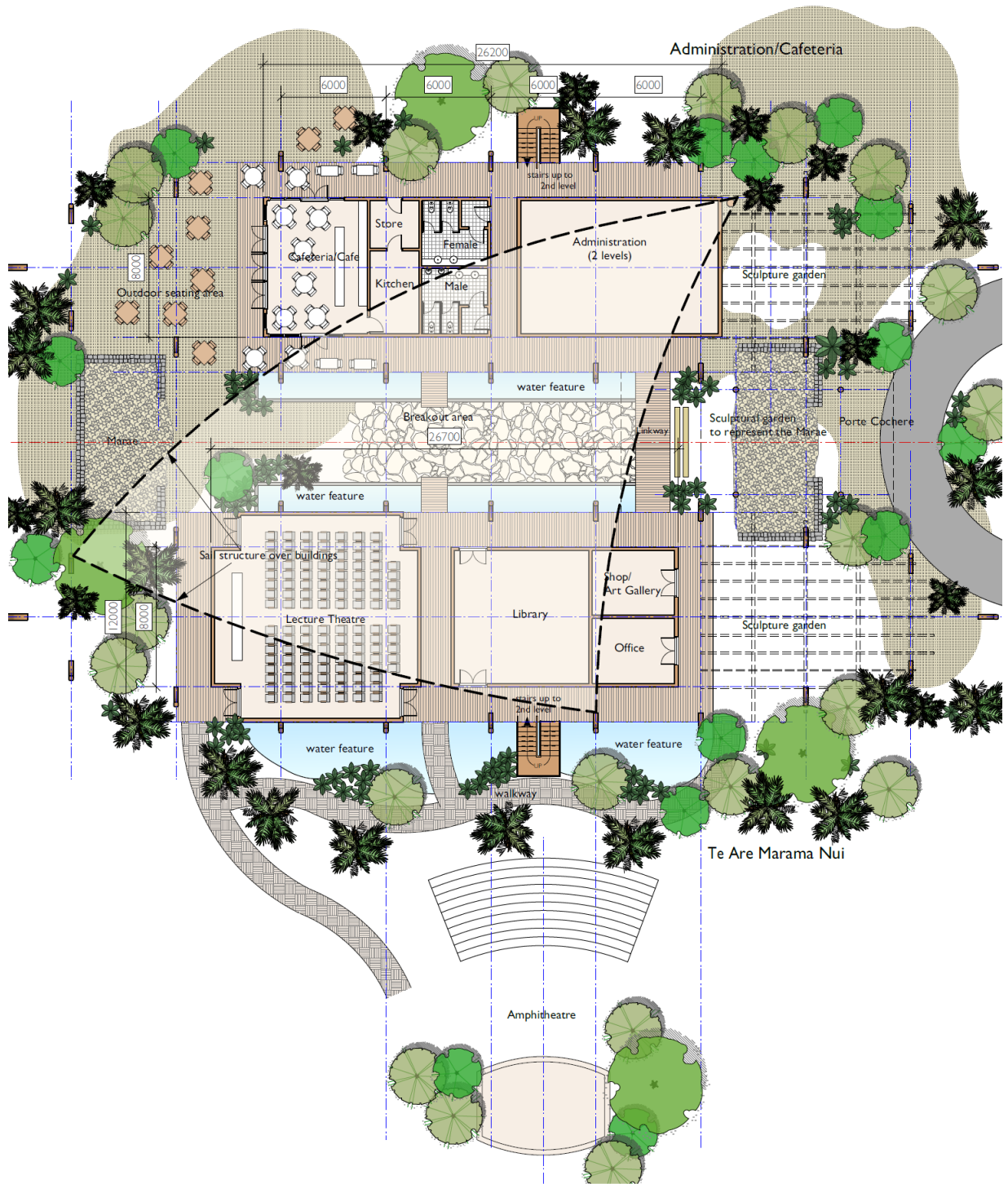
It would be important to test the market to determine attractive and sustainable pricing levels and to arrive at a strategy for achieving a minimum level of returns and maximizing returns above that

minimum threshold. At FJ\$18,000 per year (NZ\$12,600 / AUD\$11,600) for full time overseas partner tuition fees USP would look attractive from a financial perspective for international students.²

Individual pricing arrangements could be set with particular partners however it would be prudent to establish a general pricing guideline for particular products offered to overseas partners. For example, USP does not accept less than its overseas fee for ever semester equivalent paper it offers except under a well-defined volume discount arrangement. Another possibility is that USP provides a minimum of 50% academic content in any programme offered at overseas tuition fees.

² Australian National University – tuition between 28,000 and 48,500 AUD/year; University of Sydney – tuition between 36,000 and 57,000 AUD/year; University of Queensland – tuition between 2,500 and 46,000 AUD/year; University of Auckland tuition NZ\$25,900/year.

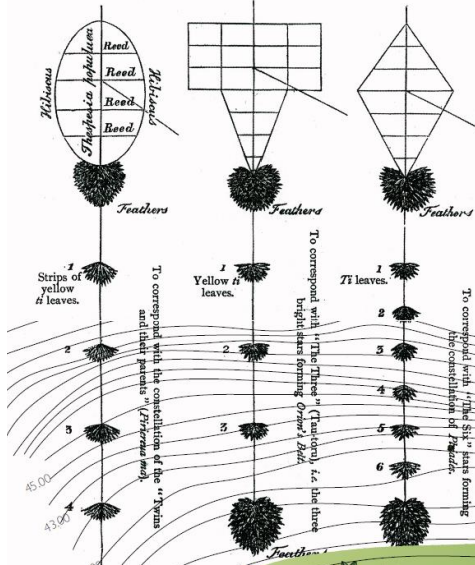
Appendix B: Architect plans for Indigenous Pacific Studies Campus



University of the South Pacific
Pacific Studies Campus

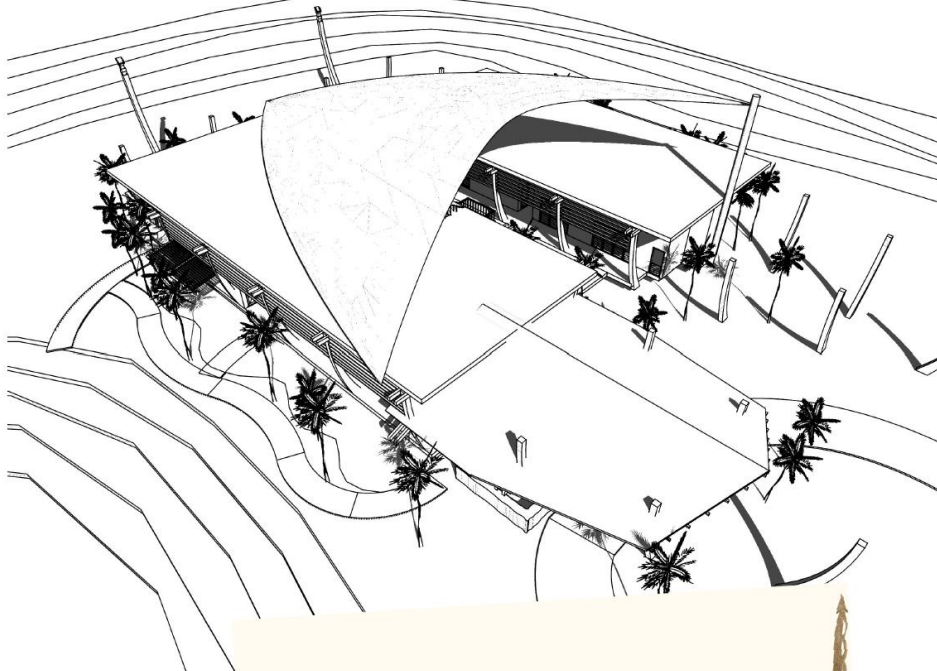
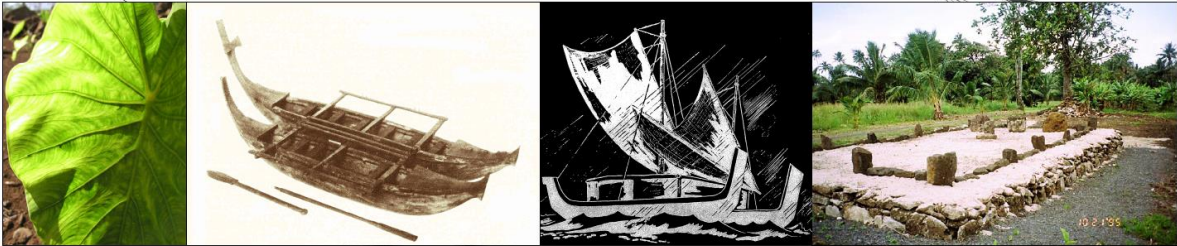
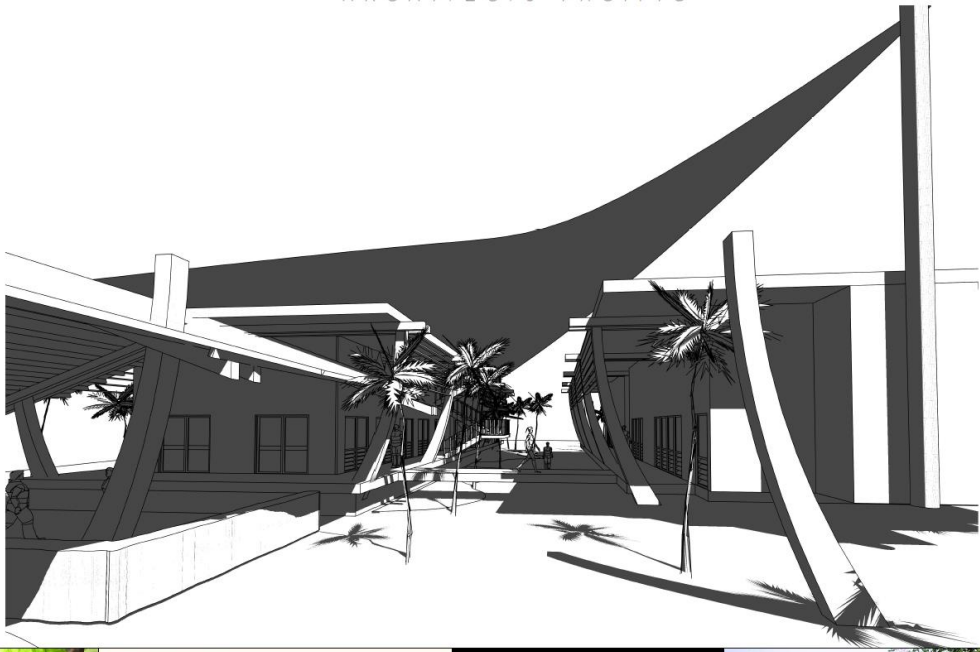
Te Are Site Plan
Scale 1:200
June 2007

Ua-moa = Egg-shaped. *Pereu* = A winged kite (or Bird-shaped). *Taiaro* = Club-shaped.

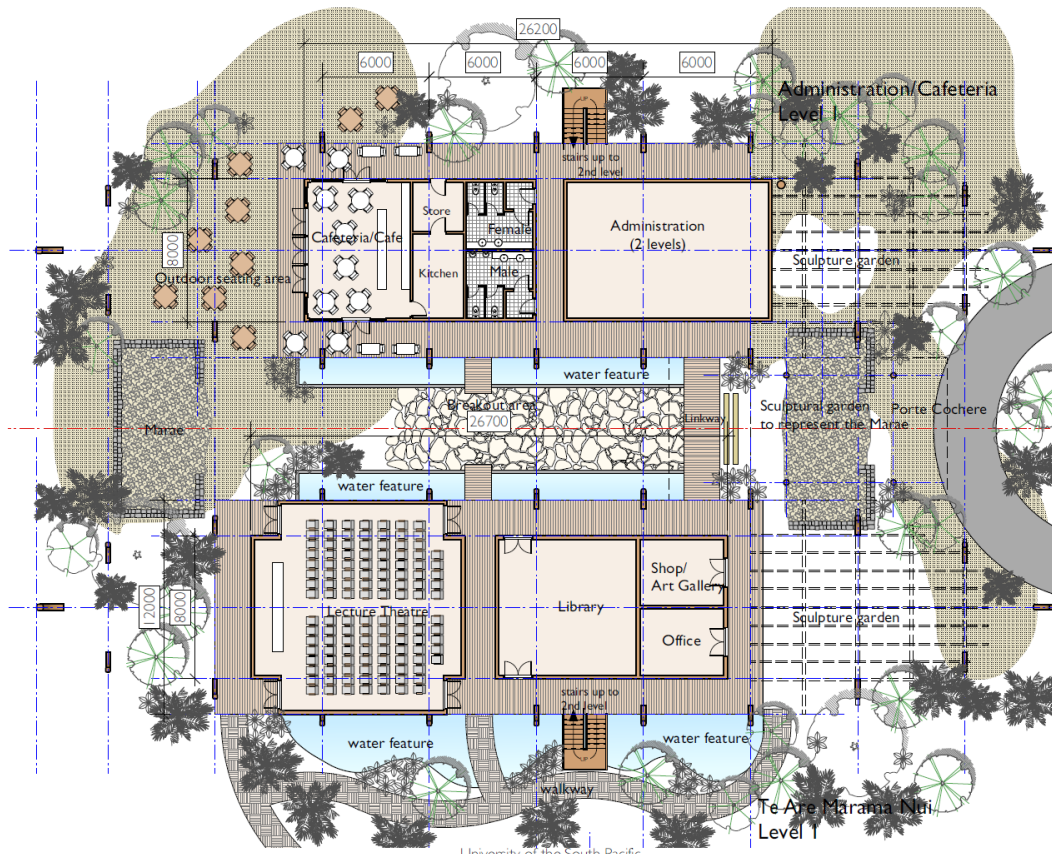
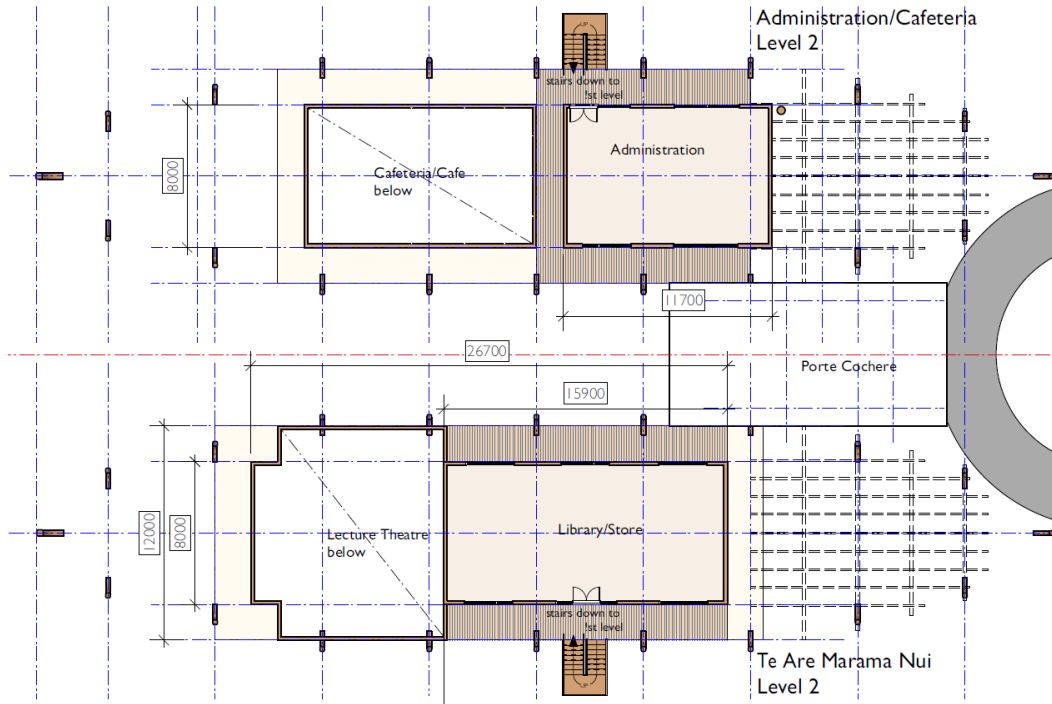


University of The South Pacific
Pacific Studies Campus
 Site Plan
 Scale 1:500
 June 2007

ARCHITECTS PACIFIC



University of the South Pacific
Pacific Studies Campus
Te Are 3d Studies I
April 2007



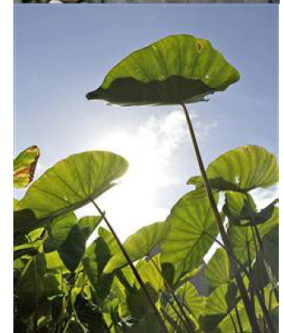
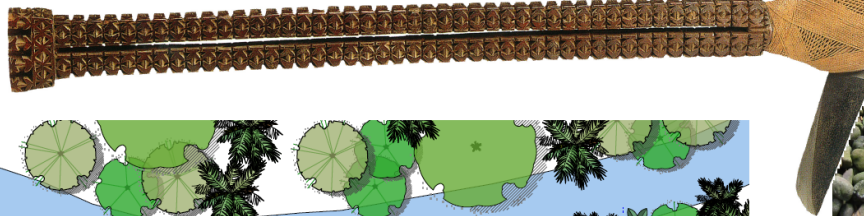
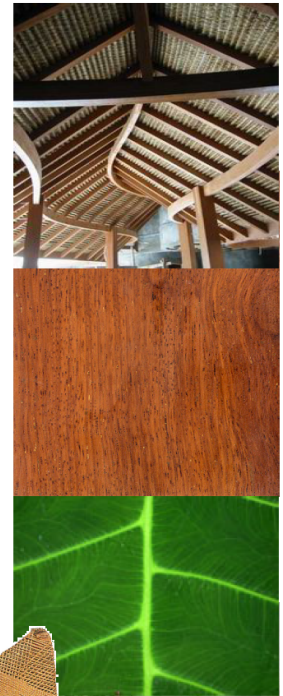
University of the South Pacific

Pacific Studies Campus

Te Are Level 1 & 2 Floor Plans

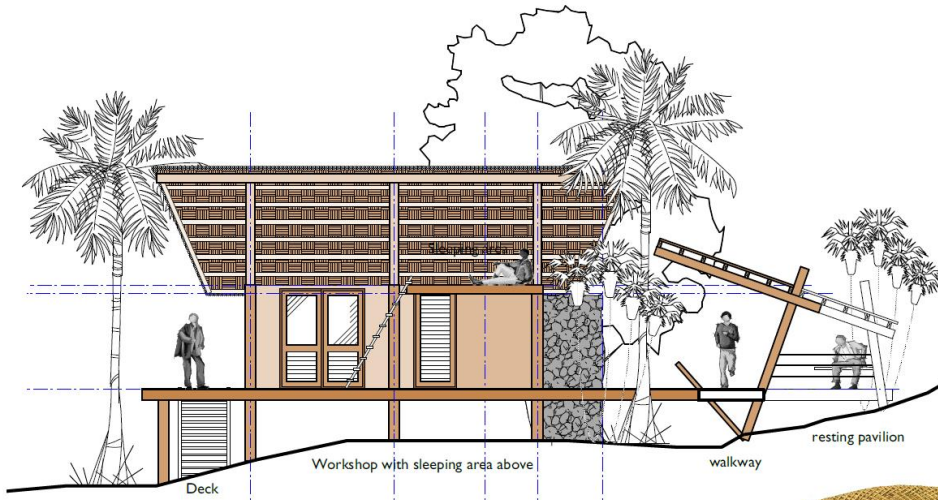
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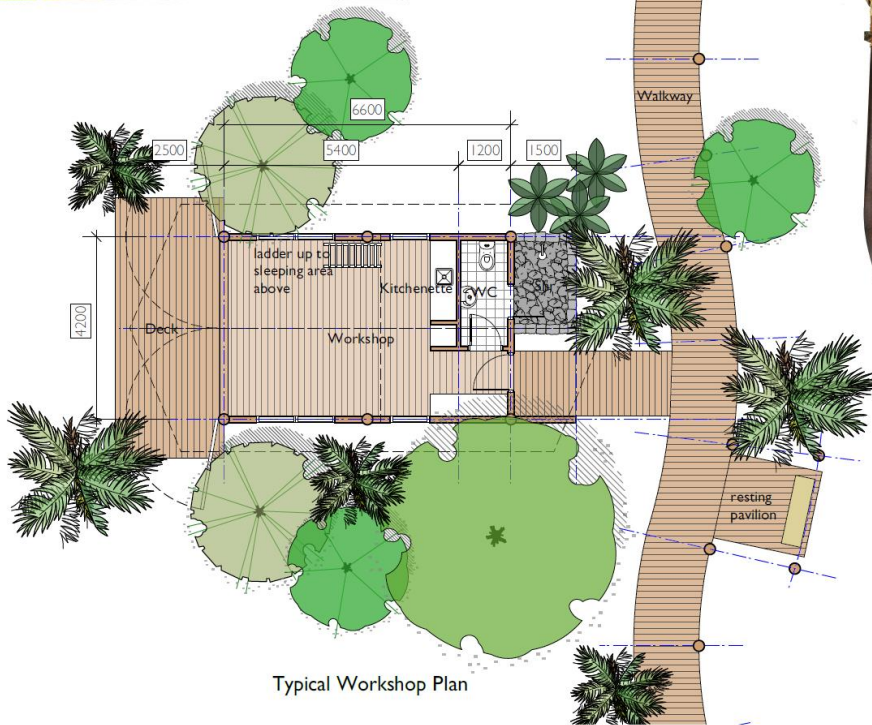


University of the South Pacific
Pacific Studies Campus

Teaching Block Plans
Scale 1:200
June 2007



Typical Workshop Section

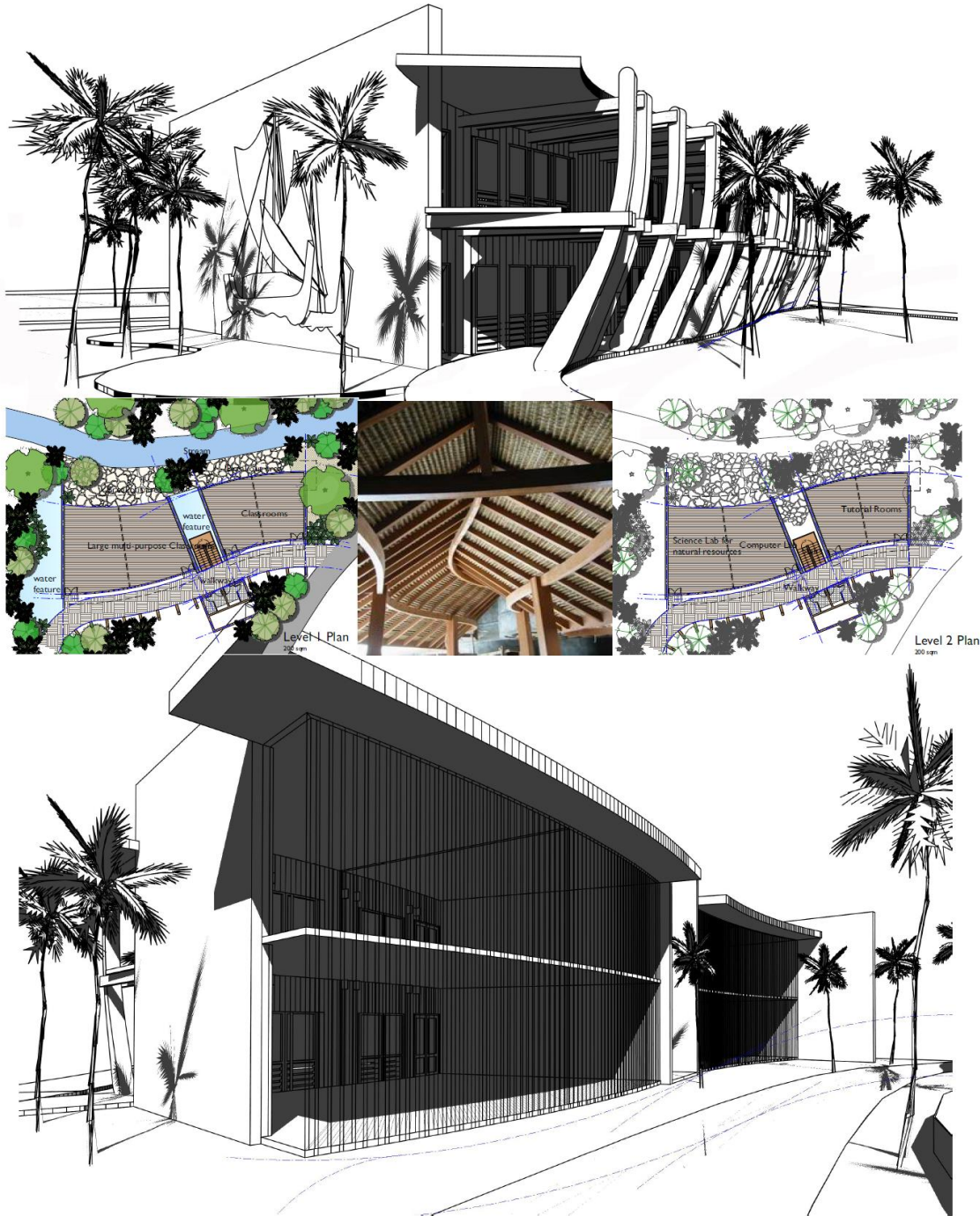


Typical Workshop Plan

University of the South Pacific

Pacific Studies Campus

Public Area Plan
Scale 1:200
April 2007



University of the South Pacific
Pacific Studies Campus
Teaching Block 3D Studies

April 2007

Appendix C: Summary of Land and Developments at USP Cook Islands Campus

- The USP Cook Islands Campus currently has two valid leases: 1) Lease Title No. 664 with a lease area of 0.2144 Hectares/0.529 acres (the current campus site in Takamoa), and 2) Lease Title No. PT 24A, lease area 6.76 Hectares/16.726 acres (the subject of this paper). These leases are current and valid with annual lease payments of \$1 for each lease.
- In 2011, a Variation to Deed of Lease was issued to USP correcting the initially described area in PT 24A from the incorrectly listed area of 7.86 Hectares/16.635 acres to the corrected area of 6.76 Hectares/16.726 acres. The covenants and conditions of the lease remain unchanged.
- A major renovation and extension to current Cook Islands campus located on lease No. 664 was undertaken in 2012.
- Over the Strategic Plan period 2013 – 2018, various requests from the Cook Islands Campus were sent to USP Fiji to include Pacific Studies and a cultural center at the current campus. The Dean of FALE and former VCP travelled to the Cook Islands and met various stakeholders regarding this possible development. The Dean FALE was interested and supportive in establishing a Pacific Cultural Centre, and there was also talk about international students being able to choose another country to study culture, etc. apart from Fiji. The Cook Islands Government was keen to support, expressed through the CI Minister of Education and Prime Minister of the time, Honorable Jim Marurai.

Appendix D: Costing of campus September 2020 by Landholdings, Cook Islands

TOTAL \$4,869,400.00 NZD

Add site works, water features, paving, outdoor seating, lights, planting, covered walkways
\$800,000.00 NZD

Contingency \$10% \$566,940.00

TOTAL \$6,236,340.00 Exclusive VAT

Budgets include sewage treatment system, Stormwater drainage, power, phones etc. All permits.

DRAFT