Conference Leave Report

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**a brief description of the Conference or Seminar attended;**

The 3rd Pacific Islands Universities Research Network Conference was hosted by the University of French Polynesia. This is a conference to strengthen research network among Pacific universities, from PNG, Solomon Islands, New Caledonia, Fiji, to French Polynesia.

I presented my paper in the session Pratiques (agriculture familiale) et sécurité alimentaire

 Pratices (family farming) and food security. The title of my presentation was “Indigenous traditional knowledge and food security after severe climatic events”, based on the findings from SRT project, which looks at how indigenous knowledge and techniques have been used for recovery from Cyclone Winston damages. I also participated in a number of sessions throughout three days period as an audience member.

**a brief summary of the travel arrangements;**

6 October: Suva – Nadi – Auckland

8-7 October: Auckland – Papeete

8-10 October: Conference

11-12 October: Cultural learning in Tahiti Nui

13-14 October: Papeete –Noumea

15 October: Noumea – Nadi – Suva

**a succinct report of the main themes of the Conference;**

The theme of this 3rd PIURN Conference was: “Traditional knowledge, academic knowledge and current universities’ research dynamics in the Pacific region.” The conference itself was not particularly strong academic focused. Some presenters talked about how Pacific universities can construct a strong network, how they can support students, how then can establish collaborations, and what challenges they are facing, such as the lack of sufficient fund for research, quality of science teachers, etc.

**a record of the staff member’s participation in the conference. (Normally, this will include a paragraph abstract of the paper presented by the staff member. It may, however, record the panel discussions, seminars, etc., of the event in which the staff member participated.)**

My session can be found at: <https://piurn2018.sciencesconf.org/data/pages/ProgPIURN_A4_FINAL_2_bd.pdf>

Please see page 6. In the session, Professor Jito Vanualailai was present as an audience member.

This is the abstract of my presentation:

Community resilience has been widely discussed in relation to climate change and intensifying climatic events in the context of remote island countries, including the South Pacific Islands. Previous case studies have found that remote communities have accumulated knowledge and techniques to cope with severe climatic events, and that, in this sense, these communities are resilient. Tropical Cyclone Winston (TCW) of 2016 was the strongest cyclone that had ever attacked the islands of Fiji in history, and many of its remote communities were severely damaged. Responses to the damage caused by TCW varied from community to community, depending on the availability of knowledge and the accumulation of social capital. This article examines the responses of four remote communities to TCW, differences among these communities, and the factors that makes a particular community more resilient than others. This article also aims to identify common elements that might be transferred to other settings to enhance community resilience and thereby contribute to a better disaster planning in the context of Pacific Island countries.

**•a record of the benefits to the participant should be brief and limited to the direct benefits the staff member attributes to their personal academic career as a result of attendance. This section will include mention of any benefits to the wider academic community judged to have been contributed by the participant.**

In the process of preparing my presentation, I was able to narrow down the focus of my manuscripts, which is to be submitted soon. The response from audience was quite positive and many of them expressed their interest in our project.

**• a section on benefits to the University should detail not only the contact made, the opportunities taken to advertise the work of the University, and the direct benefits flowing back to University teaching or research, but also a summary of further action made possible by attendance at the conference (redirected research potential, new ideas to be taken up, and so forth).**

Dr. Krishna Kotra at Emalus campus was very eager to further strengthen bond between our school and Emalus campus. It was good to know that he was also available as a research supervisor or a collaborator for research projects involving Vanuatu. This will help our school find a co-supervisor, in particular for Vanuatu students.

Dr. Nathalie Angele-Halgand at New Caledonia University approached me after my presentation, saying that we would like to establish a research network on climate change, sea level rise, and displacement of communities in Pacific Island Countries. This will be an opportunity for a future research project.

**• a final section will briefly summarise further visits made by the staff member as part of this leave position.**

There were no such visits this time.