

Briefing Information & Special Request

from the

USP-devoted IE for Justice

Pertaining to the On-going Push for a

SPECIAL INQUIRY TO INVESTIGATE SERIOUS ALLEGATIONS CHARGED AGAINST THE SENIOUR MANAGEMENT/ADMINISTRATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE SOUTH PACIFIC (USP) –

And Demanding that the *USP VC, Professor Rajesh Chandra* Must Be Held Responsible

I. **USP-devoted IE for Justice**

This determined push for a SPECIAL INQUIRY into the management operations and affairs of the USP and for the Vice-Chancellor & President of the USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra to be held fully responsible has been, since early 2011, spearheaded by USP loyal & duty-bound stakeholder members (*present & past staff members, students & associates of the USP and Taxpayers of the USP Member Countries*) – known collectively as USP-devoted IE for Justice (“IE” for short).

II. **IE’s appeal:**

The *USP-devoted IE for Justice* (“IE”) will be presenting FORMAL PETITIONS and FORMAL SUMMISSIONS to the USP Council and to Pacific regional governance bodies, to USP stakeholder groups, and when called for, through appropriate legal actions in pursuit of the cause stated above.

We are therefore appealing to your commitment to and concern for the welfare and future of our Regional University, USP; and thus are engaging your support for the cause pursued by the IE in pushing for a SPECIAL INQUIRY into the management operations and affairs of the USP and for the Vice-Chancellor & President of the USP to be accordingly held responsible.

Thus we ask, with due respect, that you please express your support by supplying the NAMES and SIGNATURES of yourself and all supporting USP stakeholder members, whom you would have accordingly and dutifully liaised and communicated, in the attached specially pre-prepared pages.

III. Of the Vice-Chancellor (VC) of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra:

NB: Provided below, for your quick information & insight, are stylized claims that are contained in the many serious allegations charged against the Vice Chancellor (VC) of USP; and which are told and substantiated in PETITIONS and FORMAL SUBMISSIONS of the *USP-devoted IE for Justice*.

- **He, the USP Vice Chancellor (VC), Professor Rajesh Chandra, has, by design or by sheer shortsightedness, steered and allowed the actual and strategic development direction taken by the USP to seriously depart from, the University's vision, mission, core values and strategic goals.**
 - VC Chandra has seriously violated good governance and established social justice & ethical principles in the management of human & financial resources of the USP as robustly advocated by the University's Charter, Statutes, Ordinances, Standing Orders, Regulations and Policies
 - In late 2008 VC Chandra began his drastic reform process that has resulted in the cleverly shifting of the focus and basic approach of the University's core & strategic operations away from the real goal of the USP – which is primarily of ***providing quality education and policy-relevant knowledge to its member countries and to the region, hiring proper qualified staff to do this, and ensuring that both staff and students operate in an environment conducive to this purpose***
 - The drastic reform process instituted by the VC has seriously compromised the entrenched command of the USP Charter (the University's supreme statutory and policy regulatory document) which resolutely states that:

“The objects of the University shall be the dissemination of knowledge by teaching, consultancy and research and the provision of the appropriate levels of education and training responsive to the wellbeing and needs of the communities of the South Pacific”.

- The Chandra-engineered **new-order USP** has been targeting particular categories of academics (with a special focus on Pacific islander regional academics some of whom are women) for immediate or eventual exiting from the University. This directed drive has been implemented through corruptively corroborated power groups operating through professionally & ethically contaminated committees and corroborated & subservient staff individuals; and by adopting deeply unethical means and guilefully designed ways such as:
 - forced redundancies
 - eventually effected *constructive dismissals* as results of intimidation & oppression, marginalization & lording it over, deliberate refusal to honor conditions of pre-officially approved employment contracts, perpetual imposition of unbearable workloads, and persistent denials of access to rightful employment opportunities, benefits and privileges
 - deliberate use of tactical means to deny true, fair or expedited resolutions to appeals and petitions officially submitted in relation to employment-based grievances
 - forced immediate dismissals
 - stepwise reductions of contract tenures & eventual dismissals
 - corruptively arranged (with huge payoff) resignations
 - instigation and perpetuation of false accusations & intimidating means for purpose of control and/or eventual expulsion or forced resignation.

- CV Chandra has arrogantly made public bragging and proclamations that state or imply that he himself self-causes advancement & progress to USP – proclamations that are grossly untrue, deceitful and intellectually insulting to USP stakeholders

- **He, VC Chandra, independently and through his Senior Management Team (SMT), has weakened and marginalized the institutional arrangements that promoted the *Pacific Way* and the themes, traditional knowledge and concerns that are *Things Pacific & Pacific values-focused* – institutional pillars that underpin and rationalize the vision, mission and values of the University; and which are organically central to the fundamental values, aspirations and sustainable & balanced progress of the PACIFIC peoples.**

- The role, activities & affairs of the Pacific regional University, USP – as they are translated and expressed through its teaching programmes & courses, research, policy dialogue & advice, consultancy and community outreach – have effectively CEASED to accord PRIORITY to the ***Pacific Way*** and to the ***Things Pacific & Pacific Values***-focused themes and concerns
- The deeply valued “***Institute of Pacific Studies***” was formed in 1969 and had been soundly developed over almost three decades by the world acclaimed Pacific scholar, Professor Ron Crocombe. This ***Institute of Pacific Studies*** was mandated with, the purpose of, appropriately assimilating *Pacific Way* and the *Things Pacific & Pacific Value*-focused themes and concerns into the “teaching and research in sociology, anthropology, history, land tenure and reform, local government, politics, and regionalism at the University”. This ***Institute of Pacific Studies***, consequent of the VC Chandra-engineered drastic reform process was, simply closed down and completely nullified
- The establishment of the “***Pacific Advanced Institute for Development and Governance***” by the deeply ethical and highly esteemed ex-VC of USP and great visionary, the late Savenaca Siwatibau was, indeed, a real source of inspiration and profound hope to the Pacific peoples and Pacific governments & institutions. This fully fledged ***Pacific Advanced Institute for Development and Governance*** was closed down completely by the now Chandra-established **new-order USP**
- **He, VC Chandra, independently and through his SMT, has manipulated and undermined (and has done so in guilefully subtle ways), the preeminent august body of the USP, the University Council.**
 - The Vice-Chancellor has been incompetent in undertaking his Council-sanctioned duties, unfaithful to his due responsibilities, and abusing the authority and administrative powers vested on his office by the University Council
 - VC Chandra has, in a shrewd and relentless manner, projected and painted in a manipulative & misleading basis and with deceiving interpretations the true performance outcomes, the bona fide statuses of staff employees and students, and the real state of affairs of the USP consequent of his performance as “*the chief academic and administrative officer and President of the University*”

- VC Chandra has mismanaged both human & financial resources of USP and has seriously violated good governance and natural justice & ethical principles; and has misled the University Council in his administration and reporting of the official affairs of the regional University
 - Specific Example: VC Chandra and his SMT were ruthlessly unfaithful, disrespectful and non-fiduciary to the USP Council by concealing and denying the august governing body of the University its due knowledge of a disbursement/payment of almost one million dollars (\$993,844.00) which was paid out as “out-of-court settlement” concerning one of the cases of members of the USP staff prosecuting the USP due to decisions issued and reinforced by the VC and his SMT
- VC Chandra has miserably failed in his premier role as “*the chief academic ... of the University*” to sustainably bolster confidence & morale, to enhance productivity, and to boost commitment to relevant and quality education amongst members of the academic staff
- As firmly viewed and professionally considered by many, the VC, Professor Rajesh Chandra is, a leader with very weak moral and ethical fiber; and has done incredible things with the USP that have merely served to demonstrate the validity of this view

NB: The recently observed unethical impositions by the VC of his executive influence over outcomes of “appointments” and “staff review” cases – influences that have effectively amounted to the VC adhering to “favoritism”, “anti-freedom of expression”, “differential treatment”, “marginalizing *Things Pacific*”, “partiality and sectionalism”, and “deceit/corruption” – have clearly served to further give credence to the afore confident assessment which stipulates that VC Chandra has indeed inhaled in an entrenched manner a “very weak moral and ethical fiber”

- VC Chandra and members of his Senior Management Team (SMT), as revealed by their own management dynamics and own authority-responsibility intra-relationships, are simply very vulnerable and are profoundly weak in their capacity to uphold good governance & ethical principles, and for protecting human dignity of themselves as a management group, let alone, of the USP employees generally.
- VC Chandra and his SMT have deliberately adopted and perpetuated the management and making of significant decisions pertaining to the implementation and management of development *Project*-based activities of the University based on a

MANAGEMENT & DECISION MAKING PROCESS that is hideously deficient in OPENNESS & TRANSPARENCY and therefore, ACCOUNTABILITY; thus incurring consequently and continuingly huge costs – millions in dollar terms!

- VC Chandra and his SMT have adopted and perpetuated management and conflict resolution means that are clearly unwise and are hideously deficient in OPENNESS & TRANSPARENCY and therefore, ACCOUNTABILITY; and thus have cost the University millions of dollars in legal fees & related charges
 - VC Chandra has vehemently led the charge of OPPOSING the recent moves made by loyal and duty-bound USP stakeholder members for the USP Council to commission a SPECIAL INQUIRY into the administration and management of the affairs of the University -- by abusing his Office's discretionary powers, by using unethical and out-of-perspective rationales, by colluding with others, and by resorting to technicalities and legal/statutory loopholes for which their applications for his purpose are, derogatory, offensive and non-fiduciary to the University
- **Expressed independently and in consonance with his SMT, VC Chandra is grossly incompetent in soundly fulfilling his mandated tasks & administrative duties; is grossly unfaithful to his mandated responsibilities; and has abused the powers & authorities vested on his Office .**

And of special significance in this regard is his serious violation of good governance and established professionalism & ethical principles in the management of financial resources and in the administration of the Human Resource (HR)-centered affairs of the University.

- The operations of the Staff Review Committees chaired by members of the VC-dictatorially controlled SMT are incompetent, unfaithful and deficient in fiduciary relation to the University
- In recent years the exodus of quality staff from USP has increased at an alarming rate
- VC Chandra has persistently abused his Office as Chief Administrator of the USP by deliberately making staff appointments based on favoritism and with demonstration of absolute disregard to the University's due process.

- VC Chandra has corrupted his Office by callously wasting scarce USP member countries' tax-payer funds
- VC Chandra has deliberately covered up embezzlement and misappropriations of USP Development Project Funds
- VC Chandra and his SMT committed a serious misconduct by cheating the Taxation agency (FIRCA) of the Fiji Government; by way of declaring large payments made as redundancy payments when they were, in fact, out of court settlements.
- VC Chandra has effected corrupt practices and misuses of funds to ensure that a self-interest of his – a close friend and collaborator of him – does benefit financially
- VC Chandra has effected corrupt decisions & practices to allow for the settling of personal Tax Bill from the USP Fund
- VC Chandra has allowed for himself and for members of his senior management machinery extraordinarily high total salary and other remuneration benefits & perks; which have, in real terms, clearly surpassed those of any administration of any of the Vice Chancellors of USP in the past
- VC Chandra has allowed for the adoption of deceptive and professionally misleading means for the Recordings & Preparing of the USP Finances aimed at projecting positive & surplus financial states
- VC Chandra has been guileful and unethical by allowing/sanctioning for enforcement of the approach of deliberately and strategically delaying making of payments legitimately due for redemption by USP in order to avoid the manifestation of the standing of the University having, under his administration, weak Financial Positions & Prospects
- VC Chandra has deliberately adopted appointment processes that are clearly flawed & undue and/or are murky and untrustworthy. And via these appointment processes, he has appointed to senior & very senior positions persons who, on professional and due criteria, are not qualified, clearly unappointable and/or are at best, very strongly suspect
- VC Chandra has effected promotions and appointments of persons to senior management/academic positions through processes and means that are clearly manipulative, are deeply unethical, and are riddled with evidences of deep-seeded favoritism and arrogance

- **He, VC Chandra, in consonance with his SMT has viciously exploited the “promoting USP” goal; and in the process has used a ‘double edged poisoned sword’ – with one of the ‘poisoned edge’ swiftly using in self-interested & unproductive ways the USP’s scarce resources (finance, time, expertise & experience); and with the other, manipulating the public & the USP media.**

- VC Chandra and his SMT have excessively and unethically inflated the public image of themselves

- VC Chandra and his SMT have excessively and unethically inflated the public image of the USP

- Instead of faithfully serving the legitimate and truly important stakeholders of USP – that is, “the University as a whole, its particular stakeholders as well as the communities which are served by them” [USP Council – Code of Conduct, page 1] –VC Chandra and his SMT have aggrandized and exalted themselves; and in the process, they have been arrogantly “micro-managing” the regional University from “top-down”.

- By VC Chandra’s own admission: **His new order USP** is addicted to “image projecting” exercises; it has caused deep slump in the USP human capability and capacity to assist member countries, and has reinforced deep strife (“anxiety and tension”) within the USP staff; and, moreover, VC Chandra has lost control and he can only now make appeal and hope!

- VC Chandra as recently revealed when pointedly shined upon the sharp light of “principle”, is a leader steeped in insecurity and relentless in *straw man* building and propaganda disseminating

- VC Chandra has wasted considerable amounts of both financial and non-financial resources by channeling these resources through ineffectual, non-transparent, non-accountable and irresponsible means into the hiring and use of handsomely endowed tenders and consultants as well as to the orchestrating of attendant activities such as expensive retreats

- He, VC Chandra, as a grave consequence of his relentlessly pursuing of his *own vested interest* and means of *protecting his own position*, has grossly failed to be composed and steadfast in executing his duty as USP's CEO.

In particular, he has miserably failed in his surpassing duty and responsibility of protecting *justice* and *academic freedom & independence* as USP's preeminent moral and professionalism values on which USP's integrity, relevance, reputation and academic standard & authority as Pacific regional higher institution, critically depend.

- The VC of USP, Professor Rajesh Chandra, is a very vulnerable and weak leader who *simply cannot protect* the regional University's *academic freedom & independence* from *political intervention & assaults*
- The USP has lost top academics and irreplaceable teachers with deep & wide ranging experiences and top-notch knowledge and experiences (properly contextualized in the economic and social milieu of the Pacific) due to the failure of VC Chandra to uphold justice & fair play and to protect academic freedom & independence
- Due to the outright failure of the incumbent VC, Professor Rajesh Chandra to protect the regional University's academic freedom & independence from political intervention & assaults, the USP has been compelled not only to loose invaluable human resources but to effect payouts of hefty and grossly inflated monetary amounts in "compensation of employee" settlements
- The USP incumbent **Vice-Chancellor & President, Professor Rajesh Chandra** is indeed, an incompetent, insecure pretentious leader with very weak and vulnerable (and hence corruptible) moral & ethical fiber. **VC Chandra is not a true article Manager. Indeed, Professor Rajesh Chandra simply cannot, and is merely unable to, stand up as a true article Leader for the Pacific regional university, the *University of the South Pacific*.**

IV. Obvious Conclusion:

In light of the cause pursued by the *USP-devoted IE for Justice* (IE) – that is, to officially commission a special inquiry to investigate the Management operations, affairs and records of the USP – the following are clear:

- ❖ Its PURPOSE Is Absolutely Plain, Resolute & Pressing

- ❖ The JUSTIFICATION for It Is Already Overwhelming

- ❖ The COSTS (to the Owner Member Countries and Stakeholders of USP) of DELAYING Its Implementation Are Enormous & Swiftly Rising

Thus, the USP MANAGEMENT Must Be INVESTIGATED and CLEANSED Without Further Delay To Allow The PACIFIC REGIONAL UNIVERSITY To EXCEL As It Should.