

USP 10 get scholarships

By Sulamanaia Manaua Faulalo 07 May 2025



Ten students from the University of the South Pacific (USP) Samoa campus have been awarded full academic scholarships from the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation. (Photo: Sulamanaia Manaua Faulalo)

Ten students of the University of the South Pacific (USP) Samoa campus were awarded full academic scholarships from the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation.

This marks the second year of the organisation's support for local tertiary students.

The award ceremony, held at USP in Alafua on Wednesday, was attended by Ryotaro Suzuki, Ambassador of Japan to Samoa; Yazaki Kizuna Foundation Managing Director Junichi Kitami and team, and USP Samoa Director Tootoooleaava Dr. Fanaafi Aiono-Le Tagaloa, family members and the scholarship recipients.

"You have worked hard to earn this recognition, and we are confident that you will continue to make us proud in the years ahead," Ambassador Suzuki said. "We encourage you to continue striving for excellence."

He noted the scholarships were an example of the "friendship and bond of kizuna between the two nations."

This year's 10 recipients — nine from the Faculty of Law and one from the Faculty of Education — receive full tuition coverage for both semesters. The number of recipients doubled from five in 2024, with a couple of lucky students receiving it twice.

"When we first met to award the five scholarships from the Yazaki Kizuna Foundation, we did not know that there would be another day like this," said Tootoooleaava. She expressed gratitude to the foundation and congratulated the ten recipients.

“The encouragement is just for them to keep the GPA (Grade Point Average) up because the GPA is always important and critical,” she said.

Tootooleaava also hopes to expand the programme to their campus in Savai'i.

“We’re hoping to do that — not just for this campus, but also for our centre in Sava’ii... and most likely and hopefully towards postgraduate. But we’ll see.”

Approximately 30 students applied for the scholarship this year. Interviews were conducted in person, with at least one representative from Japan present.

Yazaki Kizuna Foundation Managing Director Junichi Kitami explained the foundation’s origins and encouraged students to focus on “continuous learning,” “facing challenges,” and “being social with friends.” He explained that the word kizuna means “bond” or “connection” in Japanese.

“I hope that you will continue to enjoy your campus life with these three things in your mind,” he said.

The ten scholarship recipients were: Jennifer Saloga Apelu ALISI (Bachelor of Law), Geraldine Karita Aumua (Bachelor of Law), Sofeni Joseph Lauano (Bachelor of Law), Stanley Elisara Leavai (Bachelor of Law), Rosemaries Aovai Demi Lesatele (Bachelor of Law), Cordelia Narayan (Bachelor of Law), Netta Peni (Bachelor of Education), Amaya Asotasi Seiuli (Bachelor of Law), Tanielu Feagaimaleata Sarah (Bachelor of Law), Siripa Uelese (Bachelor of Law).

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The interviews from 3 recipients

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