New Faculty of Health Sciences Established

The National University of Samoa has restructured several of its academic and administrative units within the last ten years. One of the significant structural changes in 2017 was the creation of the new Faculty of Health Sciences through the merger of the School of Nursing and Health Science (previously a School within the Faculty of Applied Science) and the School of Medicine (formerly the Faculty of Medicine based at Moto’otua). The merge which was approved by the Executive Council in 2015 was implemented on the 1st July 2017. The merger of the two schools will facilitate a collaborative relationship whereby teaching facilities, expertise, research endeavors and student experiences can be shared with mutual benefit, enabling an evolution from standard classroom delivery to clinically focused learning and continual advancement in nursing and medical practice upon graduation. LeMamea Dr Limbo Fiu the former Dean of the Faculty of Medicine and Tauaitala Lees the former Head of Nursing School are taking turn to lead the new faculty until a new Dean is appointed.
External review for the MBBS programme conducted

The external evaluation to assess and report on the progress of the development of the undergraduate Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) programme was conducted in July 2017 by a team from the Western Pacific Association of Medical Education (WPAME) based in Australia. The evaluation took place over four days and was led by Professor Michael Field from the University of Sydney who is also the current President of the Association. The team was comprised of Professor Peter Ellis from the University of Otago in New Zealand, Emeritus Professor Alfaretta Reyes from the University of East Ramon Magsaysay Memorial Medical Center in the Phillippines and Ms Theane Walters from the Australian Medical Council. To provide a comprehensive assessment of the programme, the team met with major stakeholders of health which included the Ministry of Health, National Health Services, and the National Kidney Foundation. Feedback was also obtained from alumni and students currently enrolled at the school. Representatives from the World Health Organization, Samoa Qualification Authority and selected units of the University were invited to observe the proceedings, participate in discussions and to contribute to deliberations of the team. Initial observations were shared with the Minister of Education Honorable Loau Keneti Sio and Minister of Health Honorable Tuitama Leao Dr Talalelei Tuitama as well as the Deputy Prime Minister of Samoa, Honorable Fiame Naomi Mata’afa.
Clinical students encouraged to do research in health

A four day workshop facilitated by Dr Debbie Ryan-Nicholson on literature review, developing research questions and giving feedback was hosted in July. It took place as part of teaching and learning activities driven by Senior Lecturer Dr Malama Tafuna’i to develop research interests of medical students in the field of health. Students were challenged to conduct research on health conditions within Samoa and to publish. Students were also able to discuss and practice the skill of "giving feedback" in communicating with their patients and within the community. The workshop ended with a two hour presentation by Associate Professor Tamasa’ilau Suaali’i-Sauni who spoke about Pacifika research and epistemologies, as well as the context of Samoa and research in health.

More teaching opportunities for medical students

Following from Professor Schultz’s visit earlier in 2017, Dr Stephen Meyer a general Physician at the Dunedin Public Hospital (DPH) met with the School of Medicine to discuss the feasibility of the School offering a postgraduate programme with the support of the DPH and the University of Otago. Visiting medical specialists like Professor Shultz and Dr Meyer whose visits to the medical school are facilitated by Dr Malama Tafuna’i are providing teaching support for the clinical curriculum of the MBBS programme. The scope of the visiting medical specialists include building the competency of the National Health Services medical team to the consultant level who can then support the clinical programme locally. Dr Meyer taught final year students how to read Electrocardiogram (ECG), manage stroke and syncope Deep Venous Thrombosis (DVT), Atrial Fibrillation (AF), Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). He also presented on medicinal uses of Marijuana at the Continuing Medical Education of which medical clinical students have compulsory attendance.
First online class for SoM pathology course

A distance learning class delivered by Dr Diane Kenwright for the pathology component of the MBBS programme started in July and will continue throughout Semester 2, 2017. Dr Kenwright from the University of Otago Christchurch Campus was a visiting lecturer to the medical school in 2015 teaching the pathology component of the 100 level pathology/pharmacology course. This year, she is unable to travel to Samoa but has opted for the next best available opportunity of distance flexible mode of teaching to reach out to the local medical students. Her class is geared towards preclinical students in years 2 and 3 but permission was granted for clinical students to engage with and present on selected cases and to attempt quizzes. The teaching outline for her classes includes topics within the speciality of cardiovascular, liver and pancreas, bones, joints, and endocrine amongst others. The online course which is organized by Dr Malama Tafuna‘i is facilitated by local Senior Lecturer Dr Ben Matalavea. The sessions which will greatly benefit the preclinical students will provide an opportunity for enhanced learning of clinical students who are preparing for the Final Clinical Exams (FCE) in December. The course involves a facebook page Dr Kenwright has created for students to receive the lecture notes and materials.
Awareness programme for Foundation Science Students

An informational session was held on the 21st July to inform Foundation Science students at NUS of the entry requirements to the MBBS programme. Campus Manager Selesitina Ilimaleota presented a brief outline of the programme, admission criteria, admission process, tuition fees and scholarships available for the MBBS programme. The second talk was presented by Tito Junior Kamu, the President of the Medical School Student Association who shared his experiences of being a medical student. His presentation covered programmes provided by the school to support learning as well as the social and recreational activities organized by the association. The informational session is part of the activities to market the MBBS programme locally. The School of Medicine acknowledges the Dean of the Faculty of Science Tuifuia’a Dr Patila Amosa and Senior Lecturer Aleluia Taise for the opportunity granted to provide this session to prospective students for the 2018 MBBS intake.

NB: The admission criteria for the School of Medicine Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Medicine (MBBS) programme is a minimum aggregate average of 80% from English, Human Biology plus top two science courses. Candidates who are shortlisted for entry into the MBBS programme are then interviewed for final selection of successful applicants into the programme.
More donations for the Medical school

Dr Stephen Meyer during his visit in July donated to the medical school audio resources of over twenty (20) teaching sessions and lectures on different medical specialty topics from the 2015 Scientific Meeting of the American College of Physicians (ACP). He also presented a textbook on Ultrasound in Critical Care and two brand new DVD writers to play the audio discs of recorded lectures. The donation was handed to the Student Administration Officer of the Moto’otua Campus Mrs Veronika Wong.

On behalf of Yale University, Dr Nicola Hawley donated a box of textbooks on medical, surgical and various other medical specialties. Dr Hawley was part of the research team from Yale University who were in the country in July to conduct research workshops for health and medical registrars, consultant specialists within the health sector were invited to participate. The donation was received on behalf of the school by Dr Dyxon Hansell.

First Tuvaluan student in the Diploma of Nursing programme

One student from the island of Tuvalu was admitted and enrolled in the Diploma of Nursing programme starting from July 2017. Two other Tuvaluan students have applied for admission to the Diploma programme next year and have been approved placement for enrolment in February 2018.
Practical Component of the MBBS Biochemistry Course Introduced

As part of ongoing collaborations between the School of Medicine and the Faculty of Health Sciences of the University of Otago, Dr Christopher Brown was in country to deliver the Biochemistry component of the 100 level Biochemistry & Immunology course at the medical school from the 16th – 22nd July 2017. He administered two practical laboratory experiments with first year students and performed a basic blood stain experiment with year 2 and year 3 students in the presence of Senior Lecturer Dr Dyxon Hansell. Dr Brown also donated on behalf of the University of Otago a number of items and science tools for the newly refurbished medical science lab at Moto’otua campus. The medical school is grateful to Dr Brown for reviewing the biochemistry course and introducing a practical component enabling MBBS students to be exposed to basic medical science experimentation.
Japan Experience for Nursing Students

Two nursing students in their final and second year in the Bachelor of Nursing programme have returned from a two weeks attachment at Nagano University in Japan. The exchange programme is an annual event which sees nursing students of Nagano University and NUS attached to the hospital settings of their respective countries. The selection of successful candidates is based on academic performance and commitment to their studies. The trip to Japan and expenses for one of the two local students is funded by Nagano University and the other by the NUS Student Association (NUSSA) and the School of Nursing through fundraising events by staff and students. The attachment is an opportunity to expose local nursing students to hospital settings of a much bigger community and learn of the diverse teaching experiences within hospitals and old age centers of Japan. Students were able to exchange nursing techniques for different procedures, Samoan and Japanese food preparation, and cultural performances amongst others.

Mr Elia and Ms Pelevita (center front) from the School of Nursing NUS with staff members of Nagano University and family members.
Faculty of Health Science Seminar Series

The Faculty of Health Science Seminar Series 2017 commenced on July 25th 2017, with a presentation on “Exploring qualitative articulations of faatosaga identity, practice and vocation: implications for nursing and midwifery, and indigenous studies.” It was presented by Associate Professor Tamasailau Suaalii-Sauni, Associate Professor in Sociology, with the Criminology Programme, University of Auckland (UOA). Saunimaa Ma Fulu-Aiolupotea Nurse Lecturer in Nursing Processes and Critical Reasoning, at the National University of Samoa and Naumati Vasa Lecturer Samoan Studies, Centre for Samoa Studies. The second seminar in the series was presented on August 29th by Jyothi Abraham, Lecturer at the School of Nursing and Health Science and the topic was “Exploring the experiences and perceptions of Samoan nurses in their first year of practice of their transitions from final year of study to orientation to first year practice.” The Seminar series aligns with the goal of the Faculty to increase high quality research output.