

The launch of the Marine Science Short Course in PNG

Welcome to my first blog about the 2014 Marine Science Short Course. My name is William Saleu, I am an Environmental Advisor based in Nautilus Minerals' Port Moresby office in Papua New Guinea. I will be publishing blogs as often as I can while I am on Nago Island.

Nautilus Minerals, in partnership with the University of Papua New Guinea and Duke University are currently holding a Marine Science Short Course (MSSC) on Nago Island, Kavieng, in New Ireland Province, Papua New Guinea (PNG). This course is a Nautilus Minerals initiative which aims to build capacity in the field of marine science using a more hands-on practical approach. This program is funded and facilitated by Nautilus Minerals, with all lectures and practicals being taught by world leading experts from around the world.

Firstly I would like provide a little background information about Nautilus Minerals' collaborations with Duke University, which is a university in the United States. In 2007 the Nautilus Minerals – Duke University Opportunity Bursary was established. The Bursary sees one Papua New Guinean post graduate student travelling to Duke University for six months. While at Duke, the Bursary recipient attends classes and learns techniques in the state of the art facilities at Duke. To date, four PNG nationals have benefitted from this opportunity, all of which are now back in PNG working in various fields from resource management to a university lecturer at the University of Papua New Guinea (UPNG). One recipient is currently pursuing a PhD degree in Australia.

The Nautilus Minerals – Duke University Opportunity Bursary has been very beneficial to those recipients however could there be a way to hold a similar program which will benefit many more PNG nationals? This question has changed the way the Nautilus Minerals – Duke University Opportunity Bursary will be held in the future.

To make this initiative more beneficial not only to PNG nationals but also for local institutions, Nautilus Minerals decided to bring this program to PNG, thus the Marine Science Short Course (MSSC) was born.

The first MSSC was held in 2013 at the University of Papua New Guinea's Waigani campus, in Port Moresby. 21 participants attended the program including students from UPNG, two Fijian nationals from the University of South Pacific (USP) and one Tongan national. The first MSSC was a one week long program which focused on Invertebrate Zoology with the students learning in both lectures and hands on practicals. Based on feedback from the participants of the 2013 program, the more improved 2014 MSSC was established.

The 2014 course has been expanded and is currently being held over three weeks allowing the students more time to absorb what is being taught. 23 participants, including two Tongan Nationals and one Fijian have travelled to Nago Island. The three week course has three components:

1. Taught by Duke University, week one of the course focuses on marine invertebrate zoology where participants study the basic anatomy, structure and function of different near shore invertebrates
2. The UPNG will focus its two day lecture material on statistical analysis and marine governance and protected areas.

3. The last two weeks focus on marine ecology through remote observation. Students will learn how to build, maintain and use miniROVs from California based group. Open ROV specialises in building miniROV's that are robust, economical, user friendly and easy to make but which are also very effective monitoring tools.

I will do my best to provide regular updates of our progress here on Nago Island.

William Saleu

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