



FIJI NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

FNUNIKUA



NATIONAL TOPPERS SCHEME - YOUR SHOT AT EXCELLENCE

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GEOLOGY, MINING AND QUARRY - A CAREER
OPTION THROUGH FIJI NATIONAL UNIVERSITY

MARITIME INDUSTRY OFFERS PROMISING
CAREER PROSPECTS

Teaching and Learning changes lives



I am driven by the belief that excellent teaching and learning has a life changing effect. For example, in 2014 a major survey¹ of 30,000 US university alumni was conducted to find out the factors in their university experience that most affected their feelings of well-being and their engagement in the workplace. One of the major factors was found to be having a good teacher who cared about them. When we bear this in mind how can we not do everything possible to enhance the learning of students by enhancing the processes of teaching.

FNU is already engaging in many positive developments all designed to enhance learning and teaching at both the higher education and TVET levels. For example, in each of the Colleges, one faculty member is given teaching remission and a responsibility allowance to quality assure teaching and learning. Nevertheless, I have a number of additional initiatives in mind which are part of my strategic plan for FNU in 2019.

First we need to ensure that the programmes we offer in the University are of a recognised international standard. Currently all programmes that we offer certainly meet the stringent quality standards of the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) otherwise they would not be registered and could not be offered. However, I am looking to add another quality assurance requirement for all our higher education programmes which is that they must be peer reviewed by a panel of experts in the relevant fields, primarily drawn from international universities to ensure that there is no doubt that they meet international quality standards. This means that any qualification obtained from FNU will not only have the seal of approval of the FHEC but also of a panel of international experts who confirm the international quality of the FNU qualifications. This means that FNU graduates will be confident that the quality of their qualifications are a match for any similar qualifications offered anywhere in the world.

I am also concerned to ensure that teaching at FNU is second to none. There are a number of initiatives that I need to mention here. First, beginning in the coming academic year, the University will be embarking on a major programme of converting programmes and courses to an online or blended mode, where appropriate. The objective of this is to ensure that more programmes are available at more campuses and that programmes are able to be completed in full at the campus in which students commenced their studies rather than students started their studies at one campus and then having to relocate to another campus to complete them.

In addition, in order to improve the classroom experience of students, in the 2019 academic year, I will initiate a

Student Consultant programme. In this programme, students are invited to apply and are selected on the basis on their academic qualifications (GPA) and their communications ability. They are then trained in observational and communication techniques. After training, each Student Consultant partners with a faculty member and is contracted to observe all the classes in one course selected by the faculty member and provide feedback on his or her teaching and the classroom experience, all from a student perspective. Experience has shown that this programme has a very positive impact on the teaching performance of the faculty member, the classroom experience of the students taking the course, and the confidence and communication ability of the Student Consultant.

Further teaching enhancement initiatives planned for



*FNU Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching),
Professor James Pounder.*

2019 include a faculty peer observation system where colleagues visit each other's classes and offer constructively critical comments on each other's teaching as a result of their observations. The system mandates that constructive comments aimed at improvements are made. Furthermore, FNU will be introducing a series of Teaching Excellence Awards that will identify excellence FNU teachers who then be invited to join a Faculty Mentoring Scheme in which they will be allocated faculty new to teaching and mentor them in effective teaching approaches and techniques.

FNU has also become increasingly aware that it is not easy for a student graduating fresh from high school or senior school to adjust to University life whether it be at the higher education or TVET level. As a result, FNU is introducing a comprehensive first year experience programme to enable students to make the adjustment to university studies and be successful in their studies. Central to this programme will be what is called a PAL system in which senior students will mentor first year students to facilitate this adjustment. It is the intention that this PAL system will be part of a Learning Centre concept that will also address issues of

how to study at university level and will include initiatives to enhance students' English and Mathematics competence.

Associated with the first year experience programme but not exclusively attached to it is the need to help students who need support for a variety of reasons before this need results in them dropping out of their studies. For this purpose, one of our priorities in 2019 will be to develop a Student Early Alert System. This system will enable faculty members who perceive that particular students in their classes are having some personal issues e.g., indicated by a pattern of good attendance followed by a few weeks of no attendance, to alert all other faculty members presently teaching these students. Faculty members receiving these alerts can then confirm or otherwise that they are experience similar issues with the students in question and student services that can be informed. The University is then in a position to render help to these 'at risk' students before the problem becomes more serious.

These are just a few of the initiatives I have planned for FNU as its new Pro-Vice-Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) and all are driven by the knowledge that excellent teaching and learning changes lives!

Professor James Pounder comes to FNU with a varied and extensive background. Graduating from the London School of Economics in the 1970s he joined the British Gas Corporation and held various management positions until leaving UK to join the Hong Kong Polytechnic University as a Senior Lecturer in Management, a total career change. From 1984 to 2005 he occupied various posts in Hong Kong academic institutions including Head of the Management Studies Department and Director of Business Programmes. In 2005 he left Hong Kong shores for the United Arab Emirates and remained there for seven years working initially for the Higher Colleges of Technology and later Abu Dhabi University where he performed the role of Provost. He returned to Hong Kong in 2005 taking up the position of Director of Teaching and Learning at Lingnan University in Hong Kong, a role which carried overall university responsibility for teaching and learning. He assumed the role of Pro Vice Chancellor (Learning and Teaching) at FNU two months ago. Professor Pounder is married and has five grown up daughters. Professor Pounder holds a bachelor degree in economics, an MBA and doctorates in both business and education.

National Toppers Scheme

allowance of \$1,000 per academic year, accommodation and meals allowance of up to \$2,400 per academic year and monthly allowances of \$100. During the summer term, tuition and accommodation will be paid as per the bill charges of the tertiary institution.

This Scheme enables students, their families and guardians not to worry about the financial cost of attaining tertiary learning. Students are able to focus and excel in their studies.

FNU

Aligning itself with the scholarship and the needs of the nation, FNU provides an excellent opportunity for students to choose from close to 100 programmes listed under the Scheme.

These programmes are offered through FNU's five colleges which are the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), College of Humanities and Education (CHE), College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST), College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS).

Certificate and trade diploma qualification programmes listed under the Scheme such as aircraft engineering, nautical science, animal husbandry, land surveying, applied fisheries, aquaculture, geology, mining and quarry and commercial agriculture are all offered by the Fiji National University.

Access the full programme list: <https://programmes.fnu.ac.fj/>

TSLB

According to Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board Chief Executive Officer Bobby Maharaj, NTS has a dual purpose – providing students an opportunity to study under scholarship and produce a skilled Fijian workforce.

“The programme list is reviewed annually in consultation with the relevant stakeholders. High priority areas means high demand for skilled workers, which means high rate of employment,” said Maharaj.

“We know that not only students, but parents and guardians too will benefit from this scholarship scheme as they would be able to have more savings if their children are on scholarship.”

Maharaj said they have undertaken many outreach programs to schools around the country informing students of the benefits of the National Toppers Scheme.

He said it's important that students broaden their career choices given the changing local and global demand.

“We are telling students that they have so many programmes to choose from. We emphasize all the courses equally. We highlight programmes such as finance, hairdressing, fashion, fish technology, physiotherapy, organic farming, banking and finance and the other combinations these students can choose from.”

Approximately 21,049 students in Fiji are currently supported through the scholarships and loans administered by TSLB.

Repayment Method

Upon graduation, all NTS recipients are required to utilize their skills and qualifications by working in Fiji on a full-time

basis in their sponsored field of training.

For a minimum period, recipients will work for the same duration as the scholarship-funded programme multiplied by 1.5 (For example, if the student was on a 3-year tertiary programme, he/she would serve for 4.5 years).

Scholarship awardees can work in a government agency or industrial establishment. Graduates can also work in private firms upon written approval from TSLB.

For the service repayment to be credited, the awardee must be locally employed or employed with a business legally registered in and physically present in the country.

Application

Students are encouraged to apply for NTS online. All students are required to register on the TSLB website before they are able to proceed with their NTS applications on <http://application.tslb.com.fj/>

For successful application, all students need to provide the required documents and fill the information. Year 13 results with offer letter received from the student's tertiary institution of choice needs to be submitted.

After submission of documents including examination results and offer letter, applications take at least two working days by the TSLB team to be reviewed before a response is issued.

Students are encouraged to submit their online applications before the deadline on Friday 14, December 2018.

FACT FILE

- Students who have submitted their application will be able to log in and check the application status at any time and also print and submit the TSLB Offer Letter, Bond Form and award confirmation letters online.

- Applicants for NTS do not need to fill another Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS) application. Students are encouraged to fill in the NTS application and also indicate their preference for TELS. All unsuccessful applications for NTS will be considered for TELS.

- NTS awards are mostly awarded for studies at a locally approved tertiary institution. However, a limited number of scholarships may be awarded for overseas studies in national priority areas for programs not offered locally on an annual basis.

- \$255 million has been allocated in the 2018-2019 National Budget to fund the schemes offered by TSLB. This has enabled TSLB to support 4,233 more students through its financial aid programmes.

Good news for secondary school students who are intending to enter University next year following an increase of placements under the National Toppers Scheme (NTS).

The Scheme, which is facilitated by the Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB), will in 2019 offer placements for 950 successful students. This is an increase of just over 50% of scholarships from the previous quota of 630.

Students can apply for NTS after successfully completing Year 13 studies or an equivalent foundation studies. The Scheme has a list of priority areas identified by Government in which scholarships are awarded. If students successfully meet the entry requirements, they are given the award.

The list of NTS programmes is aligned to key sectors with the aim to produce more graduates in these fields and boost the workforce. Some key areas identified include tourism, engineering, mining and milling, medicine and health, agriculture, fisheries and forests, technology, social sciences, environmental and marine science, land and town planning, commerce and education.

Some new programmes added to NTS include medical imaging sciences, psychology and counselling, marine management, real estate, project management, horticulture, social and community work and human resource management and industrial relations.

Most of the programmes listed under the National Toppers Scheme are offered by the Fiji National University (FNU).

Benefits

The NTS is fully-funded, students receive benefits such as school fees paid directly to the tertiary institution, book



Geology, Mining and Quarry – a career option through Fiji National University



Students interested in geology, soil, rocks and minerals have the chance to turn their passion into a career path by enrolling at FNU's College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) in the Certificate IV programme in Geology, Mining and Quarrying.

With the identification of Mining as a priority area under Government's National Toppers Scheme (NTS), Year 13 students who completed high school this year or those who have completed foundation studies are able to enrol in the programme through the scholarship.

This programme was developed by FNU in collaboration with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to address the training, skills and knowledge-based needs of the mining and quarrying industry in Fiji.

Course lecturer Vane Seruvakula said with the boom in construction and infrastructure development there was a need to ensure Fiji had sufficient experts in this sector.

Seruvakula added there was also an increase in the interest of foreign and local investors in the development and exploration of mineral sites around the country.

The programme comprises of one year of study plus one year of compulsory industrial attachment and is taught at FNU's Derrick Campus in Samabula, Suva. Students can choose to study either a two-year full-time course or a four-year part-time programme.

Seruvakula said a main component of the programme was on-site field study. Students are given the opportunity to travel around Fiji visiting various quarries and mining sites.

The field study Seruvakula says enables students to apply their theoretical classroom knowledge and have a greater understanding of the subject.

"We have a 2-week long field study around the country. While on-site students will be able to identify the different rocks and soil types present, the various uses of these resources and the machinery and equipment used," Seruvakula said.

"All sites are different as they are operating for different uses

for the markets they are producing materials for."

"We also take students to the laboratories to observe how rocks and minerals are collected, studied, recorded and stored. So they are taught in the areas of lab testing as well as occupational health and safety, project planning, land management and legislation."

She said the programme has gained a lot of interest from students since its inception in 2017. Currently, 20 students are enrolled in the programme, three are females.

"Although it has traditionally been a male-dominated field, more females are showing interest and enrolling in the programme. During our campaign drives we have also spoken to high school students, both males and females, who have expressed intentions of taking this course."

Seruvakula highlighted that students should consider enrolling in the programme as most were land and resource owners.

"Some may have quarries or have land leased out to quarry companies or their mataqali (clan) land is being used and by taking this course they can see if things are being done the right way. This is really a practical programme with skills and knowledge learnt that is very relevant to the current needs of the country and communities," said the lecturer.

"We need to develop our local workforce in this field of expertise and I am positive there are students out there who may be interested in this field of work."

The Certificate IV programme allows students the opportunity to upskill into other fields of specialized study to enhance their skills and knowledge whilst meeting the demands of the workforce.

Career opportunities:

- Lab technicians
- Land surveyors

- GIS (geographical information systems) data collection mapping
- Geologist
- Construction companies
- Quarry Manager/Operator
- Special Advisor
- Export Coordinator
- Mining Supervisor

Minimum entry requirements as per National Toppers Scheme:

- Completion of Year 13 Secondary Education studies
- Completion of Foundation Studies

For further information contact:

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Urban and Regional planning vital for sustainable development

Traffic congestion, overcrowding, informal settlements, poor sanitation and pollution are some major challenges that municipal planners face when creating master plans or undertaking infrastructure development in towns and cities.

The prevalence of informal settlements is an issue in many countries. Studies attribute this mainly to rural and urban drift – movement of people close to towns and cities in search of employment opportunities and tapping into the developed utility and infrastructure.

In hindsight it is important that all development plans consider long-term environmental and economic viable practices to promote sustainable management of resources and ecosystems.

Therefore it is important that planners ensure this multi-disciplinary approach is embedded in all urban and regional development master plans.

Encouraging the revitalization of abandoned fields, finding alternatives for the construction of new land transportation avenues, ensuring access to affordable housing for everyone and designing ‘green’ infrastructure, are just a few examples of the sustainable options that planners develop.

In order to optimize the use of land and other resources, such alternatives are vital for a developing country like Fiji.

To ensure we have a strong number of graduates in this sector, the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) developed the Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Honours) programme in 2015.

CEST lecturer in Urban and Regional Planning programme, Yuyun Qomariyah, said urban and regional planning is extremely important as healthy, thriving communities and cities require careful planning to function well.

“Urban and Regional Planning takes into consideration the care and enhancement of the quality of life for people in cities and regions,” said Qomariyah an Urban and Regional Expert.

“Fiji is going through a rapid development phase and we need to make sure these are being done in accordance with environmental and economic sustainable practices. Through this programme, we are trying to ensure that the country meets the demand of experts in this field.”

Qomariyah said the College works closely with all stakeholders to ensure programme delivery linked to expectations of employers.

“The uniqueness of Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning is that, other than New Zealand and Australia, FNU is the only university in the South Pacific region that offers such a programme,” said Qomariyah.



Siteri Jitoko (first from left) with colleagues from CEST during the Smart-City Challenge held in Suva.

The College is currently working towards attaining accreditation from the Planning Institute of Australia and the Asian Planning School Association.

Siteri Jitoko, a first year Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning student said she was excited to have chosen a field of study which was developing her skills, knowledge and connections needed to promote active change in communities through proper planning initiatives.

Jitoko said it was interesting to learn how to use population and economic growth projections to allocate resources and anticipate infrastructure and public service needs.

“This programme is like a total package where you get to work with technology, communities and nature. It includes knowledge of computer programs such as AutoCad, Geographic Information Systems (GIS mapping software), communication skills, cooperative problem solving as well as data collection and analysis,” said Jitoko.

The youngster said, with the amount of collaboration required with public officials, engineers, architects and developers, attending meetings and managing projects, this career is suited for those ready to take on challenges.

“Apart from the compulsory six months’ industrial attachment student need in order to graduate, in just my first year of studies I have been exposed to real industry situations

through the practical sessions,” Jitoko added.

Professional Outlook

There is a range of employment opportunities available for Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Honours) graduates. Planners work in rural, suburban areas and large cities. They function in the public sector within national level and local governments. They also work for non-governmental organisations and within private sector, in real estate development companies or multi-disciplinary consulting firms.

Some employment opportunities for graduates include: Urban and Regional Planner, City/Town Planner, Senior or Principal Planners, Infrastructure Planner, Transportation Planner, Facilities Manager, Historic Buildings Inspector/Conservation Officer, Housing Manager/Officer, Local government officer, Civil Service Administrator, Community Development Worker, Planning Facilitator, Environmental Manager, Estate Agent and much more.

Bachelor of Urban and Regional Planning (Honours) is identified as a Priority Area under Land/Town Planning in government’s National Toppers Scheme.

Interest in Technology inspires Chand to study CSIS

Technology is an essential part of our lives today. From commuting to school to purchasing a movie ticket, technology plays a key role in our developing world. Without it, some compare it to living in the dark ages.

20-year-old Cyral Chand (pictured) has always had an interest in technology. He complemented his interest by taking computer studies in school. Chand says there’s so much to learn through the internet and he spends a fair bit of time browsing different sites daily exploring and learning new things.

“I always looked forward to computer programming and computer networking classes in school which I really enjoyed. I knew I wanted to look at having a degree in this area,” said Chand.

Chand is a second year Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information System (CSIS) student at the Fiji National University (FNU).

The CSIS programme is offered through FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

“I chose CSIS because once I complete this programme, there’s various professions which I can choose from like technical writer, web developer, computer hardware engineer, information system analyst, computer network architect, software developer, computer programmer, database administrator and many more,” Chand commented with enthusiasm.

“FNU helped me become more practical and critical, whatever I learnt in class are the things I can now apply in the real world. For example, I can now successfully break down computer related problems, diagram it out and use logic in each component. This programme has a strong theoretically component,” he said.

“The things which interest me most is I get to learn how to write codes in different programming languages like C++ and Java. It also shows how computing devices are connected to a network and how data is transmitted. I am glad to follow my



passion through this programme,” said Chand.

The Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information System (CSIS) is listed under the National Toppers Scheme (NTS) and is offered through FNU Campus in Nasinu and Lautoka.

Program Description

This Bachelor of Science in Computer Science and Information System programme aims to develop student’s knowledge and skills in specific areas of Computer science and Information Systems to meet the demands of academia, industries, private and government sectors.

Students can also choose one of the following subjects such as Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry, Biology, and Education with or Computer Science or Information Systems for studying double major.

This programme will help students to:

- Demonstrate the understanding of the fundamentals of Computer Science and Information Systems and Information Technology.
- Enable them to solve problems intelligently.
- Meet the needs of ICT of Fiji and the region.
- Enable to establish the IT industry in Fiji.

Duration

3 years

Minimum Qualification

The minimum entry requirement for this programme is a pass in year 13 (i.e. Minimum of 200 out of 400)

For further information regarding this programme contact: Rajneel Richard Narayan | Executive Officer – CEST | Phone: 338 1044 Ext. 1006 | Email: EOEng@fnu.ac.fj



Maritime Industry offers promising career prospects

The maritime industry offers a wide range of excellent job prospects for young people whether it be in ports, on board ships and in organisations linked to this multi-billion dollar sector.

It is one of the fastest growing sectors in the world and provides employees flexibility allowing them to move across jobs and grow throughout their professional career.

The Fiji National University (FNU) through the Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) offers a wide range of study programmes in this discipline such as marine engineering, marine simulation, nautical science, safety and survival as well as shipbuilding and fisheries technology.

Two new Level 5 Diploma programmes; Diploma in Nautical Science and Diploma in Marine Engineering were also launched this year.

FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey while speaking on the programme said since Fiji is a maritime nation and there's a great need for well-trained cadets, engineers, navigators and sea captains.

Professor Healey said with thoroughly trained professionals, the local shipping industry will continue to prosper.

"The innovative new programmes accredited by the Maritime Safety Authority of Fiji (MSAF) leads to a 240-credit University diploma, at the same time completing the requirements for the Class 5, 4 and 3 International Maritime Organisation (IMO) professional qualifications," said VC Healey.

"The new diplomas are designed to be extremely flexible. After

Semester 1, a student will have completed the IMO Class 5 course and can go at sea and get the necessary experience to qualify for a Class 5 Certificate of Competence with MSAF. He or she can then return for Semester 2 and complete the IMO Class 4 course, go to sea and so on."

"Students can either complete the new Diplomas in two years, followed by a six-month internship or spread their studies over up to five years and complete the sea time needed for MSAF Certificates of Competence up to Class 3," Professor Healey added.

Acting Chief Executive Officer of FMA, Mahesa Abeynayake said students also get international sea time through arrangements made by the Academy with selected shipping companies.

He said this provides valuable exposure to students to get a feel of working in a state-of-the-art ship.

"The Academy is working with a number of overseas companies for our student internships. At the same time, we are also trying to get the Fijian shipping companies to invest in modern ships," said Abeynayake.

"Our students have had the opportunity to work onboard international shipping company such as Swire Shipping," he added.

Swire Shipping is the brand name for all liner shipping services operated by The China Navigation Company, which operates a global network of multi-purpose liner services, drybulk and bulk logistics services through its three business divisions: Swire Shipping, Swire Bulk and Swire Bulk Logistics.

The China Navigation Company is the largest trainer and recruiter of professionals in the maritime industry.

Certificates and Diplomas in Nautical Sciences and Engineering has been recognised by the Fijian Government as a special priority area under the National Toppers Scheme (NTS).

Sea-going careers	Land-based jobs
On Deck	Ship Operator
Captain	Cargo Inspector
Navigation Officers	Marine Inspector
Deck Watchkeeper	Shipping Agent
Able Seafarer Deck	Marine Safety Specialist
Engine Room	Boarding Agent
Marine Engineer	Marine Security Specialist
Engineer Watchkeeper	Ship builders
Engine Watch Rating	Academics
Electrician	

For further information regarding this programme contact:
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Become a Human Resource generalist with FNU

In today's corporate world, employees are seen as the most valuable asset of an organisation. The onus then rests on the human resource department to lead all aspects of staff management to ensure its success as well as achieve employee satisfaction.

Seeing the growing need for human resource and industrial relations specialists, Fijian government through the National Toppers Scheme (NTS) has included Bachelor of Commerce in Industrial Relations (IR) and Human Resource Management (HRM) programme as one of the priority area.

The Fiji National University (FNU) offers this programme through the College of Business Hospitality and Tourism (CBHTS).

CBHTS Management, Industrial Relations and OHS, Assistant Lecturer Jone Toua, said the programme prepares students with the knowledge to build a career in IR, public policy and workplace relations.

"I am so glad government has included IR and HRM as a priority area. In the western division this course is available at our Namaka and Ba Campuses. This is wonderful news for students here as they don't have to travel to Suva," said Toua.

"If students want to work closely with people, then IR and HRM is a good programme to study. There is a great demand for HR professionals in the country."

Toua said entry into HR studies is flexible as students from both science and arts background can apply as long as they meet the minimum entry requirement. Students need a pass in Year 13 with 50 percent or more marks in English.



"Graduates of IR and HRM have employment opportunities in a diverse range of fields rather than just confined to an area of specializations. Apart from been a HR professional, other employment opportunities include human resources manager, industrial relations officer, management consultant or leaning and development manager," he said.

According to Toua the IR and HRM programme offered by FNU gives an inclusive understanding of all facets of employment relations, including the study of labour laws, human resource management, industrial relations policy and a global perspective of international human resources.

"Students will study about the two interrelated components in IR and HRM, which are the people and the processes within an organisation and the theory and practice of relationship between employers, employees, government, unions and other regulatory bodies," he said.

Priya Chand (pictured) from Ba is one of several students

pursuing this programme through the Fiji National University.

Chand who will be graduating soon, said she chose to study Bachelor of Commerce IR and HRM because she was interested in becoming a HR generalist.

She said with the programmes being offered at Ba Campus, it was a welcome bonus.

"I've always been interested in this programme and I was so glad that it was offered in Ba. This meant that I didn't have to travel to Suva to complete my studies," said Chand.

Chand said she enjoyed studying the wide range of disciplines that were incorporated in the programme.

"IR and HRM programme was just that! The interdisciplinary nature of this programme at FNU gave me the opportunity to take courses from many areas of interest, namely Economics, Finance and Accounting. In addition, the lectures in the programme were very knowledgeable and extremely accessible," said the former Ministry of Agriculture employee.

Chand said its exciting to learn and understand the strategic roles in running of organisations and how best to utilize human assets.

"My advice to prospective students is that this programme is probably the most practical major a Commerce student can take as you will learn about labour issues from various angles, human resources gaps in organisations and so forth," she added.

Chand plans to pursue her post graduate studies in IR and HRM to quench her thirst for more knowledge in the growing field of human capital.

Venture into an exciting career in Tourism



For the past two decades, the tourism industry has been Fiji's main economic driver. It provides direct and indirect employment to an estimated 45, 000 Fijians spread around the country.

In a statement last year, former Minister for Industry, Trade and Tourism, Hon Faiyaz Siddiq Koya stated that in 2017 Fiji welcomed 842, 884 visitors to our shores – a 6.4 percent growth compared to 792, 320 in 2016.

The famous Fijian hospitality, along with the pristine tropical setting, connectivity and low crime rate are considered as the platform to this thriving industry.

For employees, meeting and interacting with new people from all corners of work, making lifelong friendship and sharing with them a 'slice of Fijian heaven' are some of the benefits of the job.

For young Apisai Nagi, pursuing a study programme in the tourism sector wasn't a difficult decision.

Nagi, who hails from Ba is currently enrolled in the Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management programme at FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) at Namaka Campus.

According to Nagi meeting tourists and understanding their different cultural backgrounds have been key highlights in his budding career.

"This is one of few professions where you interact with people from different nationalities and backgrounds on a daily

basis. It keeps employees on their toes. We have to ensure that our customer service skills are always top notch," he said.

The soft spoken Nagi believes going the extra mile and making people feel at ease are important traits in all tourism sectors whether you work at a hotel, restaurant, as travel agent, flight attendant or tour guide.

"Customer service is key part of the hospitality industry. Regardless of how rude and demanding the customer can be, it is important to keep clam and always be customer friendly."

"We all know that poor customer service has the potential of ruining the reputation tourism operators or even Fiji as a holiday destination. If customer encounters a bad experience, then he will not use that supplier again nor will he advise anyone to use it."

"This will mean that we will lose out on revenue and it will affect our bottom line. Some operators can also close if the situation gets out of hand."

Nagi said during the course of their programme, they learn about the importance of personal and professional etiquette and customer service.

"I can confidently say that this programme is preparing me well to join the workforce."

The Year 2 student said they undertake practical sessions every Friday whereby they visit different hotels and put into practice the theory they learn in the classroom.

"This for me is very interesting and an integral part of my

studies as I get to meet guests and prepare myself for the real life work culture," said Nagi.

"We also get to learn from the experienced staff already in the industry on how services are delivered."

"With these practical sessions students get a greater insight of how the industry operates and what is expected of us when we join the workforce."

According to the former Minister Koya, the visitor earnings reached a record \$1.6 billion for 2016, a 2.7 percent increase from the previous year. Over the last five years, on average earnings have increased by approximately five percent. This upward growth trend in earnings has been confirmed by the 2017 International Visitor Survey (IVS).

The IVS is a robust qualitative and qualitative survey undertaken by the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Tourism which is collected directly from international visitors.

Nagi said with an increase in tourist visitor arrivals and steady growth of the industry, employment prospects for graduates will also increase.

The compulsory industrial attachment of four months also greatly assists students with securing employment.

Students can study the Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management programme under the government's Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS) or National Toppers Scheme (NTS).

Lata pursues studies in Agriculture

Agricultural studies have greatly evolved over the decades, it's no longer seen as a laborious task working with manual equipment and toiling the land, but one that is considered to be fast-moving and high-tech.

A love for the outdoors and playing with animals inspired 19-year-old Payal Lata (pictured) to take up Bachelor of Science in Agriculture through the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF).

"I've always had a love for plants and animals and I guess that's what drove me to enrol at FNU," said Lata.

"It all started from helping my parents in the garden when I was in high school. As I grew, so did my interest in farming and gardening."

Lata comes from a rural farming settlement in Nausori and understands the challenges faced by farmers.

The first year BSc Agriculture student said she was fortunate to receive assistance under the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS).

Lata described the programme as interesting as they were able to undertake a lot of practical training.

"I have already been exposed to a number of things. I have learnt how to do air layering, I have learnt about the different type of viruses, how to culture bacteria and so many other things," she added.

"I wish to become a Crop Extension Officer but there's a lot of other scope for students if they undertake this programme. They can become field officers, biosecurity officers, agricultural consultant, plant breeder, farm and estates manager."

"I thank FNU for offering such programmes which will not



only prepare graduates for workforce, but also enable us to share our skills with the community," said Lata.

Program Description

The Bachelor of Science in Agriculture programme equips students with technical expertise and research skills in the area of horticulture, agronomy, plant protection, crop improvement, agricultural engineering, postharvest and agricultural marketing.

Graduates will have acquired an education at a level that will equip them for employment, self-employment and lay the

foundations for a lifetime of continuous learning and personal development.

The Bachelor of Science in Agriculture is listed under the National Toppers Scheme and is offered through FNU Campus in Koronivia.

Duration

3 years 3 months (full-time studies)

Minimum Qualification

- Applicant must have passed Year 13 or equivalent with a minimum of 250 marks.
- Applicants who have passed foundation course with English, Mathematics and Biology or Agriculture Biology are also eligible for admission.
- Applicants may also be admitted to the programme who may not meet the requirement on the years of continuous education progression, but who are able to demonstrate their ability to succeed in the respective programmes on the basis of their maturity, work experience or prior learning. The Dean may require such an applicant to sit for any specific or general examination as a prerequisite for any such enrolment, or may restrict enrolment only to certain prescribed units that must be passed to progress further.

For further information regarding this programme contact:
Angelina Singh | Executive Officer – CAFF | Phone: 347 9200
Ext. 5001 | Email: eo-caff@fnu.ac.fj

Learning and growing from life challenges



Kashif Nasibdar with his family after the graduation ceremony.

Self-belief and hard work are two virtues that 42-year-old Kashif Nasibdar holds dear to his heart and applies religiously in his daily life.

Nasibdar is no stranger to the Fiji National University (FNU) having spent a fair bit of his life here as a working student. He is very proud to be a top achiever having been awarded a Gold Medal after graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce degree majoring in Accounting & Finance in 2013. This programme is now available as part of the National Toppers Scheme (NTS).

Unlike most students Nasibdar's tertiary education journey began after spending some time in the workforce. His first enrolment was in the Diploma in Accounting programme in 2004. By this time, Nasibdar had completed employment with four different companies and had significant work experience.

Nasibdar was born and raised in Suva and is the eldest of two siblings. He attended Samabula Primary School from 1982 to 1989 and attained secondary school education at Mahatma Gandhi Memorial High School from 1990 to 1994.

Responsibility and leadership arrived earlier than expected for Nasibdar due to the demise of his father. It became the youngster's responsibility to shoulder his family's obligation.

"It was not an easy task. I knew I had to fill in my father's shoes being the eldest in my family. I saw it as a challenge and with support from my family I set off on this journey," said Nasibdar.

Tertiary Education and Career

Currently, Nasibdar works as the Senior Team Administrator - Finance at the New Zealand High Commission in Fiji. He has been employed at the High Commission for just over a decade and finds it rewarding.

"I love my job. I have been here for 12 years and I must say the High Commission is a very good employer and has contributed immensely towards my development. I get to learn a lot and I have developed both personally and professionally."

Looking back, Nasibdar said due to the difficult situation he was placed in while growing up, he had to forego his dream of pursuing tertiary education after high school.

"With the responsibility placed on me and the unaffordable cost of education, I decided to seek employment. My first employment was a part time job at a printing press," said Nasibdar with a grin.

After two years, he had an opportunity to work for Vishnu Prasad and Company, a Chartered Accounting firm. This was an opportunity he was not going to miss, as his late father always encouraged him to pursue a career in the Accounting field.

Although the job was of an Office Boy, it was one step closer towards fulfilling his father's wishes. After a few months he was given the opportunity to work with the accounting team and later on at some point also assisted the Auditor in his work.

"My main aim was to learn as much as I could. I knew I had a foot in the door and just needed to pick up as much as I could about the profession," said Nasibdar.

After spending two fruitful years at the Accounting firm, he moved on to work for United Apparel. He spent a further two years there before joining Natural Foods Fiji Limited (NFFL). Unlike his previous job this was a more demanding role as he was the only person responsible for the company accounts.

While in employment, Nasibdar always knew he needed to attain proper qualification. He turned to FNU after his two and a half year stint at NFFL.

"Without FNU I would not be where I am today," he added.

Seeking further Education

"Once I attended a job interview and was told that I had all the necessary experience and knew the work, however, the most junior staff they had was a Diploma Graduate and therefore, they could not offer me the job because I lacked proper qualification. This is when I decided that I will pursue further education," said Nasibdar.

After much research, Nasibdar concluded that the Training and Productivity Authority of Fiji (TPAF), now the National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC), was the best option to pursue his education.

"Fees was affordable and the course outline was very practical and therefore, suitable for my needs," said Nasibdar.

He started the Diploma in Accounting programme in 2004 as a part-time student and completed it in 2006. While studying he started working for DHL Express (Fiji) Limited and served there for two years, enhancing his knowledge and experience on the way. In 2006, he applied for the Finance Officer role at the New Zealand High Commission and was called for an interview. It was at this point in time that he realised the importance of his studies at TPAF.

"I realised that the modules I was studying at TPAF were teaching me exactly what the interviewers were looking for. The course outline at TPAF was very practical and because of this reason, I must say that TPAF and FNU is an institution that I would highly recommend," said Nasibdar.

He was offered the job a few days later. Nasibdar started off as the Finance Officer, which was later restructured to Team Administrator - Finance. In recognition of his experience and expertise at the High Commission, he was promoted to Senior Team Administrator - Finance in 2017.

He later decided to further his education and completed a Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting this year.

Nasibdar believes that his commitment to his work, combined with his Bachelor of Commerce degree and a Post Graduate Diploma in Accounting are leading him towards achieving his late father's dream and setting an example for his children to follow.

Family Life, Interests and Advice

Nasibdar is married and has one daughter and a son. He prioritises spending time with his family during his spare time and is also an avid soccer player.

"My late father is my biggest inspiration. I have always followed his teachings to the best of my ability and tried to achieve the best in life. It is important to have a supportive family to enable you to achieve your goals. I'm blessed to have a loving and supportive family," he said.

In the next five years Nasibdar plans to attain a Masters in Accounting through FNU. His advice to current and future students of FNU is to remain dedicated and follow their passion.

"We choose and make our own destination, so we should make the most of the opportunities that come our way to ensure there is no room for regrets," said Nasibdar.

"As students make the most of the time you have while in university. If you are productive you will certainly excel in your studies."

"Whatever you do, do it with your heart. Work hard to achieve your goals and keep learning as there is no end to education."

The Fiji National University's Nikua is a monthly newsletter which aims to promote the University's activities to the wider community.

This newsletter is produced by the University Marketing and Communications team.

For views or comments please email mprc@fnu.ac.fj or contact 3394000.

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FNU NIKUA wants to hear from you

FNU NIKUA welcomes submissions by staff and students for publication in the newsletter. Please send your suggestions, comments or articles for consideration to mprc@fnu.ac.fj



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