



FIJI NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY

FNUNIKUA



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DREAMING BIG

VC's MESSAGE TO FIRST YEAR STUDENTS

THE EXEMPLARY ENTREPRENEUR

FNU Vice Chancellor's message to first-year students



As Vice Chancellor of Fiji National University (FNU), it is my great pleasure to welcome you to the FNU family. Whether you are a high-school leaver, a mature entrant or a postgraduate returning for further study, I hope that you find your

time at the University enriching and fulfilling.

We live in a global knowledge economy. Higher education is the key to building a career that allows you to fulfil your potential. The world is changing fast. Fiji is quickly becoming an advanced developed nation. Artificial intelligence, big data and robotics will destroy many existing jobs and create occupations not yet envisaged.

Education and training is the only path to success in this new global economy. At Fiji National University, you will acquire new knowledge and competencies. More importantly, you will develop the critical thinking skills to continue learning and adapting for the world to come. This is an exciting time to be a student.

As you start out on your life as a student, try to embrace all the opportunities that the University has to offer. Immerse yourself in your studies. Explore the wonderful range of digital learning resources that our library has curated from all over the world. Our digital infrastructure is as good as any university on the planet. Thanks to our investment in virtual resources, you can enjoy superfast broadband on our university network and unlimited free wifi on your own

devices anywhere on our campuses.

University is a place to discover how you are and who you want to be. Alongside your studies, you have the opportunity to broaden your horizons by making new friends, experiencing new arts and cultures, playing new sports and learning new hobbies. All our students are members of the Fiji National University Students Association (FNUSA). The University works closely with FNUSA to provide you with a holistic and supportive experience while you are a student.

For many of our students, joining the University will be the first time you have lived away from home. For the first time in your lives, no-one will tell you when to get up, when to go to class and when to go to bed. For some of you, this new freedom will be exhilarating. For others, it will be initially unsettling. Try to balance your new social life with your studies. University is a time to have fun, but remember that you are ultimately here to develop your skills and knowledge and gain a qualification. Leaving university without graduating because of an overexuberant social life amounts to a grossly overpriced night out.

Some new students make the mistake of thinking that academic studies are just about passing examinations and believe that university life is all about partying at the weekends and painful cramming in the week. This is not a recipe for success. If you have chosen a subject that you enjoy, learning and debating about the topics you are studying will be fun. Many of the FNUSA student societies and clubs are for students who want to learn more through extracurricular activities. For the last couple of years, I

have coached the team that takes part in the Fiji universities' European Union televised quiz, and I have seen first-hand how our students have excelled outside the classroom.

As a former student who has studied at five different universities, and a parent of (so far) four university students, I know one of your concerns will be financial budgeting. You are lucky to live in a country which provides generous support to university students, in the form of National Toppers Scholarships (NTS) and loans via the Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS). In principle, there is no reason why you should struggle financially given the tuition loans and study allowances available.

However, I know from direct and indirect (via my children) personal experience that, however generous the scholarships or loans, it is sometimes hard to budget when trying to balance an active social life with serious studies. I have eaten enough baked beans and pot noodles to offset a great night out to know what I am talking about. The only advice I can offer is to make sure you set aside enough money for the things that really matter – food, rent, bus fares, books – before heading out into town with your friends.

Welcome once again to Fiji National University. Benefit from everything that the University has to offer, succeed in your studies, set yourselves up for a successful career (or retrain for a new career), make friends and learn to be the person you want to become.

A university education is the most important investment you will ever make in your lives.

Most of all, enjoy yourselves.

First Year at the University

10 Tips for your First Year at FNU

Congrats and welcome to the Fiji National University!

Now that your tedious enrolment process is out of the way, it is time for the good stuff: prepare yourself for all aspects of the journey ahead, from new friends to difficult assignments to major life decisions. Here are a few tips to make your journey a little easier.

01 IT ISN'T LIKE HIGH SCHOOL

No really! You've probably heard this one before, but it really is true. No one's going to be calling home if you don't show up – you have to get yourself in that lecture seat! At uni, you're in charge of your own learning, and you're only going to get out as much as you put in. So, make sure you give 110%!

02 GET INVOLVED IN ORIENTATION WEEK

Orientation Week is a chance to get to know your new environment. The Registrar's Office will have all kinds of information set up about clubs and facilities, and also some general need-to-know things about how your new school operates. Check out the student clubs so you can meet a few people with similar interests. Having a few friends never hurts. The Orientation Week is from: 28th January - 1st February

03 SORT OUT YOUR ACCOMMODATION EARLY ON

FNU is undergoing some major upgrades and there are some exciting new facilities which are being developed for you! Woot Woot!!

You wanted better accommodation and WE HEARD YOU therefore one of our main upgrades currently underway are student hostels. Unfortunately, this means we are temporarily operating on low room availability, therefore, rooms available may be limited to a few students only. Our tip for you? Make off-campus accommodation arrangements as soon as possible as places tend to run out quickly as we get closer to start date. These can be found in your local newspapers, online and on Social Media sites such as Facebook.

04 DON'T BE AFRAID TO ASK FOR HELP

Your lectures may seem pretty intimidating, with hundreds of people all sitting in the one room, but your lecturers and tutors all understand how scary the experience might be, because at some stage they were first-year students themselves. Be the brave one and ask that nagging question. Trust us, half the class will thank you.

05 TAKE SOME TIME TO LEARN WHERE EVERYTHING IS

Make some time to come in on a day when you don't have lectures, or maybe just come in early. However you manage it, it's worth taking some time to just walk around campus. Get to know where everything is: the offices, the best places to eat, the lecture halls. Make sure you know where you need to go

06 EAT PROPERLY

It's impossible to concentrate on an empty stomach, so remember to always get something to eat whenever you're starting to feel hungry. If you're worried about your wallet, try throwing in a roti parcel or banana sandwich every other day.

07 THE LIBRARY IS AMAZING

Seriously, it is. Don't doubt the power of the library, especially a university library. Stumped on an assignment? Not sure where to go next? Or just want to kill some time? University libraries are amazing resources and should be utilised as often as possible. If you're not sure how to find what you're looking for, though, remember point number 4 and ask one of the librarians for help.

08 STAY ON TOP OF YOUR FINANCES

It can be easy to forget an appointment with your sponsor or that deadline by which you had to submit a simple form. If you let your finances slip, however, you can quickly find yourself in a lot of trouble. Make sure you're sticking with your budget throughout the semester and that you always know the status of your finances. Prepare a monthly budget to keep on top of things and don't let us catch you "shouting" your mates at O'reillys every weekend.

09 SHOOT FOR PERFECT ATTENDANCE IN YOUR CLASSES

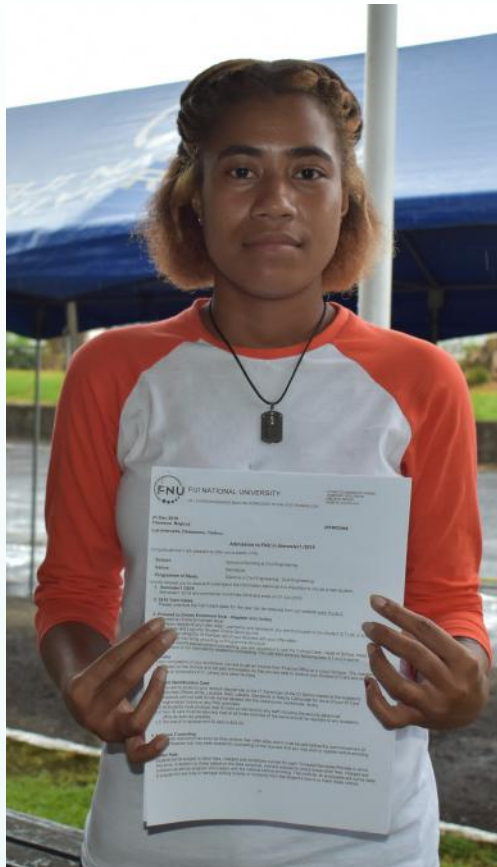
Sure, this goal may be hard to achieve – but at least shoot for it. Students who go out of their way to attend class, no matter what, in this context are demonstrating the kind of work ethic that will set them up for success!

10 MAKE THE MOST OF IT!

Keeping these sorts of things in mind as you find your way around your new campus and learn to manage your new study load will help to make your transition into tertiary education a happy and exciting one. Stay on top of your studies, make friends, join extra-curricular activities, pursue your hobbies and do at least one thing per semester that puts you out of your comfort zone (legally ofcourse ;)

**All the best First Years
GO FNU!!**

Bogirua first in family to attend university



three siblings. Her elder two brothers were not fortunate to attain tertiary education but managed to secure employment after high school.

Bogirua feels proud to be the first in her family to have successfully enrolled to pursue tertiary studies.

“I have worked really hard in my high school days and I believe this is the reward of my many sacrifices, late night studies and so forth.”

The soft-spoken lass has strong interests in design and drawing. This passion led her to opt for Technical Drawing (TD) in Year 9 when she was given the choice to study either Home Economics or Technical Drawing.

She fondly remembered attending TD classes from Year 9 to Year 13.

“I was the only female in the TD class and it was fun mostly because I enjoyed drawing and designing. It actually gave me an idea of how the construction industry works and the importance of accuracy in design for successful structures to be built.”

“Being the only female in a male-dominated subject was never an issue for me. It was just like any other class. We used to help each other out to make sure that everyone understands the concepts being taught by the teacher.”

Bogirua used to score the highest marks in TD in her class.

“Since I used to get better marks, boys often sought help from me in understanding concepts and sometimes I asked them for assistance. It was actually a fun filled class.”

“Because I loved drawing and designing, the interest to study this subject before exams was always there. Being the top scorer in my class boosted my interests to explore the options related to this field.”

“I decided that Civil Engineering will be the best option for me and I applied to study this programme at FNU.”

Bogirua said she chose to study at FNU because of the practical training and attachments students undertake before graduating.

“I have come across family and friends who have studied at FNU and had to go through the attachment process before graduating; giving them an opportunity to get a feel of a real work environment. They even managed to secure good job after graduation.”

“This is what caught my attention and now I am looking forward to this new journey.”

“I am eager for classes to commence so I can make new friends, experience university life and even play some rugby as well soccer which are my hobbies.”

Bogirua will undertake her studies through funding from the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS).

Filomena Bogirua desires to provide her family with a better life and she is on the first step of achieving her goal after successfully enrolling at the Fiji National University (FNU).

Bogirua (pictured above) will pursue a Diploma in Civil Engineering at FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

The 19-year old, who hails from the village of Nasau, Wainibuka in Tailevu, said it has been hard witnessing her parents struggle to make ends meet. Bogirua hopes their fortunes will change after she graduates and secures employment.

“My parents are farmers and we relied on the sale of root crops to cater for our expenses. I’m the first from my family to attend a university and this is a proud moment for us. I also understand the responsibilities I have on my shoulders and I look forward to working hard to achieving my goals,” said Bogirua.

“I have always appreciated the efforts of my parents to ensure that all my educational needs are met. Currently, I may not be able to do much for them but I want to excel in my chosen career and ensure that they are well looked after.”

The Tailevu teenager is the youngest out of the



CMNHS academic staff during the enrolment drive.

CMNHS excited to receive new students

Hundreds of students hoping to become future professionals in the medical sector joined the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), the region’s premier tertiary medical education provider, training medical students from Fiji and the Pacific since 1885.

The College has modern training facilities and boasts a comprehensive collection of Health training opportunities, including medicine, nursing, dentistry, public health and most of the allied health sciences.

“At the College, we have a strong desire to create an environment where students thrive to achieve maximum potential while learning,” CMNHS College Dean Dr William May said.

“We aim to graduate highly proficient, reflective, ethical, compassionate and adaptable leaders who are dedicated to the improvement of health outcomes, particularly, in the people of the Pacific.”

Dr May said the College believed that students should have confidence in the quality of their education and their capacity to make a real difference when they graduate.

Within the College, the students will see a focus on higher education which sees development of teaching and learning, and applied research in partnership with the Ministry of Health, Ministry Education, key donor agencies and other regional universities.

Dr Amelia Turagabeci, Head of Department of Epidemiology and Environmental Health said their courses are tailor made to meet national needs.

“Our programmes address issues such as NCD’s (Non Communicable Diseases) which are of national and regional interest.”

“We are very excited in this new year to receive our new students. So far their (new students) secondary school academic records are very encouraging,” Dr Turagabeci said.

According to the senior academic it was important for new students to adjust quickly to the new learning environment and make use of the study resources available.

“Although there is a lot of information online, there are also more components to learn from in lectures and attending them is very important,” she said.

Enthusiastic students accompanied by parents and guardians flocked to the CMNHS Pasifika Campus to attend the counseling sessions.

Newly enrolled student Tushal Prasad said he was ecstatic to join CMNHS and was looking forward to pursuing studies in the Bachelor of Physiotherapy programme.

“This (CMNHS) will be a challenging environment for me and I have to make a lot of sacrifices and manage my time wisely,” Prasad said.

Timoa Arawaia, from Kiribati, is a continuing second year Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences student, who said the facilities at the College were very good.

“It was a bit of a challenge to adjust to the life here but the lecturers are so supportive that it made the transition simpler.”

“The classmates are so friendly and I love studying here (CMNHS),” she said.

Another student, Achal Chand will pursue her studies in Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science this academic year.

Chand, 18, from Nadi, said she had always wanted to study at CMNHS.

“I am very excited about studying at FNU and I hope to successfully complete my degree,” the former Korovuto College student said.

Her mother, Pushpa Chand, said she felt emotional that her daughter was now starting University studies.

“I feel very good that my daughter is going to study to become something in life which will help her in the future,” she said.

Island girl

pursues Fisheries studies

Driven by her passion for conserving and protecting marine resources, Raori Bauro has enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Fisheries programme at the Fiji National University (FNU).

The 23-year-old Rabian will undertake her studies at FNU’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), Koronivia Campus.

Bauro said growing up in islands and always being surrounded by the sea, she is passionate about safe-guarding the environment.

“Fisheries and Aquaculture is one of the leading industries in the world. Fiji is surrounded by the sea and we have a

good fisheries industry. So to ensure its sustainability we have to protect it. That’s something I’m passionate about and the reason I’ve joined FNU,” said Bauro.

Reminiscing her days back on the island, Bauro said the sea had been an integral part of her life.

“I have six siblings and we all spent much of our time outside, swimming and going fishing,” she said.

“I ensured that we do not exploit the environment. I always tell my family and friends not catch under-sized fish or catch fish during their breeding season as this causes fish depletion,” said Bauro.

The former Naitasiri High School student said she is excited to commence her tertiary education at FNU.

“It wasn’t a hard decision to make when it came to choosing my career as I had known from friends and teachers that FNU offers this particular programme,” added Bauro.

“I would encourage anyone with an interest in fisheries and natural resource management to enroll for this programme,” she said. During her time at FNU, Bauro hopes to learn how to conduct survey of aquatic life, investigate fish mortalities and study water quality.

“I know after I graduate with a degree in Fisheries science, I will have employment options in the field of aquaculture, fish processing export and import or even taking up teaching positions in fisheries,” said the freshmen.



Raori Bauro is all smiles after her enrolment at CAFF.

Student Profiles



Name: Ashal Ashwariya Prasad
Age: 18

Programme of Study: Bachelor of Commerce (Industrial Relations & Human Resource Management and Management), College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS).

Why I chose FNU: I chose to study at FNU because I know it will provide me with the skills I need to succeed professionally.

Career ambitions: I aim to be a human resources officer and work for a reputable organisation.



Name: Mere Ledua
Age: 18

Programme of Study: Certificate III in Electrical Engineering, College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

Why I chose FNU: FNU provides the theoretical and practical tertiary education that I require to excel in my field of study.

Career ambitions: After I graduate from FNU, I will find employment as an electrical engineer and support my family.



Name: Deepa Anjali Lata
Age: 18

Programme of Study: Bachelor of Science (Biology and Chemistry), College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

Why I chose FNU: I made the decision to study at FNU because it is a well-known tertiary institution and provides quality education to all its students.

Career ambitions: When I graduate I aim to either become a teacher or enter find employment in my field of expertise.



Name: Motea Batitaukei
Age: 19

Programme of Study: Bachelor of Education (Primary), College of Humanities and Education (CHE).

Why I chose FNU: FNU has produced highly-skilled graduate teachers over the years and I choose to be part of this institution and receive the training I need that will help me mould others.

Career ambitions: I will become a primary school teacher and after a few years I wish to return to FNU to upgrade my qualifications.

Young Krishna determined to excel



Shamita Ashley Krishna (left) and her mother Renuka Devi at FNU's Nasinu Campus.

A keen interest in office operations and being a productive worker contributing to the efficient and innovative work of an organisation prompted Shamita Ashley Krishna to enrol in Fiji National University's (FNU) Trade Diploma in Office Administration programme.

Krishna said she had decided last year to complete Year 12 at Vunimono High School before undertaking studies at FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) at Nasinu Campus.

"I am excited to begin my studies and I have told myself that this year I will focus on my education and ensure that I pass with flying colours," Krishna said.

"When I came for enrolment I was able to take a short tour around the campus with my mother and I realised that university learning would be very different from high school."

"I believe I am prepared to embark on this journey because I want to have a successful future and in order to achieve that I need to start working hard now."

Krishna, 17, said she was interested in how an office operates using the different skills set and experience each worker possessed and said due to this she decided to embark on a programme that would enable her to also become a vital member of the workforce.

"Through this trade diploma programme I will learn various skills and topics on office administration and through this I will be able to work and communicate effectively with my workmates and also with clients and stakeholders that the company deals with."

"I want to do my part and contribute positively to my workplace and I know I will be able to do that after completing my studies at FNU."

The soft-spoken teenager from Nausori said her determination to succeed stemmed from the challenges she faced in high school last year.

"I had difficulties trying to pass my Fiji Year 12 Certificate (Fiji School Leaving Certificate) examination but I dedicated time to study and with the support of my parents, teachers and friends I was able to perform well during the external examination."

"Through my experience I also want to encourage other students to always have a goal and work towards that goal no matter how hard things may be."

"Sometimes, as teenagers when we try and work towards our dreams and if we fail at first we start to lose hope, get disheartened and start thinking of something else to work towards but if you are really passionate about that dream of yours nothing will stop you from achieving it."

Krishna said she chose FNU because of its convenient location and the facilities and programmes the University offered to students.

"I decided to enrol at FNU and get my qualifications so that I am ready for the workforce when I graduate," she said.

"I know that the lecturers at FNU will equip me with everything I need to know and through this programme I will undergo industrial attachment so I am looking forward to that."

"After a few years of working, I plan to return to FNU and upgrade my skills and qualifications in this field."

Yang dreams of becoming a doctor

Sungeun Yang moved to Fiji from Korea with her family as an eleven-year-old in 2011. Yang did not know what to expect. Her knowledge about Fiji was only limited to what she found on the internet and information received from her parents. But as she travelled into the unknown, one thing she was sure of was the profession she wanted to pursue as an adult.

Yang (pictured left) was always intrigued by the kindness of medical professionals who offered support and assisted patients to get better.

Fast-forward eight years and Sungeun Yang is on the path towards pursuing her dream. The bubbly teenager successfully enrolled in the Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery programme at Fiji National University's (FNU's) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS).

"I am very excited for my MBBS programme and I am not taking this for granted, so I have to work very hard now," she said the 19 year old.

The former Yat Sen Secondary School student said one major change for new students would

be adjusting to the new methods of learning and study environment at the University.

"Time management and not procrastinating will be the key because in University you will have to continuously work hard," she said.

According to Yang, overcoming her personal weaknesses will be one of the aims during her University life.

"The sight of blood makes me a bit nervous. I cannot handle blood and I don't know how I am going to cope with that but I am looking forward to overcoming it," she said.

Being the eldest of the two siblings always adds pressure on her to perform at the highest levels but Yang's parents have always been supportive.

Father, Sam Kyu Yang, through translation said, the family was joyous to learn that his daughter was accepted in the MBBS programme.

"I am very proud of my daughter and I am sure that she will do well in her studies."

"Since she is in medicine, taking care of a person's life will be a big responsibility. And we will support her throughout her course," he said.

Mother lives her dream through child's eyes



Emily Low (right) with her daughter Jacklynn Iroi.

Every parent wants their child to be successful in life and forty-six year old Emily Low is no exception.

It is with this dream that Low accompanied her daughter Jacklynn Iroi to the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) to enroll her into University.

Low, a mother-of-three said although she missed the opportunity to undertake University studies, being at Pasifika Campus brought back fond memories.

"This environment reminds me of my young days when I wanted to study but we did not have many opportunities to do so back then," said Low with a brave smile.

"I feel I can live that dream through my daughter's eyes now and we have been motivating her that she can successfully complete her studies," she added.

Her daughter, Jacklynn Iroi will pursue a Bachelor of Public Health programme.

Low said it was important for students to pursue their dreams. She said with the education assistance provided by Government and various scholarships available parents should always encourage their children to aim high.

"You have this opportunity to study, so make the most of it. It will only be good for you and the next generation that will come along. With all the knowledge you gain now, you will have the chance to share those ideas with others for the betterment of our communities."

Her daughter, Iroi, said she took up the programme to promote health care in the region.

Iroi's grandfather was from Kiribati, who married a Rotuman Fijian with Chinese heritage.

"I am truly a Pacific child," the humorous freshmen said with a laugh.

The youngster said she had a seamless enrollment process and acknowledge the work of the hard working FNU academic team.

"Everyone here at the College have been so helpful and the academics that are present, have helped me to understand more about the course that I will be doing."

"I am so excited to pursue this programme because it will equip me to help the people in our communities," she said.

Iroi also hopes to visit Kiribati in the future because they had never been to the island her grandfather once called home.



Rasoi has big dreams after completing University studies

Showcasing Fiji's wonderful hospitality to the world and one day managing a travel agency is the driving force behind Maleli Waqatabu Rasoi's choice to pursue studies in the tourism field at the Fiji National University (FNU).

Rasoi, 18, from Votua Village in Nadroga is enrolled in the Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management programme offered by the College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) at the Namaka Campus in Nadi.

The former Navosa Central College student (pictured above) travelled to Lautoka to complete his enrolment process and shared his excitement regarding his university journey.

"I chose to study at FNU because it provided the programme that I was interested in and also because it has a campus in the West so it's easy for me to attend classes," Rasoi stated.

"FNU holds a special place in the Fijian education system. It is a quality education institution with a good record and I am looking forward to the next three years to achieve my degree."

The lanky teenager said the tourism sector played an integral part of Fiji's economy and he wanted to

be part of the thriving industry. "The tourism sector is interesting to me because it is a very important part of Fiji's economy, providing a place for tourists to visit and relax while giving them the opportunity to learn about our country and our culture," said Rasoi.

"It also provides our families with employment which allows us to provide for our families and one day I will be able to do the same for my family."

"I personally chose this programme because I believe it has a lot of career paths and is an interesting and fun field to be in," he added.

Rasoi said he had explored his tertiary options after completing high school last year and believed the programme combination he chose would allow him to work and develop professionally in the industry.

"I'm excited because I will be taught and exposed to supervised industry training and this first-hand experience and attachment before I graduate means I will be able to enter the workforce ready to work," he said.

"I will learn hotel operations, festival and special event management, housekeeping, food and beverage services, hospitality services, rooms management, tourism marketing, cost control and planning and development," added an excited Rasoi.



Prasad aspires to become a biosecurity officer

National Toppers Scholarship recipient Shylene Prasad enrolled in the Bachelor of Science in Agriculture programme offered by the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) to pursue her dream of becoming a Biosecurity Officer.

Prasad (pictured above) envisions joining the Fijian biosecurity sector to manage risks and curb any possible negative impact to the economy, environment, public health and safety.

Biosecurity officers are tasked to monitor and prevent unwanted pests, weeds and diseases being brought into a specific area or country.

The 18-year-old said she is inspired by the biosecurity officers as they act as first line of defense.

"To my understanding, in order to be a successful Biosecurity Officer I need to have sound knowledge of agriculture, working with animals, ability to work in labs or carry out scientific study. As a student I have been preparing myself for this role. This is the reason I chose Agriculture as a subject in school," said Prasad.

The former Swami Vivekananda College (SVC) student said

Agriculture has been her favourite subject in school.

After attaining the highest mark at SVC, Prasad said this strengthened her desire to undertake studies at CAFF.

"My Agriculture mark was 96/100. I found this subject really interesting so I decided to further my studies in this field," she added.

"Agriculture is actually a large field and has lot of scope and job opportunities. Agriculture plays an important part in a country's economy and provides food security," continued Prasad.

Originally from Malolo, Nadi, Prasad said she is excited to begin her academic year at the Fiji National University.

"I have already received my confirmation letter from FNU. Now I have to sort out other arrangements such as my accommodation," she said.

Her advice to other aspiring students is to "strive hard to achieve their dreams".

"Sacrifice and hard work are the two things that helped me achieve a lot in life. To gain something we all need to sacrifice and this is reason as to why I am at this point in life," Prasad said.



Charles Junior Manini (left) with his cousin Taniela Waqanivalagi.

■ BSc Agriculture attracts Manini

The abundance rich fertile land and great employment opportunities prompted Charles Junior Manini to undertake a three year course in Bachelor of Science in Agriculture programme at the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF).

The 19-year-old from Soqulu village in Taveuni said he was keen on joining the Fiji National University (FNU) after completing high school.

“Ever since my parents separated we relied on farming to make our living. My six other siblings and I have worked really hard in the farm because that was the only source of income for us,” said Manini.

“It was like a daily activity, soon after reaching home from school, we all used to head to the farm. Agriculture and farming has been close to my heart since then,” he said.

Having faced hardships his entire life, an emotional Manini believes he can only change

his fate by attaining a qualification and entering the job market in order to provide to his family.

“Now that I have enrolled myself for a degree programme, I will make every effort to work hard and be successful in life,” said Manini.

The former Saint Bedes College student acknowledged his Agriculture Teacher Roko Dreu for being an inspiration.

“He is my role model, in fact I wanted to be like him and become an Agriculture teacher however I have realized that there’s a lot other opportunities if you graduate with this programme,” he said.

Manini was accompanied to the university by his cousin Taniela Waqanivalagi who has been assisting him with his enrollment.

“I am very happy that I was of help to my cousin Junior. All the processes involved was way too easy and we did not have to wait too long before we got the offer letter,” said Waqanivalagi.

■ Friends take up engineering courses

Friends Suruj Pal and Krishan Kumar Singh believe that the struggles in life are some of the greatest blessings as it tests one’s ability to be patient, work hard and keep true to their life goals.

Pal and Singh said they both had to overcome challenges before they could successfully enrol at the Fiji National University (FNU). The duo said they remained focused and determined to pursue university studies.

In 2018, Pal did not meet the requirements to enrol in the programme of Diploma in Architectural Drafting at FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST). He then enrolled in Preliminary Science which is a pathway to Foundation Science, certificate and diploma programmes.

“I was an average student and I used to be a bit mischievous in high school days. I was suspended a couple of times and this had a lot of impact on my studies,” said Pal. After scoring low marks in Year 13, Pal realised the urgent need to change his attitude towards his studies. “I took this as a lesson and made a commitment to myself that I will do the bridging courses and get

entry in this programme,” Pal said. “I feel proud to be just one step away from receiving my offer letter for a Diploma in Architectural Drafting.”

“The results for the final unit will be out soon, after which I will complete the enrolment process.”

Pal works part-time at New World in Damodar City, Laucala Bay. During his day-offs he assists his father in panel beating and other garage works at his family garage.

“After attending my classes I have to report to work. My normal day ends around midnight each day. It is not easy coping with studies and work but since I was privately studying the Preliminary Science programme, I had to juggle the two to cater for my expenditure.” Pal added. Similar sentiments were shared by Singh. He dropped out of Year 13 half way through the school year in 2018. “I knew that I will not be able to pass Mathematics and I had to take this decision. From second semester I enrolled in Preliminary Science and that is when I met Pal and we became good friends,” said Singh.

“I have completed the admission form to pursue Diploma in Civil

Engineering programme at CEST Derrick Campus, Samabula.” “I will complete the enrolment process and get the offer letter as soon as the results for the final unit is out.”

“From the moment I enrolled at FNU last year, I set my mind to the minimum entry requirement of this programme. Pal and I have worked really hard to get entry in our desired programmes and today we are proud to have gotten the reward of our sacrifices,” said Singh. “There is a great demand for civil engineers who deal with the design, construction and maintenance of the physical and naturally built environment. This is what led me to choose this profession of studies,” he added.

Singh who is originally from Nasinu, currently resides in Naitasiri.

“I had to change schools, which I believe had an impact on my studies but I now I am back on the right track.”

Pal and Singh have both applied for the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS).



Krishan Kumar Singh (left) and Suruj Pal after their enrolment at CEST.



Litea Maramanikaalia is all smiles after receiving her Offer Letter from CMNHS.

■ Kadavu lass follows her call for Nursing

Growing up in the village of Drue on the island of Kadavu, Litea Maramanikaalia always had an interest in assisting the those around her.

Maramanikaalia said caring for those in their time of need always provided her great self-satisfaction. So it was with this hope that she enrolled at College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) to pursue Certificate IV in Enrolled Nursing from Semester One, 2019.

The soft-spoken charismatic lass, believes working hard and staying focused will be her key to a successful student life.

“Ever since I was a little girl, I wanted to be a nurse and help everyone around me,” said Maramanikaalia.

The former Vunisea Secondary School student is the second youngest among four siblings.

“In my own time, I like to do some reading and spend time with my friends. I am very happy to have this opportunity to chase my dream,” Maramanikaalia said.

The 19-year-old said moving to Suva City was exciting. She said her family is her main pillar of strength and she looked forward to making them proud by completing her studies.

Her uncle Epi Toloi, who

accompanied her to Pasifika Campus was excited, adding it was a proud moment for their family.

“This will be her first experience of the city life compared to the village life which is slow and different,” he said.

“There will be a lot of distraction but we have been advising her to be alert and maintain her focus on studies.”

“We have also been reminding her to keep in mind the reason she is here and that is to successfully finish her studies,” Toloi said.

He said for any student, time management was an important tool.

Meanwhile, Head of School Public Health and Primary Care, Dr Donald Wilson said they were absolutely excited to welcome the new batch of students.

“The students will be the people we will be providing training and expertise to, to be able to meet our national and regional needs.”

Dr Wilson said they offered programmes which were focused on addressing these needs.

He said the Bachelor of Dietetics and Nutrition programme addressed the issue of Non Communicable Diseases and the Bachelor of Environmental Health took climate change into account which were some of the issues faced by the region as a whole.

The Exemplary Entrepreneur



start any business – the necessary forms to fill, places to go, money to pay, the time frame it takes before you can commence business etc. We wish we knew people who could help us ‘break into the market’. We also needed for people to help us with the book work, packaging, etc,” said Lawakele.

Preserving knowledge

The business began with his wife and him on the ground with some family members lending a hand. It was clear from the beginning that this venture was not the usual make and sell approach. One of its main objectives was to promote and preserve culture.

Driven by this approach Lawakele and his team are driven to create products which are inspired by nature and the environment around them. It is not uncommon to see their pieces of art depicting symbols of the Fijian culture as well.

One of the traditions about art is that the learned one passes on the skill to the younger generation and Lawakele practices and encourages this by holding holiday classes for school children. During these classes children get the



Using traditional means to create modern artifacts and jewellery is not only something unique but one that takes a lot of time and patience to perfect. The outcome on the other hand provides customers something extraordinary to marvel at and appreciate.

Such is the story of Taito Lawakele who owns and operates Vanua Clay (Fiji) a contemporary business which is gradually making waves in the local business community.

As the name suggests, Lawakele creates souvenirs and jewellery from soil, more specifically clay.

Using clay to create pottery can be dated back to early times and in Fiji and the Pacific there have been traces of pottery which have been attributed to the Lapita People.

Lawakele, an illustrious alumni of the Fiji National University (FNU) uses the traditional knowledge passed down many generations fusing this with modern trends and creating a unique line of products which are much sought after by local and foreigners alike.

Lawakele started his company in April 2015 and operates the 100% Fijian family-owned local business from his home in Votualevu, Nadi. The authenticity of Vanua Clay products which promotes ancient and traditional art of the Fijian people, Lawakele says, is the cornerstone of his business principal.

Although he is a successful businessman today, Lawakele faced many hardships including financial difficulties while growing up. As a result of this he did not think too much about the career he was going to have in the future.

The one thing he did know was that he wanted to do something different and pursue an avenue that a lot of people would not choose.

“I chose areas that not a lot of people were interested in as I knew these would provide me with a better chance at gaining employment,” he said.

Tertiary Life and Starting Business

Lawakele completed a Diploma in Business from FNU’s former Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) in 2008.

He stated that he learnt quite a lot during his studies at FIT which has helped him in his business too.

“FIT taught me budgeting and time management - both of which are essential skills to run a business.”

“We had an opportunity to buy a business that already had family employed in it. That gave birth to the idea that contemporary clay is something not tapped into in Fiji, so it was an opportunity which was different, and something worth trying. It intrigued me,” he said.

With this thought, he and his wife set afoot on a new journey.

The initial stages were quite difficult. “Getting the funds for the startup was tough. We finally managed to get the green light from the Fiji Development Bank,” he added. Despite the challenges, they were able to succeed with the immense support from family. “It was a joint effort.”

As with all start-ups, there was a lot to do. “There were so many things involved and we did not know a lot of things. We wish we had known how hard it would be to

opportunity use water and earth and design pieces using either their hands or moulds. These classes allow them to have fun, be creative and learn – taking something tangible with them when they leave.

Thus, in addition to promoting locally made products, the business also conserves traditional knowledge.

Words of Wisdom

Lawakele appreciates that there were numerous people in his life who inspired him. He still has close friendships with his former classmates from FIT days.

“There are many people who came into our lives to build us up to where we are today. I had good lecturers at FNU and later met people such as Moira Solvalu of 8 Mountains, Stephen Buksh of Honey Dew.”

“Then there are our family members who are our best models and marketing agents,” he said.

Through his experiences he has learnt to never give up. This has led him to where he is today.

He believes that life is a learning curve and that one must listen and learn from it.

“Nothing is easy in life, so be prepared for many road humps in the journey,” he added.

Lawakele is a case which demonstrates that life is a teacher and one can be successful if they are open to learning new things and remained focused on their goals.

“Never give up, no matter how hard the situation.”

“There is always light at the end of the tunnel, and you will get to that light at some point in time.”

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

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Writers: Kalpana Kaajal, Shireen Lata, Charlene Lanyon, Ronish Kumar, Sharon Chand, Salesni Chaudhary, Ana Niumataivalu

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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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