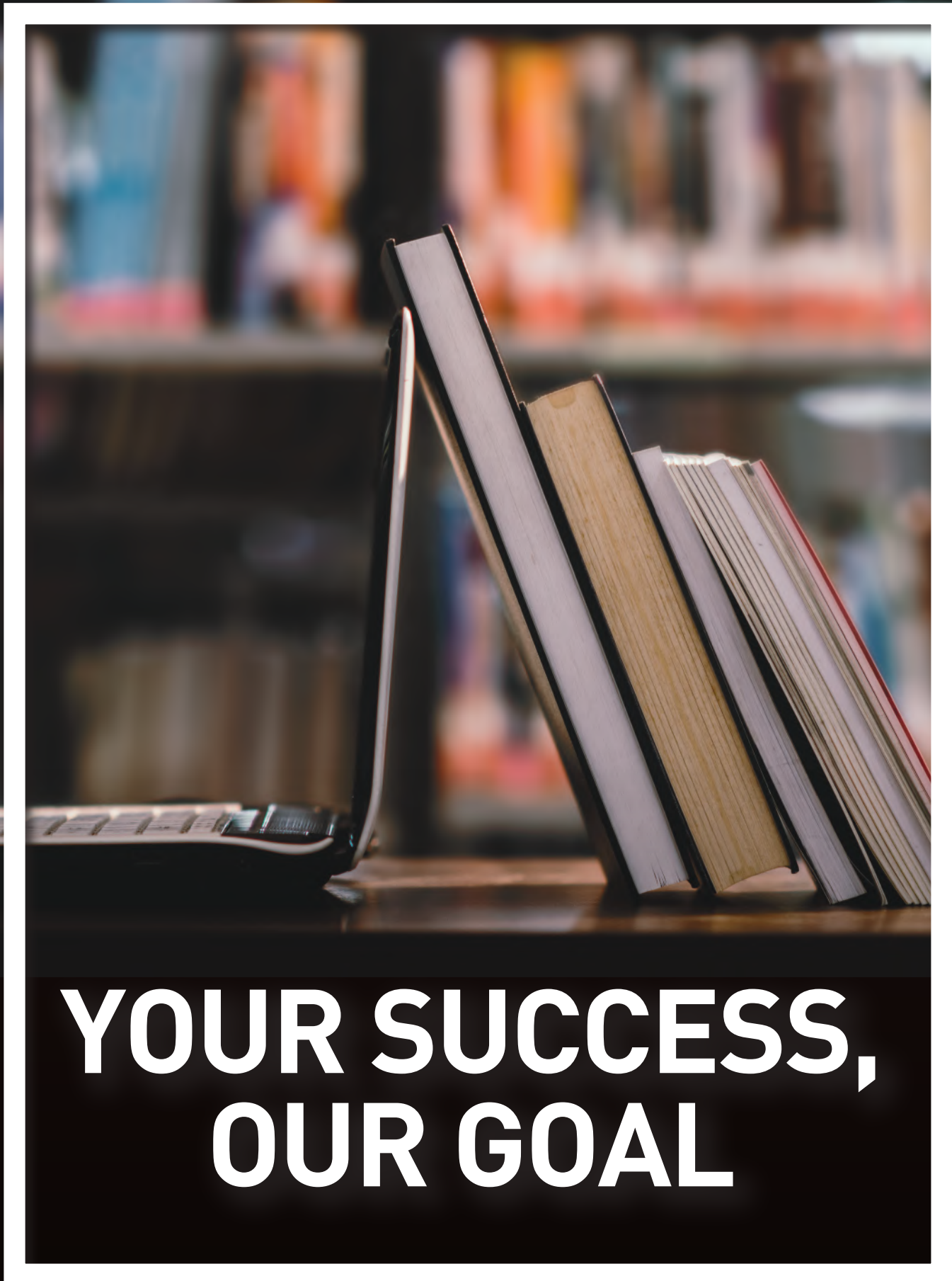




FNUUNIKUA



**YOUR SUCCESS,
OUR GOAL**

ISSUE NO. 02

FEBRUARY 2020

DIGITAL PLATFORM ENHANCES
BLENDED LEARNING PROVISION

EXCITING MODES OF LEARNING
OFFERED AT FNU

DIGITAL PLATFORM ENHANCES BLENDED LEARNING PROVISION



A blended development workshop by Centre for Flexible and E-learning with College of Engineering, Science and Technology teachers at FNU Natabua Campus.

The Fiji National University (FNU) is on track in providing first-class online self-service experience to its students and staff users as it continues to invest in building a state-of-the-art digital infrastructure to support learning and research.

FNU has undertaken a number of initiatives to upgrade its digital infrastructure, which is in line with the University's 10th-anniversary goal of being a modern 21st-century institution. These initiatives include connecting the University to Australia's Academic and Research Network (AARNet), installation of the University Information Management System (UMIS) and having high-speed internet through 'digitalFiji'.

University Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey acknowledged the assistance and commitment of the Fijian-Government for funding these important capital projects at FNU to ensure the students have the best study-experiences.

Professor Healey says connecting the universities of Australasia with those of North America has given us superfast broadband speeds on campus and access to a range of new educational software tools and that this advancement has given FNU an opportunity to expand and improve its services in various ways.

"For instance, we have converted our libraries from dusty book repositories into social learning commons, with

study spaces where students can work and access the growing range of digital collections," he said.

The other development is the installation of UMIS – an integrated system which will include all Institutional Administrative Systems, Student Services and Timetabling Service. It will integrate with other systems such as Virtual Learning Environment (VLE), financial system, student portal and communications platform, thus, providing a holistic service to students, staff and all stakeholders.

Furthermore, 'digitalFiji' initiative complements the other two projects, enabling FNU students to enjoy free, unlimited access to high-speed internet 24/7.

"We acknowledge the government for making FNU a full player in the digital academic community. This digital capability has given our students the opportunity to access study portals wherever they are on campus, that is, within the geo-fenced range and access information from the internet."

According to Professor Healey, advances in internet service provision in Fiji mean that commercial broadband is cheaper and faster than in Australia and New Zealand and FNU's connection to AARNet and students having unlimited access to free internet – has created opportunities to expand the University's blended learning provision.

He said the University aims to provide education and training that is accessible to all Fijians, regardless of location, age or physical ability, by increasing the range of courses available by blended learning and expanding the range of the part-time postgraduate programmes and micro-credentials to support lifelong learning.

In order to provide easy access to education through blended learning, the University in 2018 setup two Centres under the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching – the Centre for Learning & Teaching Enhancement (CLTE) and the Centre for Flexible & E-Learning (CFEL).

The CLTE was established with strategic responsibility for enhancing the FNU learning and teaching culture such that it engages staff and students in productive learning and teaching activities, while CFEL is charged with providing support for the enhancement of learning and the student experience through the facilitation of innovation, creativity and knowledge transfer with regards to e-learning.

Professor Healey said at CFEL, the Learning and Design team is responsible for blended/online course development and support, and the Learning Media Team is responsible for multimedia courseware development.

"I passionately believe that blended learning, that is, face-to-face teaching blended with distance or online learning – is the future for tertiary education."

"In a digitally-connected world, all of us are already deeply immersed in blended learning without even realising it. From finding the way to our destination on Google Maps, cooking a new recipe or simply looking for synonyms to paraphrase an assignment that maybe you and your colleague did together – which was supposed to be done individually!"

"For most of us, the starting point is to Google the topic or watch a YouTube video. For our students, the 'born-digital' generation, this tendency is second to nature."

The VC said moving towards the greater online provision of content, combined with face-to-face tutorials and intensive block teaching in workshops and laboratories, offers a way of making tertiary education more accessible to Fijians wherever they live and whatever their circumstances.

By providing more courses online, FNU hopes to give people in remote areas, especially teachers, more opportunities to upgrade their qualifications.

"This is to accommodate those who find it difficult to make it to the main campus for classes."

"For example, the country has 13,500 teachers and many of them need to upgrade their qualifications to bachelor's or postgraduate level."

"We have been working really hard on putting our teacher training programme online so that teachers can study whether they are in the rural or maritime community."

"We put 10 courses online last year and another 20 online this year but of course we are always running hard to keep up with the demand as expectations increase," Professor Healey added.



FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey.

Exciting modes of learning offered at FNU

On the 10th anniversary of the Fiji National University, one of its defining achievements has arguably been its strategic focus on enhancing learner support and teacher development. In an age of greater technology use and an ever-changing profile of learners and teachers, the emphasis is now being placed on enhancing learning and teaching and expanding flexible learning opportunities for access and equity.

Centre for Learning & Teaching Enhancement (CLTE) and Centre for Flexible & E-Learning (CFEL)

The Centres for Learning & Teaching Enhancement (CLTE) and Flexible & E-Learning (CFEL) were established in 2018 under the Office of the Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning & Teaching. Guided by the Strategic Plan, and Learning, Teaching & Training Policy, CLTE's role is the enhancement of learning and teaching experiences at FNU. CFEL's role is the development and delivery of flexible learning experiences to increase access to FNU's courses and programmes. Headed by Associate Dean Learning & Teaching Enhancement, Dr Deepak Prasad and Associate Dean Flexible & E-Learning, Dr Valentine Hazelman, both Centres have made headway in the advancement of learning and teaching enhancement, and flexible and e-learning at FNU. CLTE comprises an experienced team of Student Success Specialists, a Faculty Development Coordinator, an Educational Software Developer and an Open Educational Resources Technologist. CFEL comprises Learning Designers, Learning Technologists and a Multimedia Production Specialist.



Associate Dean Learning & Teaching Enhancement, Dr Deepak Prasad



Associate Dean Flexible & E-Learning, Dr Valentine Hazelman

Key developments

Over the past two years since its establishment, CLTE has implemented several key initiatives for learning enhancement. These are English Language Hub (ELH) – dedicated to helping FNU students from all disciplines and abilities to become more effective writers and communicators; Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) – free of charge, structured study sessions facilitated by peer students with a strong academic record; and Maths Help Hub (MH2), which in collaboration with the College of Engineering, Science & Technology, is a service to provide mathematics and statistics support and advice to students from all disciplines. The First-Year Experience (FYE) initiative has several activities aimed at smooth transitioning of first-year students to FNU, that includes a mobile app designed to provide important information and updates to students and help organise their learning



Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) Leader training at FNU Natabua Campus.

experiences; and Succeed@FNU, which is an online course designed to assist students identify their potential to achieving their academic goals and become familiar with FNU's expectations, regulations and support systems. An online First Year Survival Guide provides key information on making it through the first year of university in areas where adjustment and socialisation in a new environment are crucial. Foundation Mathematics Proficiency Assessment (FMPA) is an optional, online diagnostic tool designed to help first-year students assess their mathematical skills. Although it is not compulsory, every first-year student is encouraged to take advantage of this free-of-charge opportunity, and then they are most welcome to attend the MH2 if there are areas indicated in the assessment that require enhancement. There is also an International Student Mentorship Programme for international students, whereby 'mentors' who are current FNU students, volunteer their time to help 'mentees' settle into university and life in Fiji. This is also supplemented by an International Student Guide.

New initiatives

Some initiatives in progress are an Early Alert & Response Systems (EARS) – an online diagnostic and early intervention tool for teachers to identify students in need of additional assistance from the various support sections of FNU and student guides for effective learning. With regards to teaching enhancement, initiatives include an online orientation module for new teachers to FNU; Communities of Practice (CoP) to share and disseminate good practices in teaching and technology-enabled learning; Scholarship of Teaching & Learning (SoTL) – informing scholarly enquiry into student learning which advances the practice of teaching, as well as guides on effective teaching. Regular workshops and webinars are also organised for students and teachers in support of learning enhancement

and professional development. More information on CLTE can be found at <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/new/clte>

Using learning tools effectively

For CFEL, the focus of its activities has primarily been on teacher development in terms of effective use of

FNU's learning systems, Moodle (learning management system), Mahara (an ePortfolio tool), Turnitin (a plagiarism assessment tool) and various multimedia tools for online learning and teaching. Blended and Online mode development, delivery and support of courses and programmes across the 5 Colleges and NTPC are also an important focus for CFEL. To date, some 20 courses have been developed and offered in these flexible learning modes with a projected 50-100 more to roll out in 2020. Support is also provided for all Face to Face courses using Moodle as a support tool for learning and teaching. Along with course development priorities, good practice workshops are offered regularly to the Colleges in addition to consultation and walk-in sessions for proper learning systems use and flexible learning development. Essential guides for flexible and e-learning are also disseminated to all students and teachers in terms of Moodle, Turnitin and Open Education Resources. Over 400 teachers at FNU spread across its main campus locations have been trained in the use of Moodle and Turnitin, with more Blended and Online development workshops to be offered across all Colleges throughout 2020. Other activities by CFEL and collaborative projects with CLTE and other support services at FNU include multimedia courseware development and research in the areas of blended learning and teaching practices, learning design, learning enhancement and technology-enabled learning. More information on CFEL can be found at <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/new/cfel>



CLTE and CFEL teams at an E-Moderation workshop facilitated by the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) at FNU Derrick Campus.

Oral Surgeon reaps benefit of 'PAL' programme

Dr Octavian Detenamo hopes to reduce overseas patient referrals from Nauru in the field of dentistry after completing his Postgraduate Diploma in Oral Surgery from the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) recently.

"Currently, there is no speciality in oral surgery in Nauru and I aim to provide the services that are lacking in this area," Dr Detenamo said.

According to the Oral Surgeon, the facilities at CMNHS were excellent.

"The support services being provided by the College such as the library, Peer Assisted Learning groups, and all other facilities are on par."

"It has been a worthwhile experience at CMNHS. The staff involved in the programme have been tremendous and it is a conducive working and learning environment."

"This programme also provides trainees with an opportunity to work alongside experienced alumni which help to gain and access knowledge and skills from those already in the workforce."

As part of this programme, students also work alongside the Royal Melbourne Hospital Oral

Maxillofacial Surgical Team from the Royal Australasian College of Dental Surgeons which in the opinion of Dr Detenamo 'takes the training to an international level'.

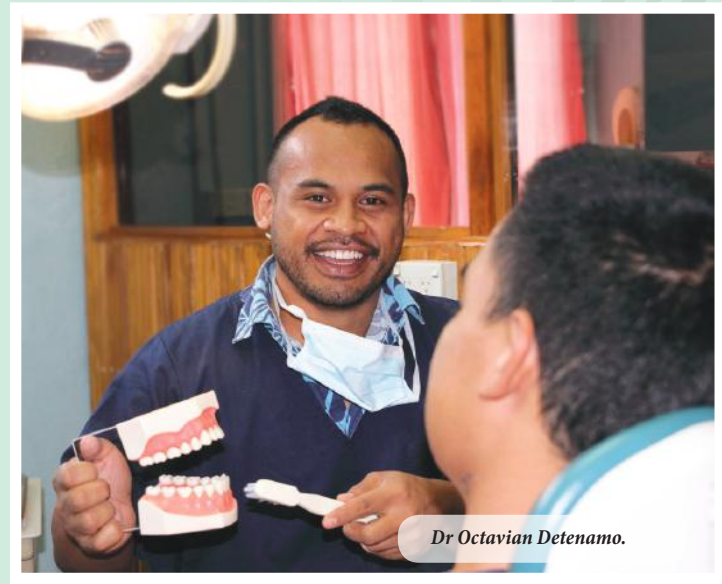
After graduating with his Bachelor of Dental Surgery from CMNHS in 2015, Dr Detenamo, worked as a Dental Officer for three years which exposed him to different aspects of dentistry and it enhanced his interest in oral surgery.

"I then researched the possibilities of gaining further training in oral surgery by searching on the University website after which I finally applied at CMNHS."

Drawing inspiration from his late father, he dedicated his success to his mother, who had always encouraged and supported Dr Detenamo throughout his life.

"She has continuously helped to nurture me academically, mentally and spiritually. I remember at a young age, I struggled at school but she was always there to remind me that everything is possible and to keep God in everything I do."

"My father was a steadfast and stern man, who encouraged that in life there are limitless boundaries and that I was my own biggest rival."



Dr Octavian Detenamo.

"He saw my capabilities at a young age and with the amount of time he has been in my life, I have cherished all his teachings and for also being a vessel of inspiration which has been a vital part of where I am today."

Dr Detenamo hopes to further his qualifications to Masters level in the future and advised aspiring regional students to "strive to do your best in everything you do, and to always believe in yourself".

"If you have a special interest in oral surgery, this programme being provided at CMNHS is the course for you."

"It encompasses areas of general medicine, general surgery, general anaesthesia, plastic surgery, radiology, oral medicine and oral pathology to enhance training in advanced oral surgery."

"Under the direction and support from experienced lecturers, the programme will enrich your skills, knowledge and hands-on experience in oral surgery, which would further develop the health services that we provide to our Pacific Islands."

'PAL' boosts Kumar's learning

For an aspiring Medical Officer, Krishna Kumar, Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) services provided by the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), is a key component to achieving success as a student.

While the Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) student is a proud Peer Mentor, Kumar attributes his accomplishments to the PAL support service.

"When I came to start my MBBS programme, I immediately joined this support service offered by CMNHS. This really helped me understand difficult topics in my programme and I was also able to make new friends," Kumar said.

The PAL programme, formerly known as the Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) at CMNHS, offers collaborative, weekly study sessions facilitated by a senior student who has previously achieved excellent results in the targeted unit.

These PAL Leaders, undergo a comprehensive training

programme and are supported for their role.

The PAL Leaders own recent experience in the unit, allows them to facilitate high-quality sessions with unique and valuable perspectives.

"This allows an opportunity to learn in small groups with other students, compare notes, discuss important topics, and to develop strategies for studying and learning."

According to Kumar, the sessions are designed to be informal, flexible, and fun and the focus of each session was to help students understanding of challenging topics in their courses.

"I have always received excellent feedback from learners because the PAL sessions are friendly, relaxed and held in an informal environment," Kumar commented.

The humble Year-4 MBBS student added that the objectives of his sessions were to promote deeper understanding and learning of subject concepts.

"I also demonstrate effective learning and study techniques that can be extended to private study, and promote the

development of students as independent learners."

"During the first half of the session, we normally discuss a challenging topic and in the second half of the session we work on questions from past year exam papers through group activities."

Kumar highlighted that the support services offered by the College was helpful to all students.

"The College has an amazing student environment and I have always indulged myself in extra-curricular activities which have enhanced my communications and interpersonal skills."

Originally from Lautoka, Kumar also shared timely advice for students intending to join the PAL programme.

"It is a unique chance to learn from your peers in an informal setting and I would like to encourage all students to make the most of the opportunities provided to them by the University."



Krishna Kumar (2nd right) is a PAL leader.

Learner Enhancement – English Language Hub

The English Language Hub (ELH) is the student learning support arm of the Centre for Learning & Teaching Enhancement (CLTE). The ELH is dedicated to helping FNU students become effective writers (in academic and non-academic genres) and oral communicators – both of which are essential for students to succeed at FNU and beyond.

Our instructors nurture students English language skills to prepare them for communicative competence in both written and oral disclosure by conducting workshops and tutorials.

ELH is for all students – whether you are struggling, doing OK or a high achiever.

The Hub offers tutoring via both face-to-face (on-site) and virtual modalities.

- **Face-to-Face Tutoring:** Our instructors are available for both walk-in and appointments during the times and venues listed on the Face-to-Face Schedule - Semester 1, 2020. Students with appointments take priority over walk-ins. Appointments can be made by emailing clte@fnu.ac.fj. Face-to-face tutorials are available at the following campuses: Natabua, Nasinu, Koronivia, Samabula and Pasifika. Students from other campuses are encouraged to utilise our virtual tutoring services to access our instructors from anywhere.
- **Virtual Tutoring:** Only available to students from the campuses where there are no face-to-face tutorials. Virtual tutoring sessions are by appointment only.
- **Workshops:** We offer workshops on a regular basis.



Additional information about the services offered by ELH

1. **How long will a tutorial session last?**
You will engage in a 30 to 45-minute discussion with your English language Instructors (ELI) addressing your academic concerns.
2. **Who can access the support services provided by ELH?**
All the students who are registered with FNU can access the services provided by the hub.
3. **Do I need to pay for the services provided by ELH?**
No, it's free of charge.
4. **Can I attend more than one session?**
Yes, the sessions run twice a week. You can attend one or both the sessions.
5. **Is attendance compulsory?**
No. However, students are encouraged to attend the sessions to enhance their literacy skills.

Please feel free to email our hub for more information – clte@fnu.ac.fj



“Before joining the ELH programme, I faced difficulty in writing. After attending a few classes, I have a better understanding of how to conduct research for my assignments. I'm able to paraphrase and ensure that I use proper referencing. I'm also more confident when it comes to making oral presentations. This set-up is a really good way for students to share and learn important things that help us in our studies. I highly recommend students to join ELH if they are having difficulties with their studies. It's a great environment to learn from each other and excel in your studies.”

SONAL KUMAR
Year 2 | Bachelor of Nursing



Students take advantage of Math Help Hub

The uptake by students seeking assistance from the Math Help Hub (MH²) is encouraging according to the assistant lecturer and facilitator Zoneed Shah.

The MH² facility which is available to students at all FNU Campuses provides free of charge additional assistance to students with Mathematics and Statistics.

Tutors from FNU's College of Engineering, Science and Technology's (CEST) School of Mathematical and Computing Sciences (SMCS) provide guided support to students during the week.

According to Shah the classes assist students in developing and enhancing numeracy skills and learning.

“We have seen a positive response from students which is really encouraging,” said Shah.

“Students attending these classes can ask questions regarding the mathematics problems they have and to seek clarification on any other mathematical concept.”

“This is the time when they can clarify their doubts.

It also makes it easier for them to learn better in these classes as the student to lecturer ratio is less,” he said.

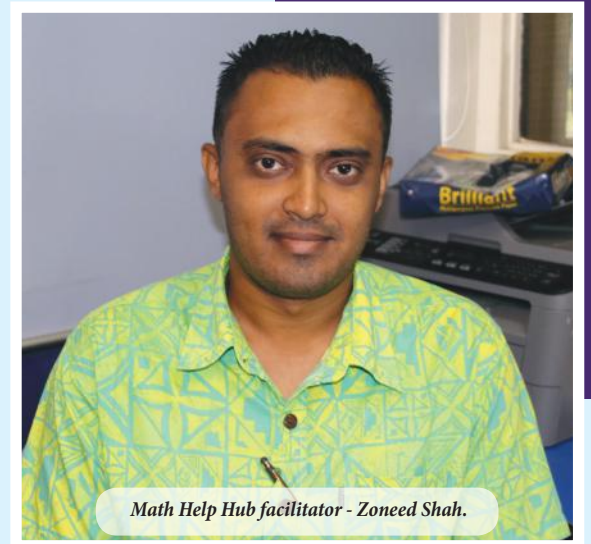
A proper timeline is provided and students are free to attend classes as per their availability.

“Classes are scheduled twice weekly for respective campuses. A facilitator is present to attend students questions,” Shah said.

“As facilitators, we are available to help with many types of problems; however, we will not complete any part of a class assignment or offer opinions or judgments on assignments that have already been marked.”

“Instead we will guide students through similar content that will help them complete their assignment and grow their understanding of the topic,” adds Shah.

MH² service is open to students taking any course that involves mathematics or statistics. No prior registration is required for the sessions. Students have to bring with them a valid identification card, notes and sign-in when attending the sessions.



Math Help Hub facilitator - Zoneed Shah.

Kiran's passion to help others

Students feel a great sense of accomplishment when excelling in their studies and receiving high accolades from their parents, peers and teachers. It is a culmination of weeks of attending lectures and tutorials, studying and reviewing relates materials at the library or online, submitting well-researched assignments and lessons gained through study sessions with their peers.

Fiji National University (FNU) student Upasana Kiran (pictured), who studies at the Labasa Campus, said helping and seeing them excel academically encouraged her to become a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) leader.

The final-year Bachelor of Commerce in Industrial Relations, Human Resources and Management student said she hoped to also boost the confidence of students who attended her sessions so that they were more vocal



and could present their ideas successfully in class.

“I decided to be a PAL leader because I wanted to help those students who had a difficult time talking in class in front of other students and lecturers,” Kiran said.

“I have seen that some students feel shy to contribute to class discussions, thinking that they might be wrong and the class would laugh at them, so in PAL we encourage students to speak up, to clarify doubts with the leaders and most importantly to help them pass the particular units with good grades.”

Since its inception last year, PAL has managed to identify student leaders who are able to conduct the weekly sessions and address students' queries regarding particular programmes.

“When I decided to be a PAL leader, I received training from the Centre for Learning and Teaching

Enhancement (CLTE), the office that offers this initiative, and I learnt how to approach students and talk to them about PAL and see if they are interested.”

“We were trained on how to create each PAL session interesting and creative and to guide the students into formulating their answers instead of just telling the answers outright.”

Kiran said she prepared for the weekly PAL sessions by making charts with subtopics and flashcards as study points for the mentees. Students attending the session could also choose which topic or programme to focus on during the hour-long study.

She added that being a PAL leader helping other students also benefitted her personally and academically.

“Personally, it has provided me with a learning experience on self-growth and being able to speak out, as I am also a shy student. Academically, I also learn something new during each session as sometimes the questions or answers given by students are new to me. It also refreshes my memories of certain subjects.”

Smooth transition assists international students



International students learn new culture and traditions and at the same time add to the cultural diversity of educational institutions. They bring with them different perspectives, experience and knowledge which are exchanged with local students and vice-versa, hence the symbiotic benefits foster the development of students and strengthen academic prestige.

The Fiji National University's (FNU) Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (CLTE) has introduced an International Student Mentorship programme, which provides assistance to a growing number of students from across the globe who enrol in various programmes each year.

International Student Mentorship Programme

The International Student Mentorship Programme is a volunteer peer-mentor programme which allows new international students to connect with current university students.

The mentors are a mix of local and international students who are trained to provide ongoing social support, assistance and guidance through one-on-one meetings and social activities throughout the mentee's first semester. Their goal is to support their mentees to succeed at FNU.

Each mentor is assigned a mentee to support their transition into the university, which ultimately aids them to succeed at FNU. The mentees meet their mentor during the orientation week at the start of the semester. Following this, they meet at least three times within the first three weeks of the semester and as needed during the semester. The student pairs are encouraged

to continue to liaise with each other via email and in-person throughout the semester.

Mentor commitment involves continued communication with the new student through email, monthly meetings, and optional social activities. The programme duration is one semester, but mentors are encouraged to continue their participation for additional semesters. Each semester, mentors will be matched with new mentees.

Student mentorship empowers Timor Leste student

When Ana Paula Salgado left her country to pursue her studies in a country almost six thousand kilometres from her homeland, she was gratified to be joining an institution that has provisions for international students like her.

Salgado is a first-year student at the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (FNU) studying towards a Bachelor of Oral Health programme.

"I found out about the mentorship programme through the university's website. I was pleased to know that I will not have to struggle to adapt to the new environment," she said.

"The mentors for the international student programme at FNU are very enthusiastic, helpful and patient. They are very responsive. I really appreciate their effort and assistance," highlighted Salgado.

A dental assistant by profession, Salgado is a recipient of the "Rotary Timor Leste Dental Programme" scholarship.

The 29-year-old student said the International Student Mentorship programme at FNU has also found

her new friends.

"Through this programme, I have managed to meet and greet and socialise with my peers," she said smilingly.

"My advice to the future international students at the Fiji National University is, be inquisitive, and ready to learn and explore. You will receive so much support from your peers through various mentorship programmes to achieve your goals."

Mentorship helps unlock a student's potential

"Mentorship has always been very valuable to students. It equips them with the skills they require to excel in their academic life," said FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) student Nausheen Buksh.

The third-year Bachelor in Medical Lab Science student passionately assists incoming students to adapt to the university as well as the Fijian lifestyle.

Buksh currently provides mentorship to Timor Leste student Ana Paula Salgado.

"I like helping people and learning about other cultures and this is the perfect opportunity for me to do both," said Buksh.

"My mentee, Ana, who is always eager to know more, is a quick learner. I assist her to cope up with her studies since she had missed two weeks of classes," added the student mentor.

Buksh highlighted that the best part about the International Student Mentorship programme is the little effort it requires.

"It's just like making new friends and helping them out with whatever they need help with," she said.



Pallawaish Kumar.

'Happy to help' - Kumar

FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) student, Pallawaish Kumar who is pursuing his studies in Higher Education Diploma in Human Resources and Industrial Relations student believes mentorship is rewarding whether the student is on a giving or receiving end.

"Seeing your mentee succeed as a result of your input is a reward itself," he explained.

"It gives me a personal sense of satisfaction when assisting students whether local or international, who require help. Mentorship has helped me learn, grow and improve my skills in many ways," said Kumar.

The young mentor has encouraged other students to join the mentorship programme to contribute towards someone's growth and development.

To give you an excellent start to your learning journey, FNU CLTE has designed the FNU First Year Experience App, which can be downloaded from Google Play Store for Android devices and the App Store for Apple devices.

The App is an easier way to keep you on-track with your student activities without having to carry dozens of papers for your checklists, timetables and so forth. This customised information is just a click away on the App.

The App has multiple features and a range of information and services such as allowing you to create a checklist of things to do, customising your class and tutorial timetable. It also allows you to ask questions and share information with your peers, while providing comprehensive info about support services.



**FYE
APP**

Students learn proper referencing methods



Students after attending the Mendeley workshop.

Throughout their tertiary education journey, students spend a lot of time in libraries or researching online to find credible resources relevant to their study topics or for assignment purposes. Finding credible sources including materials online, books, journals and other documents is important as it provides students reference points to base their writings on these sources or use it as quotes to the fulfil tasks at hand.

To ensure students do not lose marks due to incorrect referencing and bibliography and instil the practice of proper acknowledgement of work, the Fiji National University's (FNU), Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (CLTE), Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (CLTE) provides workshop training on how to use the Mendeley software.

CLTE Student Success Specialist and Mendeley Coordinator, Angeline Lal said this was a service provided by CLTE through its English Language Hub (ELH).

"Though referencing skill is considered a cross-curricula, the English Language Hub sees it as a mandatory academic skill that every student must possess in order to write authentic academic assignments, research papers, reports, proposals and other styles of academic writing," Lal said.

"Mendeley is a free Reference Manager that helps to collect references, organise citations, and create bibliographies. When compared to other reference managers, Mendeley is free and you can have it installed on your desktop and on multiple computers."

"This way, you always have access to the same documents, work on group projects and you can even share citations."

Lal said the workshops were conducted at the start of every semester to ensure students were knowledgeable on how to complete all aspects of their assignments successfully.

"The workshops began midway through semester two last year and each session is for two hours, whereby the facilitator trains the participants on how to install the software and using it for citation and collaboration."

"We target all registered FNU students and at each workshop, we have about 30 participants. We offer these workshops at our Koronivia, Pasifika, Nasinu, Namaka, Ba, Labasa and Derrick campuses."

Due to the numerous requests made since its inception, Lal said the Centre began offering Mendeley training workshops to FNU academic staff.

"We target academic staff, as Mendeley cultivates managing and sharing research papers as well as websites for discovering research trends and connecting to like-minded academics," Lal said.

"Mendeley also provides a collaborative environment where professors and teachers can share their scholarship of teaching and learning, research and classroom experiences."

"However, we do not restrict other staff from participating in professional developments like this."

Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting and Information Systems student, Ravishal Kaushal Sharma

said he learnt of the workshop through a friend and decided to register as a participant.

"During the workshop, I learnt how Mendeley enables students to find suitable resources and references to assignment topics," the second-year student said.

"In the past, my friends and I would face difficulty in finding the right information and references on our topics so through Mendeley we learnt how to create groups and learn and share our ideas with others."

Sharma encouraged other students to register for the workshop as it would assist in their research work as well as collaborate with others.

Final year Bachelor of Commerce in Management, Industrial Relations and Human Resources Management student, Ritashna Prakash echoed similar sentiments, adding that learning how to use the software significantly reduced the time it would take her to compile references and bibliographies during assignments.

"As students, we spend a lot of time researching and sometimes, by the time we start our assignment we have so much content to work with in terms of referencing so it can be quite a task making sure we attribute everything correctly," Prakash said.

"When we submit our assignments we do not want to receive high plagiarism reports due to incorrect referencing so being well-versed in using software such as Mendeley is beneficial to us students."

The 21-year-old said along with her peers, she was grateful to CLTE and FNU for providing additional student support services that assisted in their learning.



We help students come together and better understand the course content. We encourage students to join because to us, one hour of PAL session is equal to three hours of studying on your own.

Josaia Naikelekele – PAL Leader



PAL is a one-hour session every week. It is full of lecture reviews, games, group work, and heaps more and it is for anyone who want to attend to improve their grades.

Mereamo Koroi – PAL Leader

YASIN strives for excellence



Mohammed Aruf Yasin.

Mohammed Aruf Yasin always had the desire to excel in whatever opportunity came his way and he wanted to stand out from the crowd. It is with this aspiration, Yasin overcame challenges in life while at the same time learning and upgrading his academic qualifications.

From doing odd casual labour jobs to being employed by the World Health Organisation (WHO) as the Technical Officer – Pacific Open Learning Health Net; a Human Resources for Health Development Program, Yasin has an interesting life journey.

“I come from a family that lived most of its life without electricity or indoor plumbing. My brother was in Class Six and I was in Form Four when we lost our dad in a road accident. Our mother who then was a garment machinist helped us through secondary school. I used to work as a Packing Boy and a Garment Checker during my school breaks. But despite my outstanding academic achievements and to meet the needs of my family needs I could not study past Form Six,” said Yasin.

He tried enrolling at Monfort Boys Town however the result was not in his favour. Yasin didn’t lose hope, he began working as a Quality Controller at a garment factory before joining a paint company to perform the same role.

Tertiary Life and Career

In 2000, Yasin was awarded a scholarship to pursue Diploma in Nursing at the Fiji School of Nursing, now known as the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS).

Reminiscing his travel to FSN, he shared, “It was like a dream come true. Coming to nursing school was my first ever experience of travelling to Suva. That bus ride changed my life forever.”

Yasin graduated with a Diploma in Nursing in 2003. He was posted to the Lautoka Hospital where he served as a Registered Nurse for three years. He then joined the Fiji Health Sector Improvement Program funded by the Department of Foreign Affairs and Trade (DFAT) as a Health Promotional Officer and served until 2008. He then received an opportunity to work as a Clinical Educator and Charge Nurse at the Nauru Hospital.

In January 2010, he moved to Australia and started working at WorkPac Healthcare: Nursing Agency Brisbane as an Assistant in Nursing (aged care). He worked here till September 2011 when he decided to move back to Fiji.

He served again at the Lautoka Hospital. This time as a Charge Nurse in the Medical Ward. After three months, he decided to join a Non-Government Organisation (NGO), Foundation for Rural

Integrated Enterprises & Development (FRIEND) as the Community Program Nursing Officer in January 2012.

One year later Yasin joined the WHO as a Country Coordinator – Pacific Open Learning Health Net (POLHN) and then he transitioned to a Technical Officer role. As part of this job, he provides direct technical and technology – transformational support to 15 Pacific Island Countries’ Ministries of Health to establish a flexible learning and development culture to bridge the skill and knowledge gaps between geographically dispersed health workers and to boost the attitude and performance of health workers.

“The major portion of my work includes establishing a sustainable, affordable and adaptable workforce as well as enhancing solutions which include developing tailored eLearning courses, skill audit, workload assessment, coaching, continuously enhancing the Learning Management Platform to improve students experience, adding value to patient care and so on,” he shared.

To ensure he kept up his education, Yasin enrolled in the Master in Business Administration programme at the University of South Pacific (USP) in 2014 and completed it in 2016.

In 2017, he enrolled in the Master in International Relations and Diplomacy programme at the University of Fiji (UoF), which he completed last year. Simultaneously, he had also enrolled in the Bachelors of Law (LLB) programme as a part-time student at USP. Yasin is expecting to complete this later this year.

Yasin also managed to complete his Bachelor of Nursing programme from FNU through bridging courses in 2019.

He also enrolled in FNU’s Postgraduate Certificate in Public Health (PGCPH) programme as a pathway to completing a Master in Public Health. Yasin aims to attain his Master in Public Health after the completion of the LLB programme.

Yasin’s inspiration to strive to achieve more comes from his 14-year-old son, Nasir Al- Musawwir Yasin.

FNU Experience

“Living independently in the hostel in a completely different environment was incredible and the culture was so different. The staff were friendly and very helpful. I made many great friends and gained a tremendous amount of self-confidence and a sense of achievement at FSN,” he said.

“Overall, I enjoyed every day of my nursing school, it’s hard to choose one memory. However, the monthly cultural nights at the school auditorium is something I will always cherish. The cultural experience was amazing. My nursing school experience has taught me to appreciate things beyond its face value. It was the best three years of my life!” he added.

Speaking about FNU, Yasin said, “It has excellent clinical teaching culture and patient – centred curriculum. The infrastructure and support for nursing students were excellent. I have enjoyed access to a range of clinical and public health attachments. I admire how our teachers mentored each student.”

Coming back to FNU after so many years in 2019, Yasin noticed a lot of changes.

“The infrastructure definitely improved specially the eLearning platforms. There is enhanced efficiency and increased flexibility. Moodle was especially useful for me as I was a working student and had duty travel often. Features such as Forum, calendar, course material, quiz, activities and group discussion, and announcement were great while I was completing the bridging units,” he said.

“Provides (Moodle) freedom to access information and course information at my own convenience, avoid unnecessary travel, effective and efficient method of receiving latest information and I did not have to wait for classes and tutorial for updated information as course information was easily accessible through mobile phones, tablets and laptops,” added Yasin.

Yasin has left FNU with a pleasing experience that he will cherish forever and looks forward to making more memories at FNU again.

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.

Published in partnership with



Publisher: Fiji National University | **Editor:** Ranbeer Singh | **Design & Layout:** Shelvin Naidu | **Division Head:** Director Marketing and Communications Jenies Mudiliar
Writers: Kalpana Kaajal, Shireen Lata, Charlene Lanyon, Ronish Kumar, Salesni Chaudhary & Sharon Chand | **Contributors:** Dr Deepak Prasad & Dr Valentine Hazelman

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

