



FIJI NATIONAL  
UNIVERSITY

# FNUNIKUA



ISSUE NO. 06

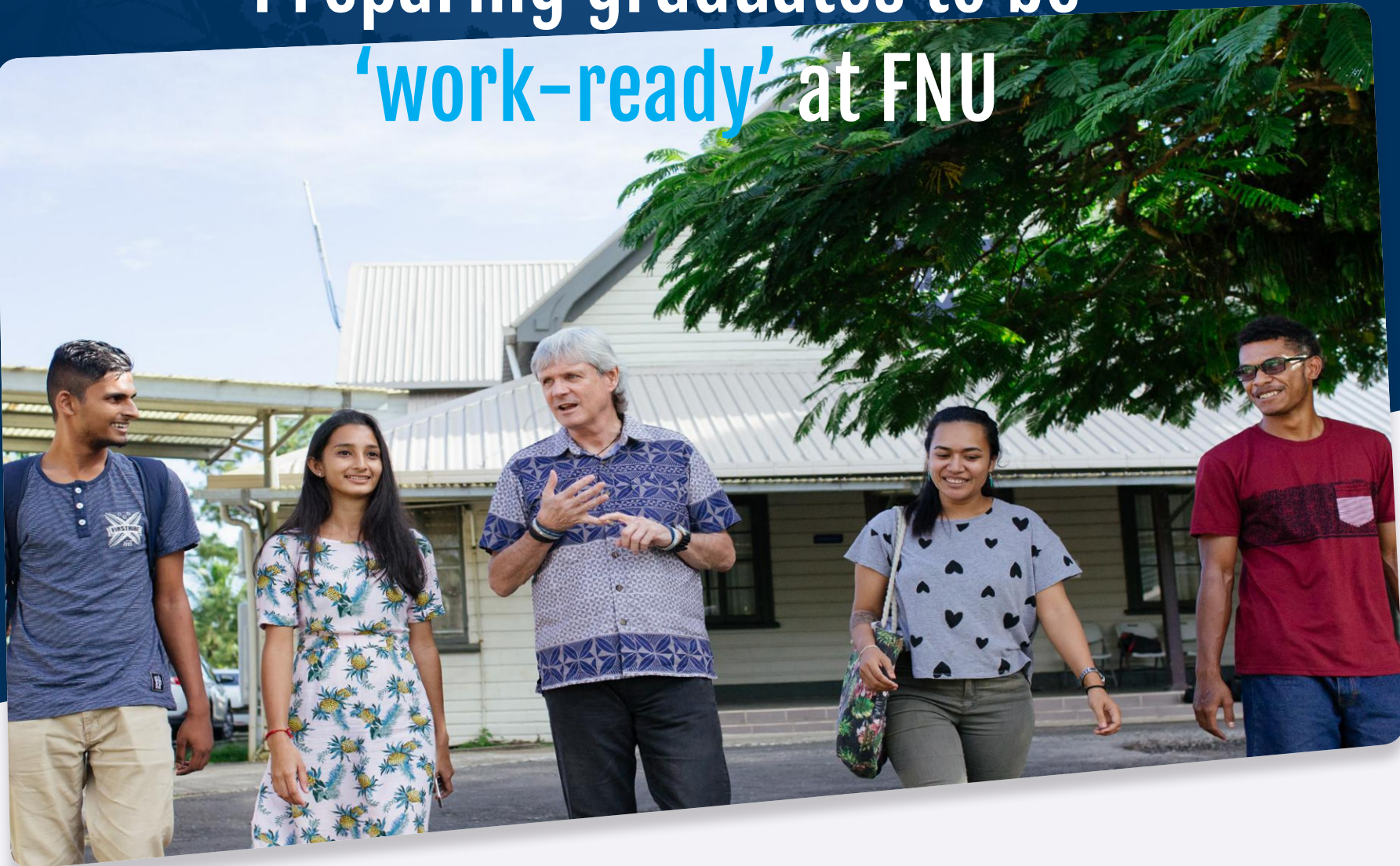
JUNE 2019

PREPARING GRADUATES TO BE  
'WORK-READY' AT FNU

CADETS DETERMINED TO  
EVEN THE SCALE



## Preparing graduates to be 'work-ready' at FNU



Graduates who have undertaken proper industrial attachments or internship have an added advantage over their peers when seeking employment opportunities.

The Fiji National University (FNU) Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey believes the compulsory attachment program which undergraduate students have to undertake before graduating is key to ensuring the institution produces high-quality and 'work-ready' graduates.

According to Professor Healey, the attachments provide students with a 'taste' how to perform in a 'real-life' work environment.

"There is a general consensus that undertaking an attachment before graduation improves the 'work-readiness' of a student because they know what to expect and how to behave in the workplace," said Professor Healey.

"Having an industrial attachment or internship before graduation gives students the chance to experience life in the workplace and learn the discipline of being on time and appropriately-dressed, as well as working as part of a team."

"More importantly, however, it gives students the chance to apply the theories and skills they have learned in the classroom to the real world and critically evaluate what works and what doesn't in a particular context. This form of reflective learning is much deeper than simply memorising theory and regurgitating it in an examination."

Professor Healey, however, said it was important that the attachments were conducted within a proper framework and that students were given opportunities by their supervisors to handle tasks that would assist them in developing an understanding of how things are done at the respective workplaces.

FNU requires all students to complete an attachment before graduation. This requirement has deep roots in the University's history as a vocational institution.

"You cannot graduate as a doctor or a nurse without learning how to treat real patients and use hospital equipment and the only way to do this is to work under supervision in a real hospital on attachment."

"We have simply generalised this principle, as we

believe that all students, whether studying accounting, teaching or engineering, will be much better prepared for employment after a supervised industrial attachment."

The senior academic said the training component offered at FNU is designed to ensure that both the students and employer benefit from the exercise. The VC said the overall objective was to ensure increased productivity and efficiency in the national workforce.

"It's important that students are given a fair opportunity to learn when they are on attachments. Employers agree that the quality and relevance of the attachment is also important. If the student spends his/her attachment photocopying and making tea, the positive impact on their employability skills is limited," Professor Healey commented.

"If the student gets the opportunity to try a range of new activities and tasks, they will return from the attachment with new skills and competencies. So it's critical that we look at the bigger picture and ensure that the scope of learning for our future workforce is not limited to doing tasks which won't broaden their talent and skills."

VC Healey said apart from producing graduates for the national workforce, the Fiji National University has an increasingly strong focus towards preparing students to become entrepreneurs.

He said the University was working closely with key stakeholders to make fostering entrepreneurialism part of its main mission.

Professor Healey said it was no secret that given the availability of employment opportunities in the market, not all graduates will be able to secure jobs in their chosen field. He said this is a global trend and not one that was confined to Fiji.

"Everyone likes to do things they are comfortable with, so the children of doctors are much more likely than other young people to study medicine. Similarly, the children of accountants and lawyers are disproportionately more likely to train to become accountants and lawyers in turn and so forth."

"If we can encourage and nurture students with no family history of owning a business to consider setting up a new business venture, we can create a more entrepreneurial culture amongst our graduates."

***"You cannot graduate as a doctor or a nurse without learning how to treat real patients and use hospital equipment and the only way to do this is to work under supervision in a real hospital on attachment."***

"We are actively working with the Government's Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES) and the University of Canterbury, which has a long history of supporting students to set up businesses, to see how we can inculcate entrepreneurialism."

The Young Entrepreneurship Scheme (YES), which is administered by the Fijian Government, provides assistance in the form of grants to budding entrepreneurs who have innovative and business ideas. YES targets young Fijian citizens between the ages of 18-40 years.





## Rao a step closer to ‘dream job’



**D**ivya Rao wakes up at 5 am daily and travels an estimated 100 kilometres from Rakiraki to Lautoka via the Kings Road to ensure she reaches work on time.

The 22-year-old said her passion for working in a field she was studying in surpassed the challenge of long travels, early mornings and reaching home late at night.

Rao is a current Bachelor of Science in Forestry student at Fiji National University’s (FNU), College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF). As part of her programme requirements, Rao is undertaking six months of workplace attachment to apply the skills and knowledge she has learnt at FNU and gain experience in the workforce before graduating.

She is an attache at the Biosecurity Authority of Fiji’s (BAF), Termites Office in Lautoka.

“I have always wanted to work at BAF so doing my attachment here is something of an achievement for me,” Rao said excitedly.

“Growing up in Qalau, Rakiraki meant I was always surrounded by nature and so this was a big part of my life and influenced my interests.” I always knew that I would pursue my education in this field so when I began high school I chose to study Agriculture from Year 9 to 13 at Penang Sangam High School.”

“During my final year of high school, a team from FNU visited and spoke to our school regarding the programmes offered at the University and I immediately seized the opportunity to inquire about courses that suited my interests.”

After consultations with FNU staff, Rao decided to enrol in the Forestry programme as this aligned with her goal of one day working at BAF.

“I looked through all the units offered in this course and saw that it included topics such as biosecurity, risk management, pathology and entomology – these were issues I knew was important to BAF in its mandate to protect Fiji’s agricultural sector from pests and diseases and other issues such as border control.”

Rao is studying at FNU under the National Toppers Scheme (NTS) administered by the Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB).

“I enjoyed learning everything I needed to at CAFF and now I get to practice all through my attachment. I am now able to understand all that I learnt in theory because I am now out on the field and I get to now visualise what I have studied in textbooks and videos.”

“As part of my attachment, my daily role includes the inspection of timber and monitor complaints received regarding termites. I also inspect the complainant’s residence and ensure that treatments are done accordingly.”

“We do this because of the Asian Subterranean Termites (AST) has caused damages to homes and it is also the second most destructive subterranean termite in the world.”

Rao added that she is now equipped to deal with termites and procedures and chemicals used in the termite killing process.

Utilising her knowledge of timber, she is also able to identify the type of wood she is dealing with and the appropriate treatments needed.

“My supervisor Ateca Caukautinai has also been very helpful when I don’t understand any concept regarding the operations and how to deal with the public. The Officers here at the Termites Office such as Tema, Joytishna and Poate and the others are always ready to provide guidance when I need it.”

“Due to this, I believe my capabilities of working independently or with minimal supervision has increased and I feel that I now have the confidence to contribute effectively to this team or to any organisation I am part of.”

“Industrial attachments are really to the advantage of the student so I encourage students to make this use of this opportunity. I am proud that I chose FNU for my studies because I am now a step closer to my dream job.”

Rao hopes to graduate this December with her degree.

## Skills demand surprises Adi Ana

**T**he technology revolution has placed careers such as Mechanical Engineering at the forefront of future technologies as it’s a discipline that applies the principles of engineering into the design, analysis, manufacturing, and maintenance of machines and mechanical production techniques.

This profession leads the development of new technologies for a number of industries including transport, healthcare, construction as well as robotics which eventually makes the work of us humans easier and more effective.

This is what caught the attention of Adi Ana Valotu, who is currently enrolled in Bachelor of Mechanical Engineering at the Fiji National University’s (FNU), College of Engineering, Science and Technology.

While growing up, Valotu was fascinated with even the simplest of machines such as a radio, refrigerator, air-conditioning systems and even the elevators.

The 22-year-old decided to venture into the mechanical engineering field when she joined Saqani High School where she took up Technical Science from Year 7 to Year 13. Valotu’s Technical Science teacher, Ranato Tokadua played a significant role in her career choice.

Today, she feels ecstatic applying her engineering and material science principles in designing, analysing and maintaining mechanical systems.

“I used to wonder how machines are designed, constructed and maintained. It is always captivating to witness how technology has been incorporated in our daily lives which have enhanced human resource capabilities,” said Valotu.

Originally from Naboutini Village in the district of Saqani, Valotu recently completed a three-month internship at 3D Manufacturing & Prototyping Services.

During this period, she was introduced to the operation of 3D printer machines and SolidWorks software – a solid modelling computer-aided design and computer-aided engineering computer program.

“Apart from what I have learnt in the classroom so far, this opportunity presented me with a whole new experience of this field of work,” said chatty Valotu.

“This is the beauty of this profession – getting the opportunity to work on almost any machine. As mechanical engineers, we need to have the knowledge of computer applications, electricity, structures, mathematics and physics to name a few. We are also required to have some understanding of social, environmental and economic factors.”

This internship opportunity has made her more familiar with using SolidWorks software and operating 3D printing machines.

“During my attachment, I was tasked to come up with a new design of power bank that attached together with the lens could be used as a torch at the same time. Learning about the 3D printer was also interesting.”

As much as Valotu enjoyed learning new things, it was also a quite challenging environment for the youngster to adjust in.

“As soon as I reached work in the morning, I am tasked to heat up the printer and print out any work left from the previous day after which I continued working on my design on the SolidWorks software. This work requires strong attention to accuracy and

standard in measurement, which I found a little demanding to cope with.”

With continued practice, Valotu managed to fine-tune her skills in this software.

“I must admit that the three months of my internship was not easy, but it is something that I will cherish for life as this was my first experience of the industry.”

“I believe such opportunities allows us, students, to feel and understand the reality as well as the importance of what is being taught inside the classrooms. It helps students to identify our weak points and improve on them before graduating.”

Valotu said this experience has not only helped her to develop the skills needed to work in the engineering industry but working on real projects for a real organisation has also given her the interpersonal skills that are extremely important to be able to work effectively with others.

“After being exposed to the demand and challenges of the workplace, I also feel more confident in my own abilities. It has helped me attain self-reliance skills whilst developing work-based skills.”

She believes internship is also an opportunity for the students to get to meet different people in their future career path.

Valotu plans to undertake another year of internship in a different line of work before she graduates.

The final year student also acknowledged her father Inoke Rokorere for his inspiration and support in her choice of career.

“This journey wouldn’t have been possible without the guidance of my parents, especially my dad for being supportive of my decisions.”

“I appreciate the way my parents brought me up. They have always challenged me to get out of my comfort zone even if it takes time to get the end result and this always has motivated me to go beyond my own capabilities,” Valotu added.



Adi Ana Valotu inspects her 3D design.



## Practicum further enhances my skills and knowledge in Early Childhood Education – Vunibaka

The love to educate children and unlock their creative minds is what inspired Ravuama Langi Vunibaka to pursue a career in early childhood teaching.

Vunibaka, 32, is currently studying Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood programme offered under the Fiji National University’s (FNU), College of Humanities and Education from Natabua Campus, Lautoka.

The Rewa native is an in-service student, currently serving his teaching practical at Lololo Kindergarten in the interior of Lautoka.

“Even though I am already in this field, but the practical component is further enhancing my skills to able to assess where students are academically and emotionally in order to set goals for the class and individual students,” the towering trainee teacher said.

Married with three children, Vunibaka said they are required to teach students basic skills in reading and writing in addition to showing them how to behave in the classroom and play nicely with others, but the student – teaching has boosted his skills, as lecturers who are his mentors offer guidance and support.

“My lecturers come and observe and offer guidance, as I prepare lesson plans and carry out the classroom instruction, preparation and administrative tasks,” he said.

Vunibaka adds that he has learnt a lot during his practicum as he is able to overcome the challenge of lack of resources and is now able to prepare his lessons as per the available resources.

“I am now well versed as to how to prepare my lesson plans according to the resources available since we are quite far from the city centre.”

Vunibaka is proud to be an Early Childhood Education teacher and for him, gender doesn’t matter when it comes to teaching early childhood students as long as there is a passion to teach.

“It is rare to see a male teacher teaching Early Childhood Education (ECE) in the country. I am proud to be the only male teacher teaching at an ECE centre in Lautoka,” he said proudly.



Ravuama Langi Vunibaka with students at Lololo Kindergarten in Lautoka.



### Shankar returns after 14 years as Intern Doctor

After 14 years, Shiva Shivniel Shankar returned to the place where he spent more than a decade of his life to complete his practical attachment and achieve his dream of becoming a doctor.

Shankar, 24, now a final year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) student at Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), was born in Suva but brought up in the Village of Kabisi in Sigatoka.

After spending the first 11 years of his childhood with his family there, they had moved to Nausori in 2005.

However, this trip to his childhood town was no

be seeing outpatients with supervising Doctors and admitting cases or doing ward work with ward Doctors, and in doing these, I have learnt a lot about medicine that perhaps no textbook would have taught me (in the classroom environment alone).”

While completing his secondary school studies at Nausori High School, a visiting officer from the College told him “sometimes you don’t choose medicine, medicine chooses you” and more than five years later, he still fancies that statement.

Such is Shankar’s love towards his profession that

longer an ordinary one. The once carefree village boy is now on a journey to become a Doctor and the pathway to the completion of his degree led Shankar to complete his attachment component of the MBBS programme at Sigatoka Sub-Divisional Hospital.

It was fitting for him to get an opportunity to undertake his practical attachment while giving back to the community where he gave his first smile, the town where he took his first step and the place where he spoke his first word.

Many must not have realised he was the same kid who once held his parent’s hands while navigating his way through the busy mornings of Saturday marketing adventure, now “helping out a baby from a mother’s womb—witnessing life into the world and attending to another patient, frantically compressing the patient’s chest whilst he took his final breaths”.

The 18-week attachment went by in the blink of an eye; such was the beautiful chaos that Shankar is so proud to be part of.

“Everything that happens in between is fascinating and tiring. On most days, I would

despite “witnessing patients shouting at doctors and nurses for some inconvenient reasons”, he has shrugged that off with no complain.

“Every patient that comes to you has a story to tell, some have wrestled their own Goliaths while some are still wrestling. You’d perhaps fancy yourself as the occasional biased referee for the ones that are still wrestling, to say the least, always in favour of the patient, that is.”

Nonetheless, he did not see this hospital attachment as a hurdle to jump to complete his degree but made the most of time with an open mind, grasping as much experience as he could to take back.

“I also realised that sometimes at the end of the day, the most effective treatment that you’ll give to anyone is to listen to them. Patients often come in with expectations that the doctor will listen to his/her problems and affirm their worries and concerns.”

“I have had to listen to a lot of Naani and Naana (older patients) talk about their troubles at home, about how they keep forgetting to take their medications amidst all the worries they have about their house, their businesses, their sugar cane fields and many more.”

“I’ve really entertained the idea of prescribing a five-month vacation in Hawaii and \$50,000 dollars in cash a few times but (I bet) the pharmacist wouldn’t have been too pleased with that!” Shankar joked as he continued to share his industrial attachment experience.

According to him, the attachment at the Sigatoka Sub-Divisional Hospital had been a tremendous experience, owing to the staff and the amazing people of Sigatoka.

“I wish to thank everyone involved at this wonderful hospital for their time and contribution towards my learning and growth.”

Shankar, who also loves reading in his leisure time while juggling assignments and playing the guitar, hopes to ‘rock and roll’ in Vegas (United States of America) once he graduates.

As he wrapped up his attachment on June 07, the Trainee Intern acknowledged Professor Eddie McCaig for his tremendous knowledge, Health Minister Dr Ifereimi Waqainabete and Dr Amos Zibran for their efforts in building him into the person he is today.

In quoting Adam Kay: ‘a great doctor must have a huge heart and a distended aorta through which pumps a vast lake of compassion and human kindness,’ Shankar aims to have his name on a research paper, his signature on a prescription paper, and good memories of him in the minds of his patients.





From Left, Timaima Nukusere and Vunise Biunaiwai

## Cadets determined to even the scale

Two young female students from Fiji National University’s (FNU) Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) are determined to break barriers and prove that women are capable of serving in the Maritime Industry.

Twenty-year-old Timaima Nukusere and 19-year-old Vunise Biunaiwai are first-year students enrolled in the Deckhand Fishing and Offshore Fishing Skipper programme, a first of its kind course offered in this field by FMA.

The pair are on a 12-months practical onboard a Sea Quest Fiji Limited vessel as Cadets.

Originally from Nukuloa, Gau, Nukusere said she chose to pursue a career in this field as she had always wanted to do something different.

“I admit I knew little about this programme but when I read about it, I was genuinely interested because I was interested in the maritime sector. I saw a newspaper advertisement regarding tuition scholarships for the course and applied,” Nukusere said.

“I received a scholarship from the New Zealand Government to study in this programme and I am fortunate to be amongst the first 46 students to undertake this formal training which was introduced earlier this year,” she said.

Similar sentiments were shared by her colleague Vunise Biunaiwai.

“Even though it’s a male-dominated field, I thought of giving it a try and today I feel blessed that I am living an adventurous life,” said Biunaiwai.

“It is a three-year course. We have completed three months of attachment and left with another nine months, following which we will get back into classroom-based theory learning,” she said.

The duo described their life onboard as a

challenging yet rewarding one.

“As cadets, we have to prepare by having the correct equipment for the journey, keeping all equipment well maintained and making sure that safety equipment is quickly and easily accessible, especially in an emergency,” said Nukusere.

“We also have to keep a close tab on the weather condition as well,” she said.

“The biggest reward is the people you meet. Sailing on vessels means you get to meet the most amazing people, especially the crew members,” added Biunaiwai.

“I have learnt a lot in this three-month journey while out at sea. This includes Basic Sea Safety, Fire Safety, Ship Handling and Knowledge of Nautical Techniques,” she added.

“Our day starts as early as 5 am, therefore lack of rest is the only drawback in this field,” said Biunaiwai.

“We are honoured to have been allowed by the Sea Quest company to be part of their team for the next few months,” they said.

Nukusere added they both aim to gain a lot of skills during the practical attachment so they are able to secure themselves a job in the fishing industry once they complete their formal education.

The duo are also part of the highest number of females enrolled at FMA to date, with a total of 15 females studying in maritime fields at the Academy.

Recently, Fiji Women in Maritime Association (FJWIMA) President Jane Koi had stated that there should be a timely and deserving acknowledgement of women in maritime, saying a focus on women empowerment would encourage more young women and girls to develop a keen interest in a maritime career path.

## Singh shares experience working on Australian Survivor television series

Nickheel Vineet Singh believes internships provide students with an ideal opportunity to apply the knowledge gained during the course of their studies, express their talent and skills as well as gain valuable ‘hands-on’ practical experience under the guidance of senior supervisors.

This is exactly what Singh went through when he undertook a three-week attachment with Endemol Shine Group, who filmed Australian Survivor in Savusavu earlier this month.

Singh, who is currently enrolled in Certificate IV in Film and Television Productions at Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Humanities and Education (CHE), believes such stints ensure students learn on-the-job and are able to tackle ‘real life’ scenarios in a controlled environment as opposed to going straight into the workforce without any practical experience.

The 23-year-old said the internship provided him with an opportunity to gauge his knowledge as well as highlighted the areas of improvement.

“I have learnt quite a lot in these two weeks by learning from people who teach from their daily experiences. After this experience, I can say that I may not be fully prepared for the real workforce but I am close enough,” said Singh.

“The internship period becomes even more exciting when we get to work with friendly people who are ready to answer even the senseless questions with a smile that we end up asking sometimes,” said Singh with a cheerful smile.

Endemol Shine Group creates world-class content that entertains and enthralls billions of people around the world. It is the world’s largest independent producer, operating on a unique local and global axis with 120 production

labels across 22 markets and unrivalled creative, production, distribution and commercial capabilities.

According to Singh, the first day on the set was fairly challenging, but one which he was able to navigate through the guidance of his supervisors.

Singh is attached as a camera assistant

“First thing in the morning, we report to the camera room where we prepare the cameras, pack the freshly charged batteries. We load all the equipment such as the cameras, tripods, batteries, disks and other components in the vans after which we travel to the shooting site.”

“At the site, we prepare the equipment for the shoot. This is when I approach the cameramen, observe them and ask questions.”

Being part of the production crew was truly a dream come true says Singh.

“The best part of my internship with the Australian Survivor shooting crew is where I actually got to shoot a footage on my own. It is a great achievement for me plus the biggest perk of this industry is getting to go to places, meet new people and learn about their cultures.”

“This is the first time I have had the opportunity to set foot in Savusavu – all because of the career I have chosen. And I am confident this profession will take me to greater heights and places which is beyond imagination at this point in time.”

The Suva man believes turning passion into a profession will ensure work perfection and eventually lead to a successful career.

He acknowledged the strong support from his uncle Dr Ramneek Goundar, his mother Monita Singh and girlfriend Nalisha Deo, which Singh said encouraged him to pursue his passion in film production at FNU.



Nickheel Singh (front) edits his work.

## Maneniaru aims to make a difference



Learn and Serve!

That’s the mantra Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences (BMLS) student Daphne Maneniaru lives by. She is a final year student at Fiji National University’s (FNU), College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS).

Originally from the Southern region of the Malaita Province in the Solomon Islands, Maneniaru counts herself lucky to have the opportunity to pursue her studies at FNU.

It felt like life was on fast forward mode for Maneniaru when she was awarded a Solomon Islands government scholarship.

“To be honest, I had no idea what the BMLS programme was about but my mother encouraged me to take on the programme. Just after first few classes, I knew this was something that I was meant to do,” she said.

Being the only girl with two other siblings, she always aimed to make a difference, even though it was difficult to adjust to life in Fiji. Maneniaru recalls how everything was subsistence-based back home.

“At home, we plant the majority of our food and coming to Suva was definitely an eye-opening experience. “There are so many bright lights here and so much peer pressure but I knew that I had to stay disciplined to be successful,” the soft-spoken student added.

As she slowly found her feet in the programme, Maneniaru realised just how important her profession was in the medical field.

She believes they are an important link between doctors and patients.

“We are always working behind the curtains but we are the ones who test the samples and confirm the doctor’s diagnosis.”

Her job also comes with a great sense of responsibility, with Maneniaru stating that the hospital-based attachment component of her programme has been a great bonus.

She is currently attached at the Colonial War Memorial Hospital, completing this compulsory component.

“In our classroom learnings, we do lab practicals but in the hospital setting, we deal with actual patient samples. We have to be more careful and come in with your A-game. We have to always read up on our notes and know what we are doing because a small mistake can be costly for a patient.”

“In the hospital, I have also learnt about working as a team with fellow staff. They are quite helpful and we get to observe how they carry out procedures.”

According to her, the experiences from this attachment had broadened her mind and they could better relate to the theoretical components taught in classrooms.

After the successful completion of another semester, Maneniaru would be ready to make a difference in her community.

“I plan to work in the hospital back home and give back to my people. For my country, we are way back when compared to Fiji. We lack technological infrastructure and good services.”

“It’s time to change the mindset of the people at home (and) I want to advocate for fresh knowledge to be brought in,” she added proudly.



## Tuifagalele undertakes elective in New Zealand



Holding a toothbrush in one hand and dental model in the other, Ane Tuifagalele charismatically advises her patient on healthy brushing habits during a clinical session at Pasifika Campus, in Suva.

However, five years ago, she didn't have the faintest idea that the field of dentistry would be her calling.

After finishing her secondary school education at Adi Cakobau School, Tuifagalele headed towards university studies wanting to pursue the field of medical sciences but doing a dentistry programme was not on her to do list.

Nonetheless, after extensive research and much deliberation, she opened herself towards studying dentistry, a profession she is proud to be part of now.

Tuifagalele, a final year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) student at Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), is among her classmates who are undertaking their elective attachments abroad.

Currently attaching at various hospitals and clinics in Auckland, New Zealand, the ecstatic student feels the experience will develop her holistically.

"This is such an amazing opportunity and I am excited to be doing my elective in Auckland."

"I guess being attached in a developed country, it is a bit challenging to adjust to the environment (here)," she said.

According to Tuifagalele, the work done by CMNHS is commendable where selected students could participate in attachments abroad.

"This is an eye-opening opportunity and I am looking forward to learning more new things," she added.

Originally from Vanuabalavu in the Lau group, Tuifagalele believes that the field of dentistry has played an instrumental role in developing her into the person she is today.

"It is more than what I knew about the field. First few years of the programme was on problem-based learning where we applied theory into practical sessions and it is just not about teeth but the whole body."

"This also helps me outside of school in terms of enhancing my problem-solving skills," Tuifagalele said.

She highlighted that the practical sessions and industrial attachment components of the BDS programme was enriching.

"The practical sessions aren't just about clinical skills; it is also exciting because that is when we realise how the different branches of learnings come together. A lot of interpersonal skills is needed as we deal with people every day."

With another semester of studies to go before she graduates as a Dentist, Tuifagalele advises aspiring students to push for their dreams.

"Work hard in school and always seek advice from the right people. Tertiary studies are something where you cannot follow your friends into a programme because the rest of your professional life will depend on it."

Tuifagalele started her attachment in New Zealand on June 17 and will finish on July 08.

## Putting theory to practice – Zarin takes up internship at freight company



Juggling tasks and meeting tight deadlines as a Customs Clerk intern is a daily routine which Zarin is thoroughly enjoying.

Zarin, 22, is a final year Trade Diploma in Customs student at the Fiji National University's (FNU), College of Humanities and Education (CHE). She is currently an intern at Allied Freight Services (AFS) in Suva that specialises in import and export of sea and air freight.

"Every student who joins a tertiary institution has the ultimate goal of securing employment once he/she is ready for it. I came to the FNU with a similar vision two years ago, which was to upskill myself for the workforce," she said.

"Choosing to study in the customs field was my mother's dream. She had always wanted to see me pursue a career in this area," said Zarin (*pictured*).

"Through my education, I got to learn things which I didn't know before. For example, the customs process and procedures. This has been an exciting two years for me and I am now able to apply everything that I have learnt into a work environment before I actually graduate and become fully employed" she added.

After successfully completing her course work, Zarin is now all set to shine bright in her internship at one of the largest company in the shipping industry.

"Doing an internship is mandatory as per the course guideline. Therefore, I joined AFS as an intern Customs Clerk and I enjoy my attachment because my role is not limited to just one particular function as I am also tasked with performing additional duties. Amongst other things,

I am also requested to prepare documents such as the bill of lading for the company, manifesting, looking after reception area and respond to phone calls and emails," continued Zarin.

She believes internship plays a major role in shaping a students' career.

"There are various things which I had learnt in the classroom that is now applied in the industry. This includes documentation preparation, entry processing, duty payment methods etc," said Zarin.

The intern student said the best part of being an intern is that her workmates make a genuine effort to teach her when she does not understand anything.

"This is the best place I would complete my attachment since the staff are so friendly and nice and they guide me at every step if I'm confused with something or I get stuck somewhere or face difficulties regarding some procedures," she said.

"Upon the expiration of my contract, I would be reviewed again on my performance and progress and after that, it would be decided whether I would be staying with them or not."

For now, her message to future students is to keep striving towards their dreams.

"Many challenges in life may seem insurmountable and limiting but people throughout history have proven that obstacles can be overcome as they contribute to your life experiences," advised Zarin.

Zarin plans to further her studies with FNU.





Sheik Haidar (right) and work colleague Merea at Williams and Goslings in Suva.

## Border services entice Haidar

“Through the two-year program at Nasinu Campus, I have gained deeper understanding of aspects of the field such as tariff, customs law, carriage and bonding, dangerous and prohibited goods, role and responsibility of a Customs Agent, customs trade, finance and marine insurance and cargo.”

“Everything I have learnt at FNU during lectures and tutorials mentally prepared me to work in an organisation and be able to apply my theory to practical situations.”

“This is why I strongly believe the industrial attachment aspect of most of FNU’s programmes are a crucial component of a student’s learning experience because we get the chance to experience what it’s actually like working in the field in which we would graduate in.”

Haider now applies his knowledge during his attachment at Williams and Goslings in Suva. He is part of the Imports Department and completes his five-month placement at the end of this month.

“I enjoy working at W&G. The theoretical skills and knowledge have helped me adapt and learn the operations of a real-life work environment. In the Imports Department we carry out clearances on imported goods and I do this by obtaining the documents required and verify these documents. I then mark the tariff (duty) and prepare a worksheet to input the data.”

“I then print a copy of the document and submit it to my team leader, who approves the entry before it is registered. Once everything is cleared from Customs, I print the Cargo Release Note and pass it onto our operations team to get out the containers from the wharf or to deliver the cargo. Without the Cargo Release Note, we will not be able to clear a consignment from Customs.”

Haider’s determination and work ethic clearly reflected in his excited and detailed explanation of the tasks assigned to him.

He further highlighted that a new skill he gained during his industrial attachment was how to operate ASYCUDA WORLD, a programme that deals with the Customs clearance process.

When questioned on a scenario during his attachment whereby he was able to utilise what he had learnt at FNU, Haider immediately responded without missing a beat.

“Honestly speaking, I have come across many scenarios however the best one I can think of is on INCOTERMS (International Commercial Terms). These are a series of commercial terms which states the obligations of a buyer and a seller on an international level,” he said.

“I remember perfectly well all the explanations and component of each INCOTERM that was provided by my lecturer, Ms Sheenal Shivani.”

He added that being part of an organisation that was inclusive and provided assistance to all staff – regardless of their employment status – helped boost his confidence in performing duties efficiently.

“I will be finishing my industrial attachment soon and I am deeply appreciative to FNU and Williams and Goslings for giving me this opportunity. I cannot wait to graduate and get back into the workforce.”

When reflecting on the current profession compared to his childhood dream, Haider said being undecided did not mean students never ‘planned right’ or did not have a particular ‘passion’.

“It’s okay for students to be undecided at some point during primary and high school because this just means your interests have changed, all you have to do is just think long and clearly about what you want to do and if it is something that will make you happy,” he said.

“In the end, you will be the one reporting to work and enjoying yourself daily because you are in a field that you chose.”

Like most children, Sheik Mustafeez Rahiman Haidar grew up with a dream career that changed at different phases of his life.

The Labasa lad said, as a child, he envisioned being a pilot as he was fascinated with flying and wanted to travel the world. This dream however changed when he entered high school. As a teenager, he wanted to become a pharmacist, which changed to becoming a psychologist later on. However, Haider changed his mind yet again by the end of high school.

“Growing up, my career dreams changed a lot but I say this with pride because I wanted to be really sure of what I wanted to do in terms of my education because this affects both my personal and professional life. I want to enjoy the work that I do so when I finished high school I began looking at courses and found many programmes offered at FNU that I was interested in but the one that caught my eye was a course offered in the Customs field.”

The 21-year-old said he enrolled in the Trade Diploma in Customs course in 2017 after conducting further online research, consultations with FNU academic staff, speaking to a friend that was already enrolled in the programme and seeking the counsel of his parents.

## Teaching excites Raj



One of the major challenges for teachers is capturing and maintaining the attention of students during lessons. For thirty-year-old Preetika Raj, researching and implementation of innovative ideas in the classroom have helped develop a strong bond with students as it empowers young minds to learn and do more in the different subject areas.

The 2nd Year Bachelor of Education (Primary) student is currently undertaking her practicum at Sigatoka Methodist Primary School. Raj teaches Year 5.

“During my practicum, it is such a rewarding feeling to see the students progressing and conveying ideas effectively enough to create a lasting impression,” said Raj.

“Knowing every lesson shapes a life is a wonderful feeling – as a teacher we are inspiring learning, helping students to stand on their own two feet and opening their eyes to what’s possible,” added the Nadroga native.

According to Raj, the six-week attachment strengthened her confidence in interacting with students.

“As a student teacher, I have learnt a lot. At the same time, I have developed an understanding of student behaviour, classroom organisation and management, evaluating student progress, engage in wider school activities and develop professional characteristics for my personal growth.”

The student teaching experience has enabled Raj to place everything that she has learnt about education at Fiji National University (FNU) into action.

“I have embraced this opportunity to become the kind of teacher that I always wanted to be, I have learnt a lot from this experience. Being in front of a room filled with people was a little intimidating for me because this was my first experience of being in a real classroom.”

The attachment enabled Raj to develop a professional relationship with teachers and school administrators.

“Through this experience, I have become familiar with how teachers treat their students and the techniques used by them to unwind a day. I have learnt to recognise the diverse needs of students, especially how to use a variety of strategies and methodologies to effectively include all students in a mainstream classroom and continuously monitor the effectiveness of these teaching strategies through reflections.”

“Best of all I have mastered the concept of differentiating instructions by providing various opportunities for students who have diverse needs and interests. Honouring diversity and supporting inclusive education has allowed me to connect with students so that they are able to demonstrate their knowledge and skills in different ways,” she commented.

Raj has always dreamt of becoming a teacher, but could not complete her studies due to financial constraints, and after completing her secondary education, her life encircled around the household and taking care of her young family.

While manning her young family, she also did part-time work to support her two siblings to complete their university educations.

“Once both my sisters graduated and secured a job, they with the help of my husband managed to put me back to school,” she said.

Raj who has a six-year-old son strongly believes that women can recreate their future dreams and achieve their ambitions which were previously not possible.

“After a decade, going to school was a challenge too. Travelling from Olosara to Lautoka and coming back home each day was not easy as there are a number of parental responsibilities and family attention. However, I am thankful that I got a place at FNU to build my career in teaching as it was my passion.

Raj is optimistic that dreams are not just to be but can become a reality if worked towards it.



## The Roaming Technician

As a young lad, Shalvin Chand had very little interest in being stuck behind a desk all day long. Although he couldn’t avoid that in school, he always thought of pursuing a career that would allow him to be more hands-on rather than completing large amounts of paperwork.

“I did not like to write and always hoped that I wouldn’t have to do a lot of paperwork. I liked to do things with my hands, be more practical,” he said.

Although he knew what kind of work he wanted to do, he still was not sure which field to choose.

“I am grateful to my Careers teacher’s recommendation who suggested exploring the Air Conditioning and Refrigeration field. It was an upcoming trade so I decided to pursue further studies in the field,” he said.

Today, he has the job he always wanted. He works as a Senior Refrigeration Technician, a role that also serves as a Roaming Technician – a position that allows him to be in the field, and doesn’t have much paperwork.

### Early Life and Career

Chand attained his primary education from Khalsa Primary School from 1995 to 2002. He then attended Khalsa College from 2003 to 2004. Their family then moved to Suva and he continued his secondary education at Bhawani Dayal Arya College from 2005 to 2006.

Chand decided to study until Form Six only as he did not need Form Seven for the field of study he had chosen.

He enrolled in the Trade Certificate in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration programme at the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT) in 2007.

“I chose FIT because it was affordable and it offered what I needed,” he said.

This was a two and a half year programme which included six months of workplace attachment.

“The workplace attachment is a requirement for graduation so we have to do it. But this is really good. It allows us to apply what we learn in the classroom and learn from it. This is FNU’s competitive advantage,” said Chand.

He completed his workplace attachment at Econ Refrigeration in Suva.

Chand graduated in 2009 and started working for Airmate Services as a Senior Refrigeration Technician in 2010. He held this post for three years before moving to Narhari Electrical Company Limited in 2013 as the Head of the Refrigeration and Air Conditioning Department.

In 2017, he joined Coca-Cola Amatil Fiji Limited as the Senior Refrigeration Technician, a position he currently serves. This job required him to be a Roaming Technician. This means that he is not be confined to an office space. He is expected to attend to faults or issues faced by the company’s vendors at the vendor’s vicinity.

“I love my job. I receive work orders on my phone from New Zealand and then attend to the issue. I normally work alone and fix the issue on site if possible. The other option is to repair the units in the van. I am given a technical vehicle which is fully equipped like a workshop, therefore I am able to repair refrigeration units in the van,” said Chand.

### Words of Wisdom

“My father passed away when I was very young. I have had to work part-time from a very early



age and realised that I needed to work hard and get educated if I wanted to earn a decent living,” said Chand.

He worked hard in school to ensure that he passes his exams while balancing work and school. “I knew that hard work and dedication is essential to move forward in life so I worked very hard to ensure I succeeded with my goals,” he said.

“From my experiences, I would advise everyone to have goals, be determined and work hard to achieve those goals,” said Chand.

Chand lives in Suva with his mother.

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](mailto:mprc@fnu.ac.fj) or contact 3394000.

Publisher: Fiji National University | Editor: Ranbeer Singh | Design & Layout: Vetaia Dakua | Division Head: Director Marketing and Communications Jenies Mudiliar  
Writers: Kalpana Kaajal, Shireen Lata, Charlene Lanyon, Ronish Kumar, Saleszni Chaudhary, Sharon Chand

**FNUNIKUA** wants to hear from you

FNUNIKUA 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](mailto:mprc@fnu.ac.fj)



Published in partnership with

