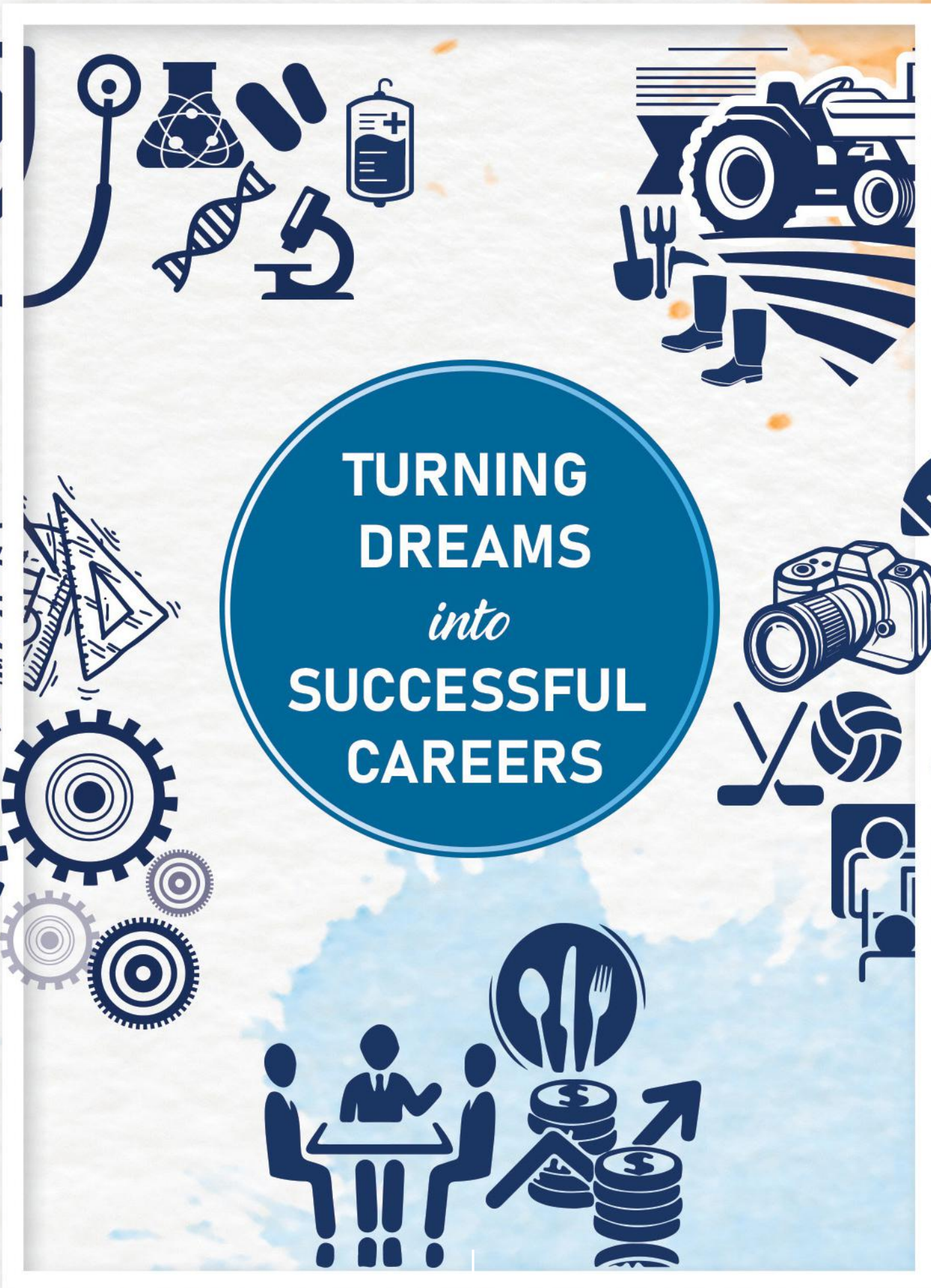




FNUUNIKUA



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LOMANI'S PATHWAY TO A SUCCESSFUL ENVIRONMENTAL CAREER

GROWING A SUSTAINABLE POOL OF EMPLOYEES THROUGH INDUSTRY INTERNSHIPS

Growing a sustainable pool of employees through industry internships



CEST Students during their practical session

As we draw closer to the start of another year, it becomes imperative to get into serious discussions on a prospective study programme that will lead to rewarding careers and given the current world economic situation and the job market due to the COVID-19 global pandemic; it is vital for you to consider your choice of institution and career path carefully.

If you are already in the job market and are thinking of re-skilling to switch careers, completing high school or simply looking to upgrade your qualifications – consider exploring the wide range of study opportunities offered by Fiji National University (FNU).

As the national university, we pride ourselves in providing an educational pathway to anyone seeking a vocational or higher education qualification. Whether you wish to join through a Certificate II and climb the ranks on to Diploma and Degree levels or you meet the requirements to begin your journey at Bachelor's level – we will definitely help you reach your goal.

We offer over 300 programmes from Certificate II to PhDs, which are diversified and covers a variety of subject areas.

We ensure that all our graduating students undergo industrial attachment, which prepares them for the job market in Fiji and the region. This is what sets us apart from other universities – where all our students go through compulsory industrial attachments. Hence, the majority of our students are able to secure paid employment within four months of completing their studies.

Graduate employability is important as it indicates how the institution is performing in terms of meeting employment demand and FNU being a vocational and dual-sector University puts great emphasis on the importance of achieving high rates of graduate employability.

Our surveys of students graduating each April, roughly four months after they completed their studies, show that 80-90% consistently report being in paid employment and this is in line with many developed countries. So, this is a good indicator for students who are intending to join the Fiji National University.

Let me discuss some of the important aspects surrounding attachments/internships.



Why attachments/internships?

In the ever-evolving working environment, industrial attachment or internship is an essential component of a student's academic programme, which can last from 3 months to up to a year – depending on the level of the programme. The student is expected to be attached to a company or organisation that offers services related to the student's programme of study.

For many students, the university can be quite theoretical and internships act as the student's first opportunity to apply their knowledge in the real world. During this period, the student gets the opportunity to apply the skills he or she has learnt throughout their studies while acquiring new knowledge and expertise at the same time.

While on an internship, students are also exposed to the demand and challenges of the workplace, they gain a work ethic while acquiring self-reliance and developing work-based skills at the same time.

Other benefits of internships include:

1. Networking opportunity with people in your field

It is important to keep a good connection with people already in the industry. Not only will you be able to get expert advice about your career choices from experienced people but you will also be afforded the opportunity to acquire valuable skills and knowledge from them.

2. Narrow down your list of potential careers

Internships give you an idea of how the different areas of the field operate. It can help you decide if a particular career or area is or isn't for you, after which you can narrow down the list of careers that interests you.

3. Employment advantage

Having several internship experiences will show that you are keen to gain employment and that you have the necessary skills, knowledge and experience to take on a permanent paid position. Students are encouraged to undertake as many internships as they can. Having a full resume that includes actual industry experience is sure to be a valuable asset in the incredibly competitive graduate job market. A work experience list has the potential to make you stand out from the competition – the more internships on your resume, the more attractive you will look to future employers.

In this edition of the FNUNIKUA, you will read the success stories of our alumni who took the first step towards their dream career by choosing FNU and secured paid employment while on an internship or after completing their chosen programmes.

The programmes highlighted are part of the Fijian Government's Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) scheme and included on the national priority list. Interested students can pursue these programmes at FNU and, if qualifying, supported by TSLB's scholarship and loans scheme.

Vinaka
Professor James Pounder
Pro-Vice-Chancellor Learning and Teaching

Kunadei holds true to Forestry passion

Ratu Tevita Raivalita Baleisomosomo Kunadei has shown that the apple does not fall far from the tree, as he grew from a young boy watching his late Forester father leave home for a week of work duties to becoming a specialist in the same field.

While many may change their career goals once or twice during their childhood, the 42-year-old from Nakorovou village in Batiwai, Serua stayed true to his passion.

Kunadei said growing up in the village and seeing his late father leave for camp with clean clothes every Sunday and return with dirty clothes every Friday with stories about work fueled his interest and a newspaper advertisement was the beginning of his study and employment journey.

“In 2007, I saw an ad about how to enrol in the Forest Technician course, so I applied and was grateful to be selected to attend the Forestry Training Centre in Colo-i-Suva for two years,” he recalls.

“I graduated with an Advance Certificate in Forest Management and was employed by the Ministry (of Forestry) as a Temporary Relieving Forest Guard.”

“A few years into employment as a Forest Guard Timber Inspector, I began thinking of pursuing further studies and after advice and support from my supervisor, Sevanaia Tawake, I enrolled in the Trade Diploma in Forestry at the Fiji National University (FNU) in 2011.”

At this time, Kunadei was supporting his wife, son and mother and had to carefully evaluate if he could financially support his family and tertiary studies.

“My wife was very supportive. We sat down one day, and she encouraged me to pursue my Diploma and upskill

to a degree after that. So, my family was my motivation to upskill myself and be more financially stable.”

“Both God and my family are the backbones of my success because they did not look at the struggles they had to face during my years in school but were focused on my success after graduation.”

“I completed my Diploma in 2012 as a part-time work student and undertook the Bachelor of Science in Forestry course as a full-time student and graduated in 2015. I was pleased to be one of the pioneering students of this degree course.”

Kunadei said he was proud to have graduated twice from FNU within five years.

Following his studies, Kunadei was a Forest Guard Preservation officer and dealt with the licensing of all treatment plants. From 2017-2018, he was a Forest Officer GIS (Geographic Information System) and looked after all the maps needed by the Ministry. A year later, he was Forestry Officer Research and tasked with researching lesser-known species and successfully completed 5 Research Papers for the Ministry.

Since last year, Kunadei heads the Ministry of Forestry’s Preservation Section as Forestry Officer Preservation and oversees the licensing, training, monitoring and inspection of timber treatment plants across Fiji.

He stated that there are 23 treatment plants across the



country, with seven in the Western Division, seven in the North and nine in the Central area.

“The section I look after contributes directly to the national gross domestic product (GDP) from timber analysis in the lab as well as the treatment of timber, which is an important component of sustainable use.”

“Without the treatment of timber, we will overexploit our forests at an alarming rate. Through my position, I am also able to monitor the amount of chemicals used in timber for the safety of consumers.”

Kunadei said he would consider Masters study in the same or related field and plans to start his own business in the timber industry.

He commended FNU for being accommodative of working students and encouraged others to pursue studies in this field.

“Within this course there are so many technical areas anyone could specialise in such as sawmilling, inventory, harvesting, preservation, timber grading, entomology, etc,” he said.



APPLICATIONS for National Topers Scheme (NTS) and Tertiary Education Loan Scheme (TELS) is NOW OPEN

Students wishing to **apply** for the two schemes mentioned above can do so from **23 November 2020** until **24 January 2021**. Students must **apply**, even without the Year 13 provisional results and offer letter from the Institutions by the due date.

Full information on the schemes edibility criteria and a step by step guide on how to apply online is available on the TSLB website www.tslb.com.fj. For any issues with the online application, applicants are requested to email to it@tslb.com.fj with full particulars of the issue.

APPLY NOW 2021

Visit the following link: www.fnu.ac.fj/study/program/ to check out our extensive programme list and apply via: www.fnu.ac.fj/study/apply/

The following programmes offered by FNU’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) are part of the Fijian Government’s Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) identified national priority list. Interested students can pursue these programmes at FNU supported by TSLB’s scholarship and loans scheme.

COURSES OFFERED AT COLLEGE OF AGRICULTURE, FISHERIES AND FORESTRY (CAFF)

Priority Area	Programme
Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry	Bachelor of Science in Agriculture Bachelor of Science in Forestry Bachelor of Science in Fisheries Bachelor of Science in Animal Science
Special Areas (Certificate and Diplomas)	Trade Diploma in Aquaculture Trade Diploma in Animal Husbandry Certificate IV in Horticulture





Melania Lomani explaining result and attending to business customers.

Lomani's pathway to a successful environmental career

Self-confidence and the willingness to complete her studies, no matter how long it took, has been the mantra behind 34-year-old Melania Lomani's successful career as a Scientific Officer at Water Authority of Fiji (WAF).

Lomani was not born with a silver spoon in her mouth. Despite the financial hurdles, she completed the programme Diploma in Environmental Science at Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

She was also able to secure a full-time job even before her graduation.

Lomani graduated with a Diploma in Environmental Science in 2015 and decided to further her education in Bachelor of Science in Environmental Science in which she graduated earlier this year.

Currently, she is pursuing a Post Graduate Diploma in Environmental Science and Management.

"My father was the sole breadwinner of the family, and there were five of us attending school. He used to work for PWD while I was in primary school. Once I moved to Suva for further education, my father's only means of getting money was the sea," said Lomani.

"He was a diver and would normally go out diving in the afternoon and came back in the morning. Whatever money he got from his catch, he used it for our daily living and education."

"I chose to study at FNU because the fees were affordable for me. Secondly, after attending the Open Days organised by the universities, I felt FNU's study

environment was easily adaptable for me."

"I am so thankful to my father for paying my first-year's fees with the little money he had in his Fiji National Provident Fund (FNPF)."

During the second year of her tertiary studies in 2008, Lomani applied for attachment at WAF's Water and Sewerage Department and worked diligently, managing to secure a permanent position in the same department in 2010.

"I still had some units left before I could graduate with my Diploma qualification. After getting the job, I came up with the idea of saving for my fees and continuing with my studies whenever I have enough money to pay for my fees."

The mother of two also acknowledged the continuous support and guidance from her husband Jamie Darren, in the successful completion of her studies.

Originally from Namena, Tailevu, Lomani chose this field of studies because of her interest in the connection and interaction between humans and the environment as well as to learn about the consequences of our actions such as the destruction of the natural resources and the ecosystem to cater for the modern way of life.

According to her, environmentalists play a crucial role in planning and executing solutions that would help heal our destructed environment while enabling us to save ourselves from the wrath of nature.

At her current position, Lomani assists in the Liquid Trade Waste Management Services and the Environmental Services in terms of WAF's operation

and is also responsible for Pollution Source Investigation (PSI).

Lomani is one of the proud pioneers of WAF's Liquid Trade Waste Program, which started in 2013 under the National Liquid Trade Waste Policy and was approved in 2017.

"This new program has been put in place to monitor commercial and industrial businesses that are discharging liquid trade waste into WAF's wastewater network and I am proud to be associated with this team till today," she said.

Lomani describes her field of specialisation as a rewarding career choice.

"The most interesting and exciting aspects of my job are travelling – not only in Fiji but overseas as well, meeting new people with the same aspirations about saving our environment and getting to learn something new now and then about our surrounding."

Considering the rapid change in our weather patterns due to climate change, which has led to increased demand for professionals in this field, Lomani encouraged students completing high school to consider a career in the Environmental Science arena.

"There is a great need to act now to slow the effects of climate change for future generations. Hence, the importance of having qualified professionals in the field. Therefore, I would recommend you, students, to realise the importance and demand for taking up a course in environmental science and management," she added.

Lomani's field work day

"Our work deals with industrial and commercial businesses in terms of ensuring that they are complying with WAF's requirements. A work program for the week will be in place, which the team needs to follow. If sampling of a particular business is scheduled for the day, then sampling equipment is to be prepared a day prior. In such a scenario, my morning will start by ensuring all equipment and materials are ready to be loaded to the vehicle before heading to the site. At the site, sample collection takes a minimum of five hours. Once the sample collection is completed, we pack it properly and safely in the esky box packed with ice and drop it off at the Post Office on the same day for it to be transported to our lab in Suva for analysis– National Water Quality Laboratory in Kinoya. Our lab team then analysis the sample and the results are ready in two weeks. This result assists us in identifying whether businesses are meeting WAF's requirements or not in terms of their discharge."



Melania Lomani taking water samples.

Continued from Page 4

The following programmes offered by College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) are part of the Fijian Government's Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) identified national priority list. Interested students can pursue these programmes at FNU supported by TSLB's scholarship and loans scheme.

COURSES OFFERED AT COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY (CEST)	
Priority Area	Programme
Engineering	Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Civil Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electrical Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronics/Instrumentations & Control Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Electronics/Telecommunications & Networking
Technology	Bachelor of Information Systems Bachelor of Science (Computer Science & Information Systems) Bachelor of Science (Computer Science and Mathematics)
Agriculture	Bachelor of Science (Food Technology)
Environment/Marine Science	Bachelor of Science (Environmental Management) Bachelor of Science (Environmental Science)



FNU Equipped Manuelli with skills to venture into gluten-free business



Entrepreneur, Christopher Manuelli did not have a definite career in mind while growing up. However, one thing he always knew was that he had a passion for cooking and indulging in different cuisines. When he entered secondary school, his father encouraged him to study home economics. It was in his home economics class that Manuelli's love for culinary arts strengthened, leading him to incorporate food into a career.

The curiosity to expand his knowledge in the food industry led Manuelli to enrol at Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) programme Certificate III in Cookery in 2011.

"After completing my secondary school education at Suva Sangam College, I enrolled in FNU's programme,

which led me to my first work experience at Botaira Island Resort. Then in 2013, I left to serve a mission for the church of Jesus Christ Of Latter-Day Saint in California USA for two years."

"I returned to FNU in 2015 to complete my Certificate III in Cookery programme. I did my attachment at Uprising Beach Resort and was given a permanent position. However, I had to leave work in 2017 to look after my ailing granduncle."

"In 2019, I returned to FNU to start my Trade Diploma in Culinary Arts. While studying, I opened up my food business, Basil's Fiji," he said.

Basil's Fiji is a home-based food operation that specialises in gluten-free food and monthly lovo.

According to the 27-year-old, learning culinary arts at FNU was fun and absolutely worth it. His journey prepared him well to venture into a unique business of selling gluten-free food.

While completing his programme, Manuelli had represented FNU at the Fiji Chef Competition.

"In 2015, I competed in the open category for live cooking doing local dish and local dessert using local ingredients. For the local dish, I won a gold medal, and for the local dessert, I won a silver medal. Then in 2019, I competed in the open category making a curry and got a bronze medal," he said proudly.

The idea to venture into gluten-free food took root when Manuelli's cousin and nephew were diagnosed with gluten intolerance.

"For those that don't know, gluten intolerance is the body's inability to digest or break down the gluten protein

found in wheat and certain other grains."

"During my studies at FNU, I learnt the professional skills I needed to know to cook and bake and gave me the passion for pushing forward, which allowed me to unleash my creative flair. My lecturers taught me proper techniques to make gluten-free goodies with creative presentations," he said.

"I always dreamt of opening up my business and was looking for my niche. I finally got the idea when my family members were diagnosed. It was then when I realised it was so difficult to find gluten-free bread and pastries."

"Seeing that there was a market for it and that no one else was doing it, I decided to give it a try, and it's been doing well so far. I put into practice what I had learnt during the practical classes at FNU. I get new clients weekly who message on my social media page. I've also asked my clients what they've missed eating since they became gluten intolerant, and then I work towards what they want. And that gives me the challenge to learn to make something new that's gluten-free," he said.

"The experience I gained during my studies exposed me to many different people. The food business is all about who you know. During my study, I met professionals in the field and found a mentor who assisted me in developing my skills," he said.

Manuelli completed his Trade Diploma in Culinary Arts in November and is now focusing on expanding his business.

"I can now focus on my business. I am planning to open my restaurant not only specialising in gluten-free food but going into other special needs like dairy-free, vegan and other specialities or dietary requirements," he added.

College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences

APPLY NOW



Applications for the following programmes have been extended till **31 December**.

- Certificate in Universal Treatment for Substance Abuse
- Certificate in Clinical Laboratory Technology
- Certificate in Phlebotomy
- Bachelor in Environmental Health
- Bachelor in Health Promotion
- Bachelor in Health Service Management
- Bachelor of Nursing (Lateral Entry)
- Bachelor in Oral Health
- Bachelor of Physiotherapy
- Bachelor of Public Health
- Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Health (Disaster Management)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Health (Food Safety Management)
- Postgraduate Diploma in Health Promotion
- Postgraduate Diploma in Health Research
- Postgraduate Diploma in Human Nutrition
- Postgraduate Diploma in Physiotherapy Rehabilitation
- Postgraduate Diploma in Sexual and Reproductive Health
- Postgraduate Diploma in Non Communicable Diseases (NCD)
- Master of Applied Epidemiology
- Master of Public Health in Non-Communicable Diseases (NCD)

Log onto the following link:

fnu.ac.fj/study/apply/ or visit our Student Academic Services at your nearest FNU Campus or email to admission@fnu.ac.fj to submit your completed FNU Application forms.

Narayan's journey with number crunching



As a working student, Bimal Narayan knew he was in the right learning environment at the Fiji National University (FNU) as he would not get penalised for leaving class early to catch his last bus home.

Enrolled at FNU's then Fiji Institute of Technology (now the College of Engineering, Science and Technology) in 2001, Narayan said it was easy to complete his Diploma in Business Accounting as he had understanding lecturers and accessibility to lecture notes and resources through online sites such as Moodle.

"I started working after completing my secondary school at Lelean Memorial School and knew I wanted to become an Accountant. As a working student, I pursued my ambition but found that although classes were in the evening, I still had to leave at 7:30 pm to catch my last bus home to Sawani."

"Even though the classes were scheduled until 9 pm, I was fortunate to have lecturers who would provide us with the tutorial and lecture slides needed instead of penalising those who had genuine issues for not attending the full class."

"After graduating with my Diploma in 2004, I knew this was the place I would further my studies," he said.

Narayan, from Vuniniudrovu in Sawani, Nausori, said as he resumed employment, he was able to apply the skills and knowledge learnt at university and progress professionally.

"The skills I gained have built my confidence and enables me to work efficiently and effectively. I have confidently succeeded in senior management positions as I attained the qualifications required and applied my learnings to my work."

"This is in the areas of audit, consultancy as a financial consultant and MYOB technical and training provider, senior management position holder, board-level liaison, presentations at conferences and other administration, human resources and procurement work."

Narayan indicated that his career journey was challenging but enjoyable as it brought

him positive growth professionally. He has held senior management level positions across the market with different companies in various industries such as the chemical industry for three years, a hospital for two years, a non-governmental organisation for seven years and in construction for four years.

After deciding to upskill his qualifications, Narayan enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce – Accounting and Information System course at FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and graduated in 2015. He attained his Master of Commerce in Accounting two years later. He attributed his success to his parents who did not finish their primary school but ensured their children graduated up to Masters level and beyond.

His professional achievements included paper presentations in Port Vila-Vanuatu, Incheon-South Korea, and attending workshops and organising the PDF regional conferences in Auckland, New Zealand, Noumea, New Caledonia, and Nadi, Fiji. He has also travelled across the Pacific Island countries, Asia, Australia and NZ for work purpose sharing his skills and expertise.

He is currently a Private Consultant providing financial, administration and business advice, support and training to clients and assists in installing and implementing the MYOB software.

Narayan also conducts free of charge consultancy work for disability non-governmental organisations in Fiji and has helped the Fiji Disabled Persons Federation and United Blinds Persons of Fiji clear their audits from 2014 to 2019, install and implement MYOB system, train staff and review organisation finance policies.

"As a Chartered Accountant member of the Fiji Institute of Accountants (FIA), I am currently a loan assessor for COVID-19 concessional loan packages provided by Government for Fijian micro, small and medium (SME) enterprises," he said.

"This free of charge commitment towards people within the community is my contribution as an FIA member and on behalf of Government as many businesses and individuals are facing hardships."

"Our timely loan approvals have helped a lot of individuals, and SMEs expand their current operations or start new ventures by utilising their skills."

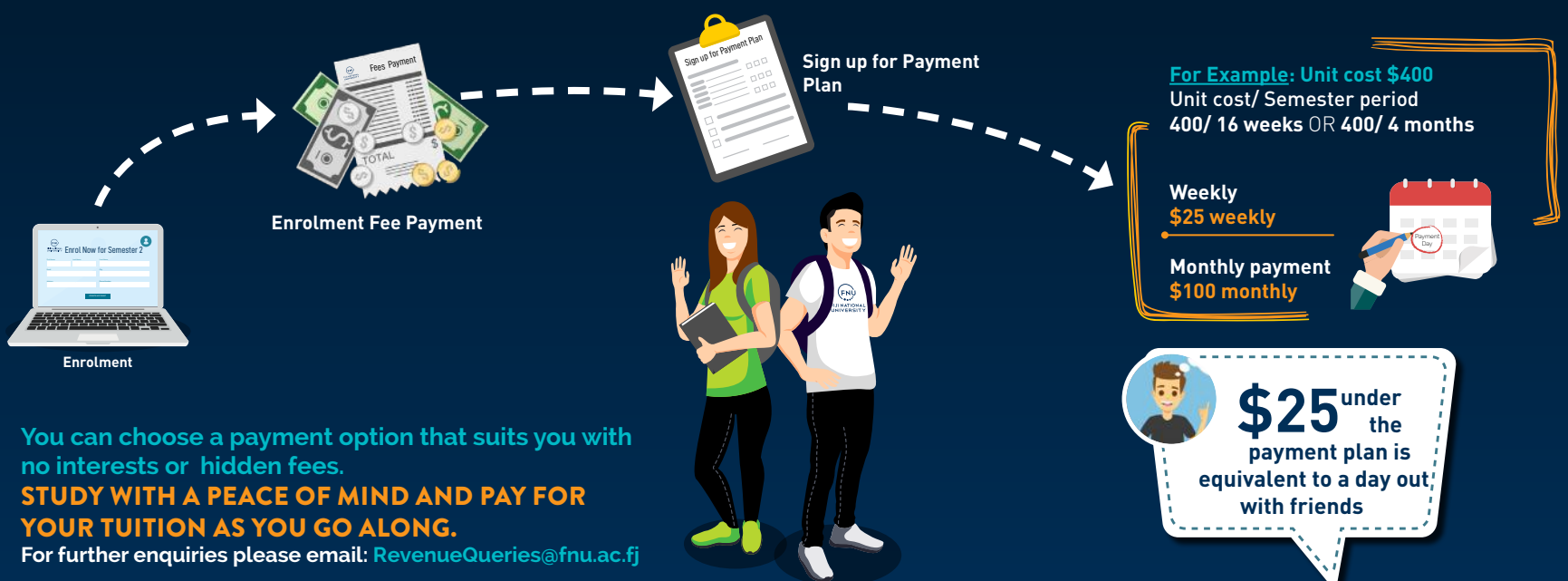
Narayan plans to enrol in FNU's new CPA-accredited Masters programmes and aspires to hold a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) or Chief Financial Officer (CFO) position in the coming years.

The following programmes offered by College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) are part of the Fijian Government's Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) identified national priority list. Interested students can pursue these programmes at FNU supported by TSLB's scholarship and loans scheme.

COURSES OFFERED AT COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, HOSPITALITY AND TOURISM STUDIES (CBHTS)	
Priority Area	Programme
Commerce	Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting & Economics
	Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting & Finance
	Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting & HRM and Industrial Relations
	Bachelor of Commerce in Economics & Finance
	Bachelor of Commerce in Economics & HRM and Industrial Relations
	Bachelor of Commerce in Finance & HRM and Industrial Relations
Special Areas (Certificate and Diploma)	Trade Diploma in Culinary Arts



FNU NOW HAS FLEXIBLE FEE PAYMENT OPTIONS!!



Chand, a passionate teacher



The former FNU student hails from a rural community in the outskirts of Nausori and attended Naitasiri Primary School after which he completed his secondary education at the Baulevu High School.

Youngest of three siblings in his family, growing up Alvin Chand knew he wanted to pursue a career in the teaching field.

Not able to secure a scholarship led Chand to divert his mind from teaching to some other field. He enrolled in the Trade Diploma in Architectural Technology programme at the FNU's College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) in 2011.

His hard work earned him a scholarship in 2013 which encouraged him to pursue a Bachelors in Civil Engineering. Chand graduated in 2016.

Still determined to fulfil his dream, Chand completed a Graduate Certificate in Education before he finally became a teacher.

"Ever since I was a child, I knew teaching was my true calling. My sister Ashika Lata is a teacher, and she has always been an inspiration to me. At first, I feared I might not be able to become what I wanted to be, but anything is possible if you are focused in life," said Chand.

The industrial-arts teacher further added that the

opportunities he had access to while studying at FNU, allowed him to combine his architectural and civil engineering knowledge, in the field of teaching.

"I can teach my students the various methods of learning, for example, problem-solving skills and the advantages of peer and group teachings since I practised this during my education journey at FNU. Currently, I am pursuing a Postgraduate Diploma in Education, and this will additionally enhance my technical skills such as usage of technology, innovations and updated information," he mentioned.

"I feel FNU has prepared me well to be a good teacher. I was taught good communication skills which help me train my students for daily routines till date," said the FNU alumni.

"I assist my students in creating designs, mould them for better career pathways as well as prepare them for tertiary school life."

According to Chand, Fiji needs qualified engineers. Consequently, students should see this subject as a prospective programme when they enter the University.

"Believe in yourself. No dream is big or small, but it is how hard we strive in aiming to achieve our goals," he said.

Self-belief and dedication are two virtues that 28-year-old Alvin Chand holds dear to his heart and applies religiously in his daily life.

Chand is a graduate from the Fiji National University, (FNU) presently a teacher at the Nakasi High School.

From Supermarket to Classroom, Lal shares her inspirational journey



Shalin Lal (middle) with fellow colleagues at Ba Sangam College.

Two words aptly define Fiji National University (FNU) graduate Shalin Lal – diligent and determined. Whether it is the focus to power through daily work challenges, or the drive to chase the big dreams, Lal has got it all covered.

"Success is not final, and failure is not fatal. It is the courage to continue that counts," she mentioned.

It is this attitude that has seen Lal successfully achieve her dream of becoming a teacher.

Born and bred in Rakiraki, she studied at Madhuvani Primary School and later joined Penang Sangam High School.

Growing up, the former FNU student had always envisioned life as a school teacher,

but destiny had some other plans when she ended up in the Food 4 Less Supermarket as a Cashier in 2016 when financial constraints could not cater for her tertiary education.

Unlike her other friends, Lal had to walk different pathways before she could reach her destination.

"It was a difficult journey. I spent a year working in a supermarket and then moved on as a data entry clerk at Electomech Distributors in Suva, where I worked for almost five years," said Lal.

The secondary school teacher was able to earn enough to start her educational journey in 2017.

"I worked tirelessly those several years. The love and encouragement from my late father Jagdish Chandra and my mother Suman Lata and the financial support from my sister and brother-in-law empowered me to enrol into the Bachelor of Education Secondary (Mathematics and Information System) programme at the Fiji National University."

"At an early age, I was curious about Mathematics and Computer Science. The desire to find answers to my questions led me to study the two subjects," Lal recalled humbly.

As a working student, Lal had to juggle between work and studies; however, proper-planning kept her focused.

"Every class at FNU has been as special as any other, but the best part was FNU's fee structure. As a private student, I was always concerned if I will be able to cater for the following semester's fee, and FNU's fee was very affordable."

"Also, the skills which I have gained during my university days will help my lifetime. I have learnt the high and quality information about computers and programming skills, I learnt how to solve questions and prepare students for examination and competition, and I have gained clear and confident communication skills," she stated.

"I would like to encourage the current students to stay focused and set a high academic standard for yourself. My message for prospective FNU students is to select your programme wisely so you will be able to find work easily, especially if the global pandemic continues in future," mentioned Lal.

The following programmes offered by College of Humanities and Education (CHE) are part of the Fijian Government's Tertiary Scholarship and Loans Board (TSLB) identified national priority list. Interested students can pursue these programmes at FNU supported by TSLB's scholarship and loans scheme.

COURSES OFFERED AT COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION (CHE)

Priority Area	Programme
Social Sciences	Bachelor of Applied Social Sciences
Education	Bachelor of Education (Secondary) – Industrial Arts Bachelor of Education (Secondary) – Maths and Physics



A career in the Accounting field

Rukhsard Banu attributes her successful career to curiosity and keen interest in the fundamentals of business management from an early age.

Banu's family operates a retail store in Rakiraki town and while growing up she would spend most of her time hanging out in the store with her parents and watch the daily activities involved in running a business.

"I was always curious about how things work in the business sector and I would keep asking my parents' different questions daily. While in the store, I observed stock coming in, my parents using accounting methods of stocktaking, then setting the goods, pricing it, selling and managing accounts. This got me interested to pursue further education in the Accounting field," she mentioned.

After completing her primary education at Rakiraki Muslim Primary School, Banu studied Accounting with other subjects at Rakiraki Public High School. Her interest in pursuing a career in the accounting field was boosted while studying the subject in high school.

Tertiary Education and Career

Banu made a tough choice of leaving her family behind and moving to Suva in 2012 to enrol in the Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting and Finance) programme at the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS).

"I come from a conservative family. Being the only girl in my family, everyone was protective of me. It was the first time I was going to stay by myself – away from my comfort zone and the protection of my family members," she explained.

"Nevertheless, I was excited for the new journey ahead as I was a step closer to achieving my dreams in the professional arena. As the day drew closer for me to commence my journey on this unknown path, I became nervous but remained positive and hoped for the best for my future."

Reminiscing her student-life at FNU, Banu said, "I faced some challenges initially, however, I was able to adjust well to the university environment with the new friends that I made along the way."

"I remember how we used to burn the midnight candles to complete our assignments and prepare for the upcoming exams. Tuna sandwiches, noodles and even Weet-bix were our go-to snacks at night in our dorms."

"Overcoming the challenges and working hard towards achieving our dream careers turned us, friends, into more of a family, where we would even look out for each other when someone fell ill or had any other issues. We were there for each other on every step of our uni-days."

In 2015 Banu completed her industrial attachment at the Water Authority of Fiji (WAF). She was then offered a full-time position as an Accounts Payable Officer at WAF.

She graduated in 2016 and continued working for WAF until August 2016 after which she joined the Office of the Director of Public Prosecution (ODPP) as an Accounts Payable Officer.

"I acknowledge my work colleagues at WAF for guiding me and I will always remember the organisation for giving me the chance to commence my career there."



ODPP allowed me to polish my existing skills and knowledge in the field of accounting while learning new things about the profession," said Banu.

After a year, she had two short stints at Digicel Fiji Limited and G Prasad Associates, respectively, before moving to Ashabhai as an Internal Auditor in 2018. She worked here for one year and decided to resign in 2019 and move back to Rakiraki to spend time with her family.

"I planned my wedding in August of 2019, following which I decided to leave my job and have some quality time with my family. There were lots of preparations to be done as well."

Following her wedding, Banu moved to Auckland, New Zealand.

"Initially, I was quite nervous to be in a new environment and finding work was difficult too."

After adjusting to her new surroundings, Banu started doing part-time jobs. The COVID-19 situation, however, made her hopes for getting a full-time job even more difficult.

She worked for Aayaans Development Ltd as a part-time Admin Officer. She recently received a full-time contract with the same company as an Accounts Officer and Rental Manager.

"During this pandemic, I am thankful that I still had a part-time job, which led to a permanent position within the same company. The company I work for is a construction company and are developers of residential properties in South Auckland."

She is thankful to her current employer for allowing her to train in other aspects of the business such as learning the roles and responsibilities of a Real Estate Agent.

Banu enjoys her work and credits her success to her parents and FNU.

"I am happy with my job and I acknowledge my parents for allowing me to pursue my dream career. FNU also deserves the credit of my success for laying the foundation of my career. The practical and compulsory industrial internships component gives FNU graduates a competitive advantage when applying for jobs."

Words of Wisdom

Banu has urged graduates to dream big and pen their long-term goals before commencing in their chosen careers.

"Do not aim for big money straightaway when you get into the field. Instead aim to gain valuable experience and expertise which will make you a treasured asset for any organisation and this is where the money will come to you."

"Therefore, take each step towards your dream passionately and ensure that you work diligently."