

FNUNIKUA



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FNU – HELPING YOU INVEST
IN YOUR FUTURE

FNU LAUNCHES
TVET PASIFIKA

FNU – Helping you invest in your future



In these uncertain times, it is more important than ever to look to the future.

One important way we can prepare for a post-pandemic world is by investing in ourselves – preparing for future success by reskilling or upskilling through tertiary education.

At the Fiji National University (FNU), our commitment to being the premier dual-sector university means Fijians can choose from a wide variety of career-related programmes and attain qualifications from certificate to doctoral levels. We are well set up to enable our students to develop new expertise and competencies – either in the same or a different area of study.

To adapt to the current challenges, FNU has successfully moved into a fully online mode of learning, teaching and assessment, building on the experience gained in 2020, to ensure that students can continue with their studies with minimal disruption. Prospective students who enrol for Semester 2 studies can be assured that they will be provided with the necessary support needed to transition smoothly into this mode of learning.

The University enjoys a close working relationship with the FNU Students’ Association (FNUSA), enabling students to be at the heart of FNU’s thinking.

Learning support & zero-data access

FNU’s Colleges and academic staff have been tirelessly working with the University’s Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (CLTE) and the Centre for Flexible & E-Learning (CFEL), the Division of Information and Communications Technology (ICT), Office of the Registrar and other departments to ensure that students can access learning materials remotely until face-to-face classes become possible again.

FNU has also negotiated with Vodafone and Digicel for zero-data access for students to the University’s Moodle site and website, enabling students to access their learning materials and online learning and teaching activities for free.

Students are provided with a variety of virtual learning support and activities by both CLTE and CFEL. These resources and activities are either self-paced or guided by Student Success Specialists. Popular initiatives and programmes include the English Language & Maths Help Hub, Learning to Learn Online, and Guide to Effective Learning. Webinars focusing on students’ experiences while studying at home and online community chat groups in Moodle (‘Talanoa Karo’) have kept students engaged beyond the classroom and foster a sense of university engagement and learning continuity. Colleges have also developed additional support measures targeted at first-year students.

Flexibility in learning

FNU has adopted maximum flexibility to support students with connectivity



*Professor Toby Wilkinson
FNU Vice-Chancellor.*

challenges during the current restrictions. Students who cannot attend live online classes can access the recorded sessions that teachers upload to Moodle. Students are given the option to continue their studies if they have digital access or pause their studies until such time as face-to-face classes can resume, without penalty.

Flexibility has also been applied to deadlines for assessments, and the format of the assessments themselves has been revised to provide maximum flexibility. The University Senate has agreed that all students will be allowed to complete their assessments with flexibility throughout the semester, quarter and trimester. No student will be penalised for late submission. Any student who cannot submit their assignments by the end of term will not be failed but will be allowed to submit their assessment throughout the year 2021, after informing their College Deans and Lecturers. If students are able to complete

their assessment by the end of the term but fail, they will be given supplementary assessments without any additional fee or charge. Deans and Lecturers are reaching out to students, by email, telephone and the University’s social media pages, to reassure students and ensure that they are fully supported.

e-Learning & growth

Digital technology and innovation in learning and teaching enable programme learning outcomes to be met, whether through face-to-face, blended or fully online delivery. At FNU, students can continue to progress with their studies, confident that their tuition fees are being invested to deliver all the learning outcomes of their course. Moreover, students are also gaining familiarity with digital platforms, which is an important 21st-century graduate attribute to prepare students for success in the context of Industry 4.0.

Through CFEL and CLTE, the University gathers regular feedback from students on how they are coping with their studies. This enables FNU to pinpoint any challenges and address them quickly. Preliminary results indicate that students are generally coping well with online studies.

The University will continue to work closely with FNUSA, Colleges, and Lecturers to ensure that any difficulties encountered by students during the current period of fully online delivery are addressed speedily, and that students are offered regular, timely and proactive support to enable them to progress with their studies.

I am excited to welcome our new and returning students to FNU in the coming weeks. If you are still thinking about investing in your future, you will find a warm welcome and a supportive learning environment when you enrol at FNU.

*Professor Toby Wilkinson
Vice-Chancellor
Fiji National University*

FNU launches TVET Pasifika

The Fiji National University (FNU) launched a new brand known as TVET Pasifika, which is aimed at introducing the University's Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes at the service of stakeholders across the region.

FNU is a modern, dynamic, dual-sector university offering a full range of qualifications from certificate to doctorate levels, from short courses and apprenticeships to full degree programmes and is already the leading provider of TVET in Fiji, as befits the national university and is very proud of, and deeply committed to the regional role.

FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Toby Wilkinson said TVET Pasifika brings together the full range of TVET programmes offered by FNU in a single, dedicated space.

The brand will draw on the collective strength and expertise of FNU's constituent units – its five academic colleges, the National Training and Productivity Centre, and the Fiji Maritime Academy.

"TVET Pasifika is a one-stop shop where students and employers – local, national and regional – can browse, research and enrol onto programmes to boost their employability and fulfil their personal and professional aspirations," said VC Wilkinson.

"Our primary focus is on education for employability, providing our students with the skills, experience and competencies to enjoy fulfilling careers."

Professor Wilkinson said the University was proud of its commitment to Technical and Vocational Education and Training.

He said FNU was committed to ensuring that students are highly employable and 'work ready' the day after graduation, and that they acquire the outlook and motivation to become life-long learners, re-skilling and up-skilling to meet new challenges and take advantage of new opportunities, throughout their working lives.

The University believes that TVET is essential for the post-pandemic economic recovery. TVET Pasifika will enable students, employers, and development partners across the Pacific to select the technical and vocational education and training programmes that meet their specific needs.

"Our extensive portfolio is tailored to support diverse industry sectors relevant to our region,



including agriculture and the marine sector, hospitality and tourism, business and commerce, engineering and technology, education and community care. Our wide range of courses offer individuals and organisations opportunities to train, up-skill and re-skill to meet the changing requirements of national and regional labour markets – now and in the future." Professor Wilkinson said.

Across the world, Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is driving the post-pandemic recovery. TVET enables young people and those already at work to develop the skills, experience

and competencies demanded by employers, in a fast-changing global economy.

TVET Pasifika is committed to supporting the post-pandemic recovery in Fiji and across the Pacific.

"We will do this in alignment with the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), playing our part in supporting quality education, poverty alleviation, job creation and entrepreneurship, national productivity, infrastructure development and inclusive economic growth." Professor Wilkinson said.

Students and stakeholders can learn more by visiting <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/tvet-pasifika/>

Enrol now for Semester II studies

Learn from our industry experts and prepare yourself for the new look workforce by upskilling, reskilling or making a career change with the Fiji National University (FNU). Enrolment for Semester II, 2021 is currently underway.

While Campuses around the country remain closed due to the public health measures in place as a result of COVID-19, FNU encourages all prospective students to apply online by visiting the FNU website <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/student/academic-services/apply-here/>

The entire enrolment process can be completed online. Prospective students can text on 857 or email on admission@fnu.ac.fj if they face difficulties completing the process online or need further information on enrolment for Semester II.

Explore our website www.fnu.ac.fj for the wide range of programmes offered in the fields of:

- medicine, nursing and health sciences,
- humanities and education,



- business, hospitality and tourism studies,
- engineering, science and technology, and
- agriculture, fisheries and forestry.

Classes for Semester II begins on Monday, 26 July 2021.

Providing the best learning experience to students with minimal disruptions remain the primary focus of the University during these unprecedented times.

The University has transitioned smoothly into the online mode of learning and teaching and has introduced flexible options for continuing and

prospective students.

You will be provided with a variety of virtual learning support activities, which are either self-paced or guided by Student Success Specialists. Popular initiatives and programmes include the English Language & Maths Help Hub, Learning to Learn Online, and Guide to Effective Learning. Webinars focusing on students experiences while studying at home and online community

FNU has also negotiated with Vodafone and Digicel for Zero-data access for students to the University's Moodle site and website, enabling students to access their learning materials and online learning and teaching activities for free.

Exams, Assessments & Academic Calendar

To support students during these difficult times, FNU has applied flexibility to deadlines for assessments, and the format of the assessments themselves has been revised. All students will be allowed to complete their assessments with flexibility throughout the semester, quarter and trimester.

For those prospective students facing financial difficulties and have concerns regarding fee payment, FNU is continuing to offer the Flexible Fee Payment option.

To view the revised 2021 Academic Calendar, follow this link: <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/study/apply/academic-calender/>



Females encouraged to pursue their career goals

(pictured) wants to encourage women and girls never to lose hope as, through hard work and dedication, perseverance is rewarded.

“My future plans are to upgrade my HR skills, knowledge, and qualifications and pursue HR consultancy opportunities while assisting in the family business. I do not see age as an obstacle if you have a dream in life,” she said.

The mother of one also attributes her spurt of energy to the close support from her family.

Mrs Singh-Sharma comes from a Finance background and has worked in a Chartered Accounting firm as an account assistant for three years and then in a public entity as an Assistant Accountant for six years.

She then joined the HR and Administration Department and has also worked as HR Officer for seven years before being promoted to HR Executive at the Fiji Meat Industry Board.

According to Mrs Singh-Sharma upskilling and re-

training is important and praised NTPC for providing relevant courses via the online platform so students could continue with their studies during the COVID-19 pandemic.

“The switch to online learning mode provided students with an opportunity to learn new things and challenge ourselves to adapt to the new learning environment. It was essential to develop new learning strategies while ensuring normal work-life balance and learning cross-functional skills,” she said.

The necessity of the shift to online learning also heralded new skills to manage time and keep to her schedule.

“FNU provided excellent support and mechanisms for students to get through the programme in the most challenging times. I found the learning platform very conducive and convenient. We are grateful for the learning opportunities and the lecturers and staff for the immersive online experience.”

Juggling her busy work schedule, managing family time and studies, she said it was important to put perfect her time management skills.

“I managed my studies effectively with the help of stringent timetable and the introduction of study groups by the tutor facilitated a lot of online learning and sharing knowledge,” she said.

“We were always connected through online groups, group work, projects, and online tutorials and lectures. Tertiary learning requires a lot of independent research, and with the help of the University, we were able to keep ourselves equipped with information, facts, and findings.”

Mrs Singh-Sharma said she also engages in activities such as readings, healthy cooking, gardening, and spiritual recitals.

NTPC committed to enhancing productivity

Employees are the key component in organisations because they are the ones who make things happen. These are the comments of Fiji National University’s (FNU), National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) Director, Dr Isimeli Tagicakiverata, who added that NTPC remains committed to providing essential training and upskilling programmes to assist organisations in maintaining and efficiently increasing outputs.

NTPC, as the National Productivity Organisation for Fiji, has swiftly and successfully adapted to providing quality courses online since the COVID-19 pandemic began last year.

“Despite the overwhelming use of technology, computers, and machines, in industry and various sectors, we still need people to operate, monitor, and repair them,” Dr Tagicakiverata (pictured) said.

“Productivity plays an important part in the success of any organisation in Fiji. This can be successfully attained by reskilling or up-skilling employees to improve their skills, competence, and qualifications,” he said.

Dr Tagicakiverata said HR practices around the world had to incorporate a level of flexibility as a result of the pandemic, which enabled organisations to allow employees to work remotely.

He added organisations also have had to implement social distancing, shift work, and other essential measures to comply with the new medical regulations and prevent the spread of COVID-19.

“Organisations have a duty of care to look after their employees, to provide a nurturing and conducive environment where the workers can demonstrate their talent and creativity and maximise their contribution to the organisation. This means that employers ought to provide mentoring with in-service training support so that workers who may be lagging in some areas have an opportunity to improve their knowledge and



skills.”

Dr Tagicakiverata said it is vital for organisations to train workers to become productive while telecommuting as a majority to all training focused on workplace productivity.

He shared it was important for employees and executives to learn and practise the various productivity tools and techniques they can use while working from home to boost productivity and quality of work while they also tend to the family and household needs.

“It is for this reason that the NTPC is intent on providing more online short courses for people in the industry and the general public. These online short courses would enable virtually anyone to register and access our training from any location in Fiji, in the Pacific, or worldwide.”

Dr Tagicakiverata said learning online provided students with an opportunity to do the courses in their own time and from the comfort of their homes.

Meanwhile, individuals can email info.ntpc@fnu.ac.fj to enquire about programmes and courses offered by the Centre.

Flexible fee payment options at FNU

Prospective and current students of the Fiji National University (FNU) can pursue their academic aspirations without the financial stress through the institution’s flexible fee payment option.

FNU will continuously evaluate and enhance the student learning to make the learning experience a smooth transition for its students and the payment plan will ease the financial requirement of paying the full amount upfront.

When enrolling, new students can apply and enter into a payment plan with agreed instalments at the beginning of their semester, trimester or quarterly mode of study.

Students will be able to pay their fees through the duration of their studies and sit for their exams despite have outstanding fees, as long as the fees are paid by the end of this year.

There are no extra charges for payment plan applications. The University may also offer an extension on fee payment dates if required.

Below are the simple steps for students who wish to study with flexibility in fee payment;

- Apply Now for Semester 2 studies at FNU
- Once enrolled, students can download the editable Form by visiting the FNU website on https://www.fnu.ac.fj/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/Payment_Plan_Application.pdf.
- Once completed, send the form to the Finance Division on RevenueQueries@fnu.ac.fj

For any queries, you can also email the address listed above.

Cake Lab by Jay – A Success Story



Cagica working on a cake order

Growing up in a family that celebrated food not only tantalised Josese Muatabu Lesikicicia Cagica's tastebuds, but also deepened his passion to pursue a qualification in cookery and eventually open his own baking business.

The 27-year-old from Narocivo village in Vanuabalavu, Lau said he never realised helping in food preparation and being in the kitchen would turn into a career for him. As he developed a keen interest in watching cooking shows and baking, it was his sous chef uncle that gave Cagica (pictured) a nudge into this career field.

In 2010, he enrolled in the Certificate III in Commercial Cookery course at the Fiji National University (FNU), graduated the following year and is still reaping the benefits a decade later.

"I am grateful to my uncle, Lino Temo, for motivating me to follow my heart," he said.

"It was the learning environment at FNU that developed and enhanced my skills as I was able to study in a practical setting."

"Learning through technical and vocational education and training (TVET) was important for me because I know that without quality education, there would not be any competition in the workforce."

Cagica said his lecturers at FNU were mentors that provided support and guidance throughout and after his studies which boosted his morale and confidence.

Since then, he has worked at several renowned resorts like Radisson Blu Resort and Spa, Tokoriki Island Resort, Sofitel Resort, Kokomo Private Island Resort and at the Nautilus Resort in Rarotonga, Cook Islands. This was before the current global pandemic.

Last year, Cagica put his entrepreneurial skills to work and started his own baking business called The Cake Lab by Jay. He decided to register his business on 1 July, a special date as it also marked his birthday.

Cagica vividly remembers the Sunday evening after dinner when he decided to make his first post on a Facebook group about his baking services. Despite being more worried about the critics than the compliments, he made the post and was soon inundated with orders.

"The response from people in terms of orders and support was more than I expected, I was in a state of shock," he said.

"I've had tremendous support from my parents, family and friends and I'm so blessed."

"I never knew people would appreciate what I do and since there are a lot of well-established cake shops in Suva, I sort of underestimated myself."

"However, I regained confidence and took advantage of platforms such as social media to market my cakes. I now receive local orders and from as far as Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and Africa."

"Many of them order for relatives here in Fiji."

By September last year, Cagica was able to invest about \$10,000 in buying his first set of basic equipment and baking utensils.

When the second wave of COVID-19

began in Fiji earlier this year, Cagica knew he had to change his business strategy to meet his customers' demands amidst the lockdown, containment and movement restrictions.

"I released a revised price list to suit the current situation and with restrictions on social gatherings, smaller cakes were in demand for celebrations with immediate family members."

"I occasionally used my vehicle to deliver the cakes, especially at the borders to places outside Suva."

"Through it all, I was still able to operate during this current situation and I would honestly say that this has been more of a blessing than a curse to me."

Cagica said it was a hectic experience meeting his orders based on the daily press conferences that were initially held daily by the Ministry of Health.

"With unpredictable announcements made at the press conferences, I had to act quickly and inform most customers by shifting pick up dates earlier than scheduled, allocating pick up times to suit the last minute changes and making sure customers were happy with the change."

"I still made things work and on Mother's Day, I had my highest target of daily cake orders which was 35," he said with a smile.

He added that strict COVID-safe protocols were followed during the baking and delivery process to ensure the safety of his business and customers.

Cagica said he plans to go under further studies in business at FNU to enhance his portfolio.



Sowane resets goals and joins FNU

Up until March last year, Lavenia Sowane (pictured) was confident that her career would primarily remain in the tourism industry, however her career field changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The twenty-three-year-old quickly realised the need to reinvent herself so she can remain financially secure. This led her to enrol at Fiji National University (FNU) to learn an entirely new skillset.

With a tertiary qualification in International Tourism Management under her belt, Sowane enrolled in the Bachelor of Accounting programme offered through FNU's College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), Namaka Campus in Nadi.

The choice, Sowane said, was simple and it enabled her to be on par with the changing dynamics of the employment market.

"It's important for people to keep an open mind about their aspirations and be ready to try something new. That's what I did when things took a turn for the worse. You have to remain positive and keep looking for opportunities in the midst of adversity," said Sowane.

The Nadi lass describes her journey at FNU as a great experience that will enable her to achieve a new level of success. She adds that the accounting curriculum has a good structure that provides her with real experience for her desired field.

"I chose to study at FNU because of accessibility and because of the diverse range of programmes on offer. At FNU, you will find that academic and support staff will

assist and guide you on the path of your degree."

"After completing my undergraduate studies, I returned to Fiji in 2019 and joined my family business, Pacific Destination. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, things didn't go as planned. I was not disheartened but instead started to research and looked into skills that are in demand and will be helpful in our family business and hence opted to enrol in Bachelor of Accounting in Semester 2, 2020 at FNU."

"Enrolling in a new programme can sound daunting to some, but it's an exciting opportunity to take on and learn a new skill set. Reskilling will expand my current skill set, setting me out apart from the rest. At times we don't feel motivated to learn, especially new things that are completely beyond the scope of what we currently do. We can only unlock our greater potential if we try to overcome the negativity which is rooted in our minds."

According to Sowane, it is essential to have relevant qualifications.

"We live in a world where change comes so fast that whatever tertiary qualifications we may have may not be

relevant. Everyone needs to understand that we have to keep refreshing our skill set."

Sowane is enjoying her virtual studies but said the transition required many adjustments to the household front regarding family support, allocating study time and spaces.

"Given my previous University experience, I've been able to adapt swiftly to the change in learning. However, I respect and thoroughly understand my FNU colleagues' coping challenges, mainly the first-year student."

"My advice to fellow students is to communicate with lecturers and the supportive academic teams who can assist. It will ease unnecessary stress and pressure that students may face given their various situations," she adds.

To stay positive during this phase, Sowane encourages students to learn new hobbies or read books to remain

positive.

"From my experience, another way I am remaining positive is by embarking on a new challenge of self-discipline through intermittent fasting. The goal of this challenge is to reset the body and mind physically and spiritually."

"I wish to encourage my FNU colleagues to continue to work hard toward their dreams and aspirations in life. We all have our own stories to write, and it is up to us as individuals to pursue and persevere toward achieving it."

Hostel Arrangements

- Students who have checked out of their FNU hostel accommodation and completed a checkout form will have their hostel fees adjusted and a credit transferred to their account which can be used in the next enrolment.
- Students who have not returned to their FNU hostel accommodation after the mid-semester break will get a hostel fee refund in the form of a credit note. Students who still have belongings to collect should not worry: personal property will remain secured in their respective rooms.
- Students who remain in FNU hostel accommodation will continue to receive practical and pastoral support from the University.
- Students facing severe financial hardship, who have checked out of their hostel accommodation may apply for a refund by completing the form available from the FNU website at: <https://www.fnu.ac.fj/wp-content/uploads/2020/09/Application-for-Refund-of-Fees.pdf>. Completed refund forms should be emailed to accommodationenquiries@fnu.ac.fj
- For any concerns or queries concerning FNU hostel accommodation, please contact **Manager Accommodation** on 9920736 or email on maco@fnu.ac.fj or accommodationenquiries@fnu.ac.fj



Engineering programme fun – Chite



Growing up, Philip Jerry Chite had a keen interest in fixing his broken toys, before moving on to larger items such as chairs and other old equipment he discovered in the garage. But while items did not last after he attempted to fix them, this desire fueled his passion and has since shaped his choice of career.

Originally from the Solomon Islands, Chite (pictured) is

currently pursuing a Bachelor of Engineering (Honours) in Mechanical Engineering at the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

"I love being creative and innovative. Therefore, in my primary and even through secondary education, I started focusing on science and mathematics. I believed this will help me towards my interest in engineering."

Chite describes mechanical engineering as fun and cool since there is a lot of design and creative thinking involved.

"I have friends and relatives from Solomon Islands who are studying at FNU and they advised me that the University offers engineering programmes. I had also learnt through the FNU website that the units offered for this programme are flexible and practical," he said.

"I have learned a lot of new things. Doing practical work has helped broaden my understanding of what I have learned in class or through a textbook. The practical sessions certainly help to sharpen my capability and skills in mechanical engineering designing and research."

Chite highlighted that he enjoys the regional student experience and is looking forward to making more friends and memories while studying at FNU.

"There are a lot of instances that I cherish but my most memorable moments as a student would be going on industrial tours which is an eye-opener as I get to learn about practical engineering applications in the industry. Regional/international student tours would also be one of my favourite experience, where I learnt about the traditional lifestyle and socioeconomic developments in Fiji. Other moments would be the campus open days and studying with my classmates."

The transmission from face-to-face to remote learning has not been easy for Chite.

"The online learning model offers flexible learning during this pandemic. Students are learning from home, which is an approach to lessen movements. However, adjustments and time management skill is required for this way of learning. In contrast, online learning requires more time than studying on campus. It also requires students to be active learners and more independent than relying on face-to-face consultation with lecturers. Online learning limits classes and practical learning."

"Thus, studying during COVID-19 is very challenging. Being isolated and able to cope with my studies, online classes, learning contents, assignment is a new experience for me. I have, however, learned to adjust over time and keep up with my studies."

"The lecturers have also been supportive, attentive and responsive towards students through online discussion and forums."

Chite stays connected with his family via email and social media.

"My mother, father and four older siblings are in the Solomon Islands. Whenever I need advice or guidance in anything, I simply notify them. Staying connected with my family is helping during this COVID-19 situation as it reduces the harmful effects of stress and loneliness."

He is advising the students to avoid distraction, be mindful of safety and be optimistic no matter what the situation is.

"Make good use of the study opportunities available during this COVID-19 crisis. It is crucial to concentrate on your studies and stay healthy both physically and mentally," he added.

Students participate in virtual elective project



As the COVID-19 pandemic redefines the way people work, learn, travel and teach, learning institutions such as the Fiji National University (FNU) have also evolved and adapted to ensure students continue to receive quality education and without disruptions.

While lectures and tutorials are now conducted fully online, students can access their notes at any time and have virtual classroom discussions from the comfort of their homes.

While most clinical and other practical attachments have been pulled on hold due to the current restrictions, various fields of study have envisioned new ways of keeping their students connected and motivated to learn.

Oral Health lecturer, Dr Leenu Maimanuku said the students had submitted their proposals stating their areas of interest and were matched with students from the other two institutions to study with.

"The students will communicate using software such as Microsoft Teams and Zoom and be able to work on a project related to dentistry while they share information about life in Fiji, the dental school, how the pandemic has affected them and what they are doing to adjust and cope," Dr Maimanuku said.

"Our students will also get to hear and learn from their counterparts overseas so the knowledge exchange will benefit everyone in the group."

"Through this programme, we hope that our students

One such institution is the FNU's School of Dentistry and Oral Health at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS).

Through a partnership with the Newcastle University and the University of Indonesia, 13 of the School's final-year Bachelor of Dental Surgery (BDS) students will participate in a virtual elective project with students from the two schools that will run from mid-June to mid-July.

Department of

will develop cultural sensitivity, be reflective and life-long learners who take ownership of their learning journey and enhance their teamwork, collaboration and communication skills."

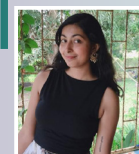
"They will also maintain a structured reflective journal that will form the assessment for this project and deliver group presentation to the rest of the students in this virtual elective."

Some of these students have shared their expectations below:



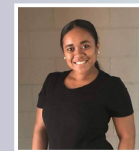
"I look forward to forging new friendships, learning more about various aspects of dentistry, and different cultures and improve my personal development skills."

Sahil Singh



"This exchange is an opportunity to meet and explore new ideas and perspectives, experience different cultures and make new friends in my field."

Suweshha Maharaj



"I am hoping to learn and know more about dentistry and other diverse cultural groups from the other universities."

Losana Buluvakaca



"This is an exciting venture of exploring dentistry in another part of the world despite the pandemic."

Payal Mala



"I'm keen and looking forward to meeting new people, making new friends, and learning new things about Dentistry. Really excited for this exchange programme."

Kartik Rathod

Tuiyoyo enjoys apprenticeship training

Apprentice Timoci Tuiyoyo said the COVID-19 pandemic taught him many important lessons, one being the ability for people to work independently and be abreast with technological advancements to help ease challenges.

Tuiyoyo (*pictured*) is currently pursuing a Certificate IV in Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning at the Fiji National University's (FNU) National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC).

The 21-year-old Nadi lad is also part of the National Apprenticeship Scheme and is employed by Goodman Fielder International (Fiji) Pte Ltd.

"This pandemic has taught many lessons to the people from different walks of life regardless of their financial status, qualification, and occupation," said Tuiyoyo.

"Most students prefer face-to-face learning to online learning. However, with the current situation, we are forced to adapt to the changing environment and for me, attending online classes and learning virtually is a whole new thing."

"I have changed my mindset and look at things differently, considering what is best for me, my family, society, and our beloved country. I have pushed myself to do one thing: assignments or weekly tutorials, working or even protecting my family," added Tuiyoyo.

Tuiyoyo said he found heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) systems to be an exciting field, so he decided to make a career in it, and he believes

NTPC has helped him to fulfil his dream.

"This field gives me the desire to work with the HVAC system, which includes a small spilt air-conditioning system to large ammonia blast freezer systems. The science for this is fascinating. I love to get my hands dirty in conducting small servings or replacing one whole reciprocating refrigeration compressor at work," he explained.

"On weekdays, I am primarily at work and I manage my study by allocating specific times while at work. The management team has been very helpful by giving me as much time as I need daily. My company takes excellent care of me in terms of my education, and I am indebted to them for their support and assistance."

"My work involves checking refrigeration equipment. This includes blast freezers and air-conditioning units done every two hours. After that, I sit to complete other tasks before going through my notes and other learning resources online."

"The teaching staff has been accommodating through this online learning. They have been keeping students



up to date with lecture notes and assignments. The students are connected by a Viber group chat to refer to if we need any assistance," Tuiyoyo added.

Tuiyoyo is eagerly waiting for the pandemic to end so he can undertake his practical lessons and gain hands-on experience.

The National Apprenticeship Training Scheme is a tripartite agreement between the apprentice, employer, and NTPC. The apprentices are monitored and trained by competent personnel from the industry for a duration of three to four years. It allows the individual (apprentice) to be paid as employees while they learn on the job and simultaneously studying for academic awards on a part-time basis.

Invest in Education – Sharma

Fiji National University (FNU) student Vasheeta Sharma, who is currently pursuing a Master of Commerce, believes upgrading one's qualifications provide candidates with a competitive advantage when seeking employment opportunities.

Speaking from her experience, Sharma (*pictured*) said the best investment for career progression is education adding that values such as hard work and commitment make job seekers desirable options for employers.

"Accounting has been my favourite subject since secondary school, which led me to pursue my studies in the same area at the tertiary level. I have seen many opportunities in this field which motivated me to pursue Masters, which can develop me professionally in the area of finance," said Sharma.

Originally from Ba, Sharma joined FNU to study Postgraduate Diploma in Accounting and graduated in 2017.

The 35-year-old further stated that she enjoyed hearing from practitioners in the 'real world' in lectures which led her to pursue her Master of Commerce in Accounting at FNU.

"I chose FNU for a great study environment with all availability of proper resources and good service. I also liked the fact we had guest speakers in our lectures who gave us insights into real-life situations."

"Through my education at FNU, I have attained knowledge on the importance of accounting information in the decision-making process, conduct independent research in

any field of accounting, demonstrate a thorough understanding of international aspects of accounting and finance and also to integrate knowledge, handle complexity and formulate judgements in the field of the accounting profession."

Sharma began her career as an Accountant at Camira Holdings Limited and T. D. Punja and Company Limited. Two years later, she joined the Oceanic Schooner Group of Companies as an Assistant Accountant. She is currently employed as the Revenue Analyst at the FNU's Division of Finance at the Namaka Campus in Nadi.



"Alongside the academic knowledge, my qualifications in the field of accounting gave me a range of skills, such as open-mindedness and learning to work with a diverse range of people," she commented.

"Through my work experience, I am skilled in the administration of payroll, internal audit, preparing budgets, preparing financial statements. My current job activities at the University is processing enrolment adjustments, generating invoices, receiving payments, preparation of banking, debt collection, liaising with sponsor students, attending to student enquiries on the counter, emails and telephones, processing of course withdrawals, maintain petty cash and prepare acquittals and liaising with levy customers."

Sharma's advice to all students is "Do your best to upgrade your qualification, it will lead to better job opportunities and a brighter future."

Anthony hopes to inspire young minds

Selina Marie Anthony loves spending time with young children. So when it was time for her to decide her career aspiration, without hesitation, she opted to become an early childhood teacher so that she can inspire young minds through the joys of learning.

Anthony (*pictured*) is currently studying Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood programme offered under the Fiji National University's (FNU), College of Humanities and Education (CHE), Labasa Campus.

The forty-three-year-old stepped into her career late, but getting an undergraduate degree was always on her bucket list. As a Sunday school teacher at her church Anthony connected with young children, and the decision to go back to school wasn't difficult.

"What attracted me to FNU was the ability to do my programme in Labasa. After seeing children's learning and development in my Sunday school, I wanted to be part of their learning journey," said Anthony.

"After completing my Higher Education in Early Childhood, I ventured into the field of early childhood to assist children to learn and grow. I particularly enjoy creating inviting play spaces around children's interests and observing them explore and discover meaningful experiences."

After teaching for few years, Anthony said she always had in her mind to provide a safe and secure place for young children and with the support of her family, she managed to open an early childhood centre in Labasa town.



"My Kindergarten, Bethesda Little Stars Kindergarten, is located at Labasa town and is convenient as parents can drop off their children en route to work. I have gained so much from teaching little children and being part of their learning journey. And this was only possible because of my husband's continuous support and encouragement," she added.

As a director of an Early Childhood Education (ECE) centre, Anthony said she felt that she needed more knowledge given the changing education landscape.

"I chose to study at FNU as I had previously completed my Higher Education studies here, and it provided an easy pathway towards my Bachelor's programme. In addition, the programme in early childhood will provide me with the skills I need to develop to be a creative and resourceful educator."

"I have learnt the fundamentals in early childhood development and got a real-world experience working in an early childhood centre. The programme has prepared me to develop, implement and evaluate the curriculum to teach young children from birth – 8 years in a variety of setting," she explained.

According to Anthony, education is very important, and that emphasis has trickled down to her children.

"I have three sons, and my eldest son is also doing his Bachelor of Law at FNU Nasinu. The other two are in Years 12 and 13, respectively. I always convey to my sons that education is the most powerful tool to succeed in life."

Anthony encourages everyone to continue their studies as one is never too old to learn and go back to school.

"The mind doesn't age, but it grows."

Mentors guide Asgar towards career success

Rizwan Ali Asgar always found mathematics and physics intriguing. So much so that he wanted to pursue a career that incorporated both subjects. That dream led him to the Fiji National University (FNU) to pursue tertiary education and the start of a rewarding journey.

“I was good in maths and physics and wanted to take up a double major programme with those subjects when my teacher Shameel Hussein introduced me to engineering and advised me to look into the different engineering fields. Learning about engineering changed my life,” recounted Asgar.

He took his teacher’s advice and decided to work towards a career in engineering.

Asgar was born and raised in Rakiraki and has two younger siblings. He attained his primary education at Rakiraki Muslim Primary School and his secondary education at Penang Sangam High School.

Tertiary Education and Career

After completing Year 13, he moved to Suva to pursue a Bachelor of Engineering (Electronic and Instrumentation) at FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) at the Derrick Campus.

“I saw a lot of students taking up Civil, Electrical and Mechanical Engineering but not many were taking Electronics. I was told that it was a bit difficult and quite challenging. Because I love challenges, I decided to take up electronics and instrumentation.”

Reminiscing his student days, Asgar said, “Studying at FNU was fun. I met many people over the years who became good friends. I also learnt many important life lessons as a student. I believe tertiary life is where you grow most as a person.”

While at FNU, Asgar actively participated in many student activities. He was the treasurer of the Derrick Students Association in 2017, President of the Derrick Students Association in 2018 as well as a Council Member representing the FNU Students Association in the same year. In addition, he was also a Tertiary Scholarship and Loan Board (TSLB) Ambassador for the TSLB students at the Derrick Campus.

Asgar undertook the industrial attachment component of his programme at the Land Transport Authority (LTA) in 2019 for six months. After completing that, he was able to secure a full-time job as a Service Engineer for Fuji Xerox.

“My job was included installing new printers, attending to printer break down service calls and fixing it, updating the firmware of printers and calibration of colour, troubleshooting of boards and refurbishing of old machines. Because I was working full time, I took fewer courses in my final year.”

Asgar completed his studies and graduated in March 2020.

In the same year, Asgar received an employment



Asgar at his work station.

opportunity as a Service Engineer from CAS Scales (Fiji) Limited. He snapped up this opportunity. His role was to repair, calibrate and service various types of scales, weighbridges and instruments, help customers understand the working aspect of the product and attend to customer complaints.

A couple of months later, he joined Fiji Dairy Limited as a Maintenance Planner & Coordinator.

“My role at Fiji Dairy included planning work for the maintenance team, carrying out and planning for preventative maintenance work, preparing monthly breakdown report and carrying out thorough and critical checks on all plants and equipment. I also prepared the checklist of new machinery and drawing up the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for our operations.”

Asgar credits his success to his parents and teachers from his primary and secondary schools as well as his

lecturers from university.

“My parents have always been there for me and are my main inspiration. I am also grateful to all my teachers throughout my life as without them I would never be where I am today. My principal at Penang Sangam High School, Ravi Chand, inspired me a lot and believed that I could achieve my goals and I did. I also had some of the best lecturers at FNU who were excellent mentors.”

Words of Wisdom

Asgar’s advice to students is to believe in themselves and know that nothing is impossible.

“Set goals for yourself and work hard to achieve them. Be humble and do not look down on anyone.

Giving his top three tips to graduates starting in their career, he said “take advantage of every opportunity you get in life, keep on learning new things and always ask for assistance if you are stuck or don’t know something.”

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

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Writers: Charlene Lanyon, Shireen Lata, Kalpana Kaajal, Sharon Chand, Salesni Chaudhary, Pravin Narain, Riteshni Singh | Contributors: Professor Toby Wilkinson

FNU NIKUA wants to hear from you

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



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