



FNUUNIKUA



ISSUE NO. 8

AUGUST 2021

TVET STUDIES OFFER ENDLESS OPPORTUNITIES
– GOUNDAR

ROSALIA SIKOA SHINES IN HER ROLE AS
PLANT FITTER



Future-ready skills



FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Toby Wilkinson

The Fiji National University (FNU) is a proud dual-sector University. We recognise that excellent Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) is as important as excellent Higher Education for the future success of Fiji and other Pacific island nations. Indeed, around the world, TVET is recognised as critical to the post-pandemic economic recovery.

Quality education

From short courses and trade diplomas to certificates and apprenticeships, TVET enables young people and those already in work to develop the skills, experience and competencies demanded by employers, in a fast-changing global economy. TVET provides individuals with skill sets for lifelong employability. TVET provides employers with the skilled workforce needed to compete and succeed. In the Pacific, TVET has a crucial role to play in providing educational opportunity, reducing inequality, filling skills gaps, and supporting sustainable economic growth – especially in rural and remote communities.

FNU has unrivalled experience and a proven track record of delivering TVET aligned to labour market needs. We continue to strengthen our learning and teaching through the international accreditation of programmes, investing in our staff, and enhancing our campuses and facilities. Our primary focus is on education for employability, providing our students with the skills, experience and competencies to enjoy fulfilling careers. At FNU, we are committed to ensuring that our 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.

TVET Pasifika

Building on these strengths, FNU is putting its TVET programmes at the service of stakeholders across the region through our TVET Pasifika brand (www.fnu.ac.fj/tvetpasifika). TVET Pasifika brings together the full range of TVET programmes offered by FNU in a single, dedicated space. TVET Pasifika is a one-stop shop where students and employers can browse, research and enrol on technical and vocational education and training programmes that meet their specific needs, helping them boost their employability and fulfil their personal and professional aspirations.

TVET Pasifika draws 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 embodies the FNU ethos of working closely with the industry to provide education for employability. Our TVET teachers have real-world industry experience as well as the right academic qualifications. Our facilities and equipment are benchmarked against international best practices, and our courses are achieving international accreditation. With flexibility in start dates, payment plans and articulation arrangements, TVET Pasifika brings all the resources and capabilities of a large university to serve TVET students, employers and partners.

New study opportunities

The Fiji National Budget for the 2021–2022 financial year includes two major announcements that underline the importance of TVET and provide an opportunity for FNU to play a critical role in the post-pandemic economic recovery. The first is the announcement of 5000 new funded places for TVET courses through the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS). FNU will work hard with employers, communities, students and their families to demonstrate that a TVET qualification is every bit as valuable as a higher educational qualification. Investing in a TVET programme, now with the added opportunity of TELS funding, provides education for employability, and is an investment in the future.

The second announcement is an allocation of \$1 million through the Re-skilling Fund to enable FNU to re-skill individuals who have lost their jobs since the start of the pandemic. In these challenging times, this is a real vote of confidence in FNU, and the University will work hard to repay the trust that the government and people of Fiji have placed in us.

Our commitment

At FNU, we are committed to putting our students at the heart of everything we do; to working together with students, employers and development partners; to ensuring that our TVET programmes are future-focused, entrepreneurial and innovative; and to tailoring our offer to the needs of the post-pandemic economy and the opportunities of the 21st century. Working with our partners, we will continue to innovate, developing new courses and new teaching methods that enable individuals and businesses to become adaptable, resilient and sustainable. Our focus on quality, employability and relevance will support our ambition to become the TVET provider of choice for the Pacific region.

**Professor Toby Wilkinson,
Vice-Chancellor
Fiji National University**



FNU's TVET Pasifika empowers students with lifelong trade skills

The Fiji National University (FNU) launched TVET Pasifika in July 2021, as the centralised platform to achieve its dual-sector strategic goals by strengthening the quality of its Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) teaching and addressing the growing shortage of technical skills. TVET Pasifika is committed to supporting the economic and social development of Fiji and the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) through the provision of relevant, high-quality education and training that maximises graduate employability.

In the 2021/22 National Budget, the Fijian Government announced 5000 new funded places for TVET courses through the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS). Pursuing TVET studies, now with the added opportunity of TELS funding, provides education for employability and is an investment in your future. In addition, the government has also provided funding of \$1M to FNU for offering short courses to upskill and reskill particularly those who became unemployed as a result of the pandemic.

Working with Pacific Island Countries (PIC)

TVET Pasifika endeavours to work in close collaboration with the PICs by providing tailor-made programmes suitable to the current and future jobs market. FNU is liaising with PIC governments and industry partners in assessing the technical skills gap and offer study courses in the areas that are not provided by their own TVET Colleges. PICs are developing nations with low to a middle-income bracket having less developed industrial base and low human development index. Investing in the skills development of such nations through TVET programmes thus becomes a critical component of human capital development.

Whether you are a student, a parent or guardian, or an employer, visit www.fnu.ac.fj/tvetpasifika to explore the wide range of TVET courses on offer.

From short courses and trade diplomas to certificates and apprenticeships: we are confident you will find a TVET course that meets your needs and supports your career aspirations.

SDG Goal 4

FNU's TVET programmes aim to empower youth with relevant technical and vocational skills to transition into adult economic and social roles and to effectively contribute to their community's socio-economic development. TVET Pasifika endeavours to transform TVET education in Fiji and neighbouring PICs in line with the principles of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4: that is, "seeking to ensure access, equity, inclusion, quality and lifelong learning, leaving no one behind".

TVET Pasifika's strategy is to contextualise TVET education into UN's SDG 4, also known as Education

2030. Within the SDG 4 framework, the three dimensions that we consider TVET education to be critical include:

1. Fostering Youth Employment and Entrepreneurship,
2. Promoting Equity and Gender Equality, and
3. Facilitating the Transition to Green Economy and Sustainable Societies.

Across the world, TVET is driving the post-pandemic economic recovery as it enables secondary school graduates and those already in work to develop the skills, experience and competencies demanded by employers, in a fast-changing global economy. TVET being an industry-driven qualification and training scheme tracks closely the changing demands for skills in the jobs market and continuously attempts to fill the skills gap with job-ready TVET graduates.



FNU's Acting Associate Pro-Vice-Chancellor
TVET Dr Rohit Kishore

Lifelong trade skills

It is important to note that TVET studies provide students with skillsets for lifelong employability which is truly beneficial. In the Pacific, TVET has a crucial role to play in providing educational opportunity, reducing inequality, filling skills gaps, and supporting sustainable economic growth – especially in rural and remote communities.

We offer study programmes in various fields including Engineering, Medical, Tourism and Hospitality, Entrepreneurship, Fashion and Design, Cooking and Patisserie, Carpentry, Construction, Automotive, Electrical, Electronics and so forth.

Battered by the global pandemic, economies are focusing their efforts on adapting to the new normal and require new knowledge and skills to manipulate through an increasingly uncertain and changing world. TVET Pasifika is committed to assisting businesses and industries in providing courses such as Adaptability

and Flexibility, Leadership Skills, Tech Intelligence, Emotional Intelligence, Critical thinking, Post Pandemic Soft Skills, Cooperation and Creativity, Payroll Accounting, Business Start-Up, Financial Management, Artificial Intelligence, Digital Marketing, Sustainable Tourism, Sanitation and Food Security, Cyber Security, Data and Network Communication and Counselling.

In the area of health and safety, age care has been identified as an urgent need for qualified personnel in Individual Support for Older and Disabled People. FNU will partner with APTC to offer the Australian Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) which is the prerequisite qualification for employment in the Australian age care sector. APTC will train FNU staff as trainers in this area, with the ultimate objective of FNU gaining accreditation from AQSA to deliver the course. The Certificate III in Individual Support (Ageing) will prepare students for employment opportunities in Australia under the Pacific Labour Scheme.

Blended Learning TVET Model

FNU's TVET programmes are targeted to train students with real-time industry-based practical and soft skills. Practical and soft skills can be up to 80% of a programme and are sometimes difficult to be taught online and to overcome this, FNU has adopted a blended mode of teaching its courses with theoretical components offered through online mode and workplace learning of the practical components.

Blended mode TVET is the practice of building competence in knowledge, practical and soft skills through a combination of face-to-face and technology-enabled distance learning experiences. FNU's TVET programmes allow students flexibility in selecting their learning components, upskilling essential workers in their workplaces and reskill displaced workers while observing physical distancing guidelines.

TVET education has been recognised for its experimental learning, that is, learning by doing, which has been labelled as 'not being able to be done by distance'. However, well-designed blends of TVET, particularly when combined with workplace learning, can use technology to increase quality and access, reduce costs and be more inclusive. COVID-19 has provided the catalyst for TVET Pasifika to understand and act on this potential. By implementing the blended TVET strategy, it aims to provide skills-based education and training to secondary school students, youths and mature people who were unemployed or became unemployed as a result of the global pandemic, in Fiji and across the Pacific Island countries.

Dr Rohit Kishore
Acting Associate Pro Vice-Chancellor,
Technical and Vocational Education and Training

Holmes pursues his Engineering dream

Jonathan Joel Holmes vividly recalls walking through Suva for the first time and in awe of the city’s landscape and buildings. This experience would eventually lead Holmes into the world of Civil Engineering. The 25-year-old from Vuna, Taveuni with maternal links to Motusa in Rotuma said his father played a key role in his decision to pursue studies in this field.

“I remember the first time I came to Suva with my dad as a child and was amused with how the city looked,” he shared.

“At one point, we went by the Reserve Bank of Fiji and I remarked to my dad that it was ‘such a big house’. What I didn’t know was that it was the tallest building in Fiji at that time.”

“My dad insisted I pursue studies in a field that was in demand, highlighting that Fiji was a developing country in terms of infrastructure.”

Holmes then undertook studies at the Fiji National University’s (FNU), College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) and graduated in 2018 with a Trade Diploma in Civil Engineering.

He said some lecturers inspired and challenged him to “go beyond the books and think outside the box”.

In addition, Holmes’ mentor and cousin, Kerryng Chung, had graduated from the Fiji Institute of Technology (which is now CEST) with a Diploma in Civil Engineering and was a Gold medallist in the class of 2008. She later went on to the Queensland University of Technology and graduated with first class honours.

“She inspired me because she also started from humble beginnings and always had the mindset that God had given her the ability to be the best in all her endeavours,” he said.

“This is what motivated me to do my best in this field. Seeing someone from my family do well in Engineering (Civil) also pushes me to go the extra mile when it comes

to structures and development.”

“Words of advice from my structural lecturer Dulce De Asa that I will also never forget is the phrase ‘no matter how complex the problem is, the principle always remains the same’.”

Holmes is employed at Engineered Designs Limited since graduating in 2018 and works as a technician, performing site inspections and reporting, as well as structural drafting.

“Though I work as a draftsman/technician, it’s mandatory to understand the basic principles in the design of a building because when it comes to structural detailing, we are sometimes required to apply these principles without being told,” he said.

“Working for one of the Pacific’s leading consultants is mind blowing and this is evident in its projects. Learning under Director Vijay Krishnan is a huge opportunity anyone in this field can have.”

Holmes said his long-term career plans include being a fully qualified Engineer majoring in structural engineering and studies relating to coastal protection against climate change.

“I believe protecting our shorelines and the people that live near them has to be a priority for the future and I would like to be an influence in that area with the knowledge I have obtained from structural and civil engineering.”

Holmes said it would be amiss if he did not acknowledge his family members in Fiji and overseas for their support, as well as his friends from high school and university for their encouragement.

“I also thank God for His supernatural strength and wisdom rendered throughout the course,” he said.

He also encouraged others to pursue their academic ambitions, saying “if it is what you desire, then let nothing stop you from doing so”.



Jonathan Holmes

Marshall loves virtually learning from her kitchen



Baking enthusiast Michaela Helava Marshall (pictured) loves the virtual practical sessions she is undertaking as part of the Trade Diploma in Baking, Patisserie programme through the Fiji National University (FNU).

Marshall enrolled at FNU in Semester II, 2020, after the desire to perfect her baking skills and intention to start a business in the future.

According to the FNU student, the course has taught her many new tactics of baking.

“I thoroughly enjoyed my first semester of studies. I

appreciated the hands-on parts of the class and the theory parts of the course too. I believe this programme is preparing me very well to go into the workforce as a baker or venture into a baking business, and I look forward to completing my programme,” she said.

The former Natabua High School student said that she likes the virtual learning atmosphere.

“I like the virtual class ambiance and the format it is presented in. I learn and retain more through online classes because I can do the course as an open book. This makes me search for the answers, and in return, I retain more

information.”

“As a student at FNU, I enjoy working at my own pace and scheduling time to complete assignments while managing my small business. I would describe online learning as convenient. This is as I learn from the comfort of my home without stepping foot outside at all.”

“The best part is that when class finishes, we don’t have to rush somewhere to buy food and rush back to campus, as we have our kitchen to whip something healthy and delicious,” she said.

The Nadi lass is delighted to be learning from the comfort of her kitchen, describing it as a mini bakery.

“I’m so excited to watch, listen and learn from my kitchen as my instructors teach me the in’s and out of baking and patisserie.”

Though Marshall’s classes mostly require a hands-on approach, she is coping well with the online studies.

“Since we haven’t been able to have face-to-face practical classes, I have just been doing tons of research online, watching YouTube, experimenting on new and old recipes, trying to perfect certain skills and learning more at home, especially in my kitchen.”

Despite the intermittent network issues, Marshall thoroughly enjoys the online learning process and regularly logs in to Moodle to be part of the collaborative learning atmosphere.

“At the moment, I have been using Viber and messenger as a mode of communication to my lecturers and peers, and it’s great as we have our various group chats for our different units.”

She advises fellow students to stay positive during this transition phase.

“Take it one day at a time and try not to feel overwhelmed with all these new changes and transitions but to take it as a learning curve and try to learn as much as we can. There’s always a light at the end of the tunnel, and we need to stay hopeful that eventually, things will go back to normal.”



Fiu nails a career in Carpentry

While Fiu knew that following a blue-collar career was not favoured much for women, she enrolled for the Certificate IV in Carpentry offered by the Fiji National University (FNU) to be at the forefront of a traditionally male-dominated industry.

The course, which is offered through FNU's College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), provides students with an opportunity to master the basic skills of carpentry. According to Fiu, the programme is relevant for students who, like her, did not have prior experience or skills in carpentry.

"The carpentry programme at FNU empowers women to become builders. Given that I never had any encouragement to engage in construction and building, my only option was to learn from the industry experts at FNU, Ba Campus," she said.

The former Jasper Williams High School student adds that initially, there was resistance from family members of her choice of studies, but when they realised that she was serious about it, they provided great encouragement.

"I was also able to encourage my family members towards TVET programmes and courses. I explained that it is a life-long skill that can take me to greater heights."

The Lauan lass said that there is always a demand for good carpenters, and she is looking forward to diverse and exciting work throughout her career.

"Carpenters play a vital role in the construction industry, from putting down floorboards to fitting skirting and window frames. They work on both commercial and domestic projects, and projects can be highly varied."

The budding carpenter Fiu stressed that students wishing to venture into carpentry would require numeracy and literacy skills.

"Don't forget to brush up on calculations and communication skills as you'll need to be able to read technical drawings, take measurements, calculate quantities and angles, so it's important to have a good understanding of Maths and English," she said.

While face to face classes has been placed on hold due to COVID-19 restrictions, Fiu is enjoying studying via the online mode.

"The lecturers at Ba campus are always ready to support and serve me whenever I have difficulty. Anytime I try to get in touch with them by phone or email, I receive a timely response which is very helpful."

After completing the two-year programme, Fiu aims to expand her skill set by pursuing a Diploma in Construction through FNU. Fiu believes this will further develop her skills and knowledge in the building industry.

Fiu's advice to women thinking about entering the carpentry field is, "just do it and if you think you're capable of the job, do it."

As a youngster, Fane Tukana Fiu was always intrigued by seeing homes being constructed in her neighbourhood. Keeping a tab on the different stages of the construction projects until it was completed gradually became one of her favourite topics. Little did Fiu realise that as she matured, the desire to pursue a career in carpentry would become an option after completing high school.

Rosalia Buabeta Sikoa battled all odds to build a career as a Plant Fitter. While it may be regarded as a male-dominated workforce, Sikoa is determined to break down the barriers and encourage more females to join the rewarding career.

Sikoa, 22, has completed her three-year National Apprenticeship Scheme program and is continuing her employment at Goodman Fielder International (Fiji) Pte Limited while awaiting her Apprenticeship graduation scheduled for December. She also completed Certificate IV in Plant Maintenance Engineering from Fiji National University's College of Engineering, Science and Technology.

Originally from Nacamaki, Koro, Lomaiviti, with maternal ties to Nabouwalu, Bua in Vanua Levu, Sikoa's passion for engineering led her to enrol at FNU.

"I had aspired to become an aircraft engineer, but because I had only completed Year 12, I enrolled at FNU to pursue plant maintenance as my foundation studies," Sikoa explained.

"The National Apprenticeship Scheme is beneficial as we get to learn and earn at the same time. I am grateful to my employer and NTPC for providing me with the opportunity to succeed in my career."

"One of the benefits of working at Goodman Fielder International (Fiji) Pte Ltd is that I am exposed to different professions outside of my field, such as carpentry and plumbing. This allows me to learn these trade skills too."

Sikoa values passion, commitment and loyalty adding these qualities has assisted her with career progression.

"Sometimes people look at me and wonder if this petite

young woman will be able to do a man's job. And I see myself as an example of how looks can be deceiving," she said with a laugh.

"There are times when I have to work alone. While it is difficult, I view it as a challenge because it stimulates my mind with new ideas," she said.

Sikoa is an empowered young woman who believes in "the power of reasoning" and likes to discuss her views at her workplace based on her skills and knowledge. Thus, her eagerness to become better in her trade.

"I am the first woman in my family to pursue this career. When I first started working, I fell in love with what I was doing. While studying at FNU, I enjoyed researching and discussing ideas and class discussions with my colleagues and instructors. It was an added pleasure to have practical classes in well-equipped workshops. The lecturers did not hesitate to share their knowledge of utilising the equipment and always answer any queries."

Sikoa strongly urges women to pursue a career of their choice.

"Choose a career path of your interest since there are job opportunities out there that will help the country advance. Continue to persevere and endure with diligence whatever tasks are thrown your way. Time does not wait for anyone; thus, if you have the opportunity to complete your education, do it without delay."

Apart from her professional work, she loves to read, draw and create short videos of stills of sunset, family and nature.

Sikoa shines in her role as Plant Fitter



Upskilling key to career progression – Kumar



Upskilling oneself not only harnesses skill sets but also places you on the front foot for career progression. Such has been the fruitful journey of Ramjeet Kumar, whose passion for trade and education has led him to enjoy career success.

Kumar who currently works as a Service Technician at the Fiji National University is a firm believer in education. He completed five short programmes from FNU's National Training and Productivity Centre which has provided him

with the necessary skill set to grow in the technical field.

"After high school, I chose to pursue a career in air conditioning and refrigeration. The first two to three years were challenging for me, but I continued, particularly during the difficult period of adapting to and learning the work. I was physically, emotionally, and financially prepared for the difficulties that were ahead of me. The beginning is critical because you will be expected to work hard, study, and develop your knowledge and experience," he said.

The father of two had climbed the ranks from junior to supervisory level. He is now grateful that the decision to upgrade his qualifications helped him succeed.

"Upon completing my short course, I started work at the Plantation Island Resort before joining FNU's Maintenance Department in 2013. At FNU, my duties include servicing, repairing, and maintaining all air units at the university's western campuses," explained Kumar.

"Upgrading my qualifications and competencies was a wise choice as I progressed in my profession. I also got my skills certified through Trade Test, which rewarded me with a promotion at work, from assistant tradesperson to a certified tradesperson, and finally to a supervisor."

According to Kumar, there is high demand for qualified tradespeople which is a plus point for students intending to undertake TVET courses.

"NTPC is constantly up to par with the industry, with the most modern tools and equipment that are utilised or introduced. They are also highly experienced in the area of the lectures, so they can explain and educate us what we need to know and anticipate when we go out into the working environment," he added.

"There is a high demand for tradespeople both in Fiji and abroad. I have established objectives for what I want to accomplish and achieve, and now I am actively working towards them, but it all depends on when the COVID-19 pandemic ends."

His advice to young people is to remain focused on their goals.

"Keep working hard, and learn through trial and error makes you stronger. Do not give up when you suddenly lack support. Instead, give it another try. Life is a journey, and it's our choice which journey we choose. And for me, it's education and upskilling myself."

So far Kumar has undertaken the following courses through NTPC Certificate of Attainment in Air Conditioning and Refrigeration, Certificate of Participation in Electrical Safety, National Trade Test Certificate 3, Certificate of Attainment in CCTV and Certificate of Attainment in Power Generation and Controls. He hopes to pursue a diploma programme at FNU next year.

Prasad acknowledges EFL for the apprenticeship study opportunity

Having spent several years in the workforce, Sonal Sanjesh Prasad of Tuatua, Labasa is elated to be given the opportunity to attain a professional qualification in his field of work.

Prasad, who is an Apprentice Electrical Technician at Energy Fiji Limited (EFL), is grateful to his employer for allowing him to pursue a Diploma in Electrical Engineering at Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

“I want to sincerely acknowledge EFL for allowing me to be one of their apprentices. Not only this, but also giving precedence to studies over my work, which has enabled me to do well in my studies,” said Prasad.

“I consider this programme as a stepping stone to a successful career in the field of electrical engineering. Everything that I have learnt so far in this programme is directly assisting me in carrying out my daily work more effectively.”

The Labasa man joined the workforce as an Electronics/ Instruments Apprentice at Fiji Sugar Corporation (FSC) Labasa Mill and was later promoted to Instrument Fitter. He has also worked as a Boiler Operator in training at the Labasa Mill. Later, he joined EFL and is currently in the third year of the apprenticeship program.

The budding apprentice describes his career as rewarding. “This field of work makes me feel satisfied because of

various reasons. I get to visit and work at a new site almost every day, which also enables me to learn something new each day. I am not stuck behind a desk and a computer, instead I get to work in a refreshing environment.”

“Trying to find solutions to some issues can be quite challenging at times, but in the end, customer satisfaction feels delightful and motivates me to strive for better results in a shorter period.”

Prasad highlighted that keeping health and safety in check was a vital aspect of carrying out his work effectively.

“Electrical technology requires strong attention and could be hazardous if work is not carried out according to the established guidelines. This requires extra caution, but also makes the work even more interesting.”

Prasad thanked the lecturers at FNU, especially Roneel Maharaj, for the continuous guidance and support in his studies.

“Through the guidance of lecturers at FNU, I was able to plan, structure, wire up and carry out testing required for the desired outcomes – all by using electrical equipment and this feels wonderful. It feels even more satisfying when I can apply these concepts at work by myself.”

He also acknowledged his mother, wife and relatives for being the pillars of strength in his life.

“I dedicate my career achievements to my mum, mentors at FSC, EFL and the HR Training Team as well,” he added.



Refrigeration and Air Conditioning, an exciting career option – Reddy



The desire to work in a stimulating environment with different types of tools and machines prompted Fiji National University (FNU) graduate Viklesh Reddy to opt for a career in the Technical and Vocational Educational and Training (TVET) sector.

Reddy pursued a Trade Certificate in Refrigeration and Air Conditioning from FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

“Most of the modern buildings and structures require some sort of refrigeration and air conditioning features, which has created a lot of potential for career prospects in this field,” said Reddy.

“The careers in this field of work include design, engineering, installation and maintenance of residential, commercial and industrial heating, cooling and refrigeration systems.”

According to Reddy, refrigeration and air conditioning are fast becoming a necessity as it makes life more comfortable and pleasant.

“Refrigeration has paved way for food preservation, medicine storage at appropriate temperatures while air conditioning has brought comfort and environmental temperature flexibility,” he shared.

“These technologies have become an important component of our everyday lives and will remain so in the future; both at personal and industrial levels. Therefore, I encourage youngsters to consider a career in this field.”

Reddy, who is a sales engineer at Aquaheat South Pacific Limited, highlighted that this field of work presented different types of challenges every day, making the work

atmosphere interesting and exciting.

“I am part of the business development team whereby my task is to liaise with potential developers and other stakeholders to ensure accurate products are sold to them.”

Enjoying practical work, being mechanically minded and having a love for working in different settings have been the driving force behind Reddy’s success in his career so far.

“The most thrilling aspect of my job is to meet customers and explain in-depth to them about the air conditioning system or troubleshooting any issues in the air conditioning systems. The different types of issues in the systems give me the chance to learn something new almost every day.”

Originally from Siberia, Labasa, Reddy said the programme at FNU provided him with the knowledge and skills to excel in his career.

“I am grateful to have studied under field experts who offered insight into the latest processes in the field and the tools used to conduct my work efficiently. I was able to learn how to install, maintain, service equipment to industry standards.”

“The practical sessions were intense as we strived to put theory into practice as correctly as possible. This attitude helped us, students, to develop a better understanding of the concepts. We were able to identify our weaknesses and worked towards developing solutions to overcome those.”

“The skills that I acquired during this programme have contributed to the success of my career and made me enjoy what I do for a living.”

Reddy also acknowledged the guidance and support of his parents in his career choice.

Vakaseleyasi strives for success

The desire to be a positive influence in her community was the driving force behind Silivia Vakaseleyasi’s academic success at the Fiji National University (FNU). Vakaseleyasi, 25, hails from Nabuna in Tavua and works as a Fieldman at the Ministry of Fisheries’ Caboni Research Station in Togovere, Rakiraki.

Three years ago, she proudly graduated from FNU’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) with a Trade Diploma in Aquaculture and recounts her tertiary education journey with a smile.

“I wanted to study in a field which contributed to a healthy and sustainable population now and for generations to come, and one which also provided me with progression opportunities,” she shared.

“Throughout my studies, I knew I had made the right decision and the learning and teaching support from my lecturers towards my studies helped me complete my courses.”

“My highlights from FNU were during our practical classes where we had to go out into the field and practice what we had just learned in the classroom. This first-hand learning experience and the compulsory industrial attachment at FNU greatly developed our skills and knowledge. I particularly enjoyed the times when we would travel on field trips and then file our reports when we returned.”

The Aquaculture programme at FNU enables graduates to

be competent in the area of freshwater, coastal aquaculture and mariculture, fish breeding and hatchery and pond management and aquaculture craft and gear technology, aquaculture nutrition and aquatic farming systems.

The graduates will have qualifications that will prepare them for employment and self-employment opportunities as well as lay the foundations for a lifetime of continuous learning and personal development.

Vakaseleyasi believes being humble, having a strong family support system and working according to schedule were factors that influenced her work ethics.

As a Fieldman at the station, her responsibilities include supporting hatchery production trials for shrimps, oversee algae inoculation, assisting in hatchery development activities at the Ba hatchery and Sigatoka holding facility and assisting in the production of seaweed within the province.

Vakaseleyasi said a highlight for her would be providing fishermen and tilapia farmers with a reliable and sustainable source of income by enhancing their skills and knowledge through workshops and technical advice.

Her long-term goals include undertaking studies for an undergraduate degree that is aligned to her passion for providing knowledge and support on food security measures to produce quality tilapia, and prawns and shrimps.

She encouraged others to be open-minded to new people



and ideas and utilise the land that is available in a country such as ours.

“Think about you and your future. Invest in yourself so you can also help your family and community.”

Mark the date and be part of FNU's Virtual Open Week 13 to 17 September



The Fiji National University (FNU) will be hosting its Virtual Open Week (VOW) from Monday 13 to Friday 17 September and we are excited to welcome all prospective students as well as teachers, parents and guardians to participate in a week-long important information sharing program.

The COVID-19 pandemic has opened new avenues for the delivery of education, where technology has become an integral part of daily learning and teaching. This has given us an opportunity to rethink how we hold events and conduct our normal day to day business.

Given the present gathering and social distancing measures currently in place in our country, FNU has decided to conduct this year's Open Day Virtually to ensure that students are provided with all the relevant information promptly as they plan their academic aspirations.

With a reliable internet connection and a digital device, anyone can attend our Open Day from the comfort of their own space.

FNU is excited about this new way of conducting Open Days and we are happy to be able to provide potential students and the members of the public the information regarding study opportunities, minimum entry requirements and enrolment details.

You will be able to receive all the valuable insights into life at FNU that you would have at a normal Open Day as this is a customised online event that is designed for you to explore your study options from our five Colleges, our training centre, maritime academy and TVET Pasifika.

What you can expect from FNU's Virtual Open Day.

First-hand information

Given the current world economic situation and the job market due to the COVID-19 global pandemic, it is vital for you to carefully consider your choice of institution and career path. Attending an Open Day, even a virtual one, can assist you in making a better decision about your future. If you are already in the job market and are thinking of re-skilling to switch careers, this is the perfect opportunity for you to engage with us during our Open Day.

- Over 300 programmes from Certificate II to PhDs

- Programmes are diversified and cover a variety of subject areas.
- As the national University, we also pride ourselves in providing an educational pathway to anyone seeking a vocational or higher education qualification. Academic and Financial challenges are not a hindrance at all and neither is age.
- Our Finance Team will also be presenting at the Open Day so you will get a chance to engage in live interactive chat discussions with them regarding payment plans etc. and our Academic Team will be more than happy to assist you with the best entry pathway suited to you.

Student Life

You will get information on student life services such as orientation, debate competitions, intercampus sports competitions, wellness clinics, free medical consultations, free counselling services, career development services, CV writing, mock interviews workshops and disability services and much more.

Together with this, you will also learn about other student learning support services offered by the University that will be essential for you to know when you begin your tertiary education journey at FNU. These services include programmes that are designed to assist new students in transitioning into their first year of uni-life. These include:

- Maths Help Hub
- English Language Hub
- Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)
- Learning to learn online (LTLO)
- First Year Experience (FYE) App



Explore the virtual campus

Over the years our Open Day has served as the best way for our potential students to get a feel of our University. To make sure that you are not deprived of this experience, a Campus Tour video will take you through our seven major campuses around Fiji.

Get in touch with us and ask questions

Open Days have been a perfect opportunity for prospective students to clear any doubts they may have about the choice of their study programmes and career opportunities. Our Virtual Open Day is your opportunity to hear from inspiring guests from a variety of professions and get all your questions answered through the FNU Social Media pages, live chat feature, or email.

Attend live Q&A sessions for the week of the 13th to the 17th of September. Register early and be in the draw to win awesome prizes.

Visit our website www.fnu.ac.fj for more information regarding our Virtual Open Week or follow the FNU social media pages.

Virtual Outreach Program set to guide prospective students to enrol at FNU



The Fiji National University (FNU) will continue to remain accessible and engaged with its prospective students despite the current restrictions to provide important information about the institution's learning, teaching and research opportunities.

The University's Virtual Outreach Program (VOP) which is set to commence in October will allow students and others who participated in the FNU Virtual Open Week (VOW) in September, the opportunity to follow up or seek any further clarifications answered regarding their specified programme of interest and or career pathways.

High school students in Year 12 and 13 who are planning their tertiary journey amidst a global pandemic can be assured they are able to study safely and affordably at FNU.

FNU's full programme listing, course details and minimum entry requirements will be made available on the Ministry of Education's online learning portal

along with the application details. Students and interested parties can also access the same information on the FNU website at www.fnu.ac.fj

Offline information packs will also be delivered to identified schools to ensure all students have the information they need to map their academic aspirations with the Fiji National University.

The Virtual Outreach Program is a targeted approach as students who have already decided on their field of study can listen to presentations by academics from the respective Colleges and ask questions via the Zoom webinar platform and the chat feature.

Dedicated Zoom sessions will be scheduled with various schools and student groups, connecting them with academic staff on hand to answer their queries relating to FNU's Colleges – the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF), College of Humanities and Education (CHE), College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST), College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), the National Training and Productivity Centre, (NTPC), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) and FNU's Technical and Vocational Education and Training brand – TVET Pasifika.

Students wishing to contact the University directly for more information can do so via email: admission@fnu.ac.fj OR phone: 9372170.

TVET studies offer endless opportunities – Goundar

When Merlyn Goundar started her education as a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) student at the Fiji National University (FNU), she did this with a burning desire to achieve more.

According to the FNU alumnus, her skills in TVET programme became the foundation of a promising professional career.

“I had always been interested to pursue a career in the science field. During FNU’s Open Day some years back, I saw the different options that were available for science students, and I found myself interested in the Industrial Lab Technology programme,” said Goundar.

“Studying at FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) has helped me gain a qualification to move up the ladder in my career,” highlighted the FNU graduate.

Education and Career

Born and raised in Rakiraki, Goundar is the youngest in her family. She attended Penang Sangam Primary School and progressed to Penang Sangam High School. She enrolled in the Diploma in Industrial Laboratory

Technology programme at the FNU’s College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) in 2009.

Reminiscing her University days, she said, “I have good memories of my student life. Many of the fellow students from the same group became close friends when we spent our time together doing assignments, tutorials, and spending most of our leisure times at the cafeteria and the Samabula campus foyer.”

Goundar graduated in April 2011 and started working for the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji as a Technical Assistant.

“As part of my role, I got involved in an African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) States project whereby I received an opportunity to travel to Mauritius to study further about analytical chemistry. This was sponsored by the European Union.”

In 2012, she was promoted to the role of Senior Technical Assistant at the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji.

Her role was to set up laboratory equipment and conduct tests and experiments, record and analyse data, present results to senior research staff and research and write papers, reports and reviews.

While working, she simultaneously completed a Bachelor of Environmental Science programme from FNU and graduated in 2017.

In the same year, Goundar joined Nabou Green Energy as the Quality Assurance Officer.

“My role was to plan, prioritize, assign, supervise and review the work of staff involved in water quality sampling, and maintaining boiler water quality standards, supervising professional staff in biomass plant quality program development, evaluation and assessment of program effectiveness and environmental compliance, and required record-keeping and reporting activities as well as ensuring biomass power plant operations and policies comply with Fiji environmental laws, regulations and guidelines and with company policies and procedures.”

She also enrolled in the Master in Renewable Energy and Management programme at the University of Fiji.

Two years later in 2019, she joined the Fiji Sugar Corporation as the Shift Chemist at the Rarawai Mill in Ba, which is her current position.

As a Shift Chemist, she is responsible for the production house ensuring the accurate collection of samples, laboratory analysis, recording and reporting of all relevant process data, including the interpretation and translation of that data into useful information.

“I lead and manage the factory Quality Management System (QMS) and ensure compliance with standardized laboratory methods, procedures and equipment in accordance with company policies. I also coordinate and execute training of factory employees in the areas of product quality, process chemistry, and environmental, sanitation, safety and food safety policies and procedures as well as discuss plant evaluation with plant management; make appropriate recommendations and set timetables for improvement and corrections.”

She graduated with a Master in Renewable Energy and Management degree last year.

Words of Wisdom

Goundar’s advice to current and future students of FNU is to make the most of the time while still studying.

“FNU is a great place to learn. The lecturers are very friendly and flexible. You can always approach them for assistance. You will also feel comfortable at FNU and will be able to adapt to the change from high school to tertiary life fairly quickly.”

Giving her top three tips for graduates starting in their career, she said, “always apply the knowledge from the classroom in the field, take advantage of any research opportunities that you may come across and always be familiar with the surroundings so that it is easier to adapt.”

She is currently a part-time student in the Executive Masters in Business Administration programme at FNU.

