

FNU NIKUA



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Leaving No Learner Behind



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BUILDING A RESILIENT
EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR ALL LEARNERS

DEVI UPSKILLS
IN EDUCATION AT FNU



BUILDING A RESILIENT EDUCATION SYSTEM FOR ALL LEARNERS



Dr William May
Acting Vice-Chancellor

Learning and teaching has changed dramatically in recent years and the COVID-19 pandemic further changed the delivery of education globally. Fiji was no exception but thanks to various support programmes and initiatives rolled out during this period, students were able to access lessons using technology and smart devices.

As we move towards a sense of normalcy and face-to-face classes resume for Semester 1, 2022 studies, the Fiji National University recognises that some students may need additional support to better navigate through their studies.

The University has implemented several key initiatives for learning enhancement this semester, one of which is blended learning as a means to cater for both remote and face-to-face studies. This allows in-person sessions that are accompanied by online resources and tasks. Core to this is that online resources are not used as a substitute for face-to-face classes but are intended to enhance concepts discussed in a classroom setting.

Our Peer Assistant Learning (PAL) and noquBuddy programmes can be instrumental in bridging the knowledge gap between students who have had contrasting amounts of instruction during the pandemic. Peer collaboration, group discussion, and cooperative tasks will benefit students tremendously, particularly those who may not have the confidence to raise questions or seek clarifications during face to face learning.

On a different scale, our one-on-one consultation sessions are designed to help students develop specific strategies to address academic concerns. There could be students who need individual guidance. One-on-one consultations examine a student's approach to learning, and current barriers to success, and work with student success specialists to develop effective learning strategies.

The English Language and Math Help Hubs are dedicated to helping students from all disciplines and abilities to become more effective writers and more competent in mathematics. These services are free to all enrolled students and the University offers tutorials and free courses to assist both struggling and high achieving students.

FNU's First-Year Experience programme could help new students assimilate to university life. The programme was designed to help ease integration and enable access to other resources that could allow a smooth transition in FNU.

The newly opened Sports and Wellness Centre could mark a transition to a more holistic learning environment. Many individuals overtly discuss the importance of maintaining a balance between academic and social life. A part of this is sports. Sports or physical activity allows students to take a break from academics and release pent-up energy. It helps students lead fuller lives as regular wellness activities have proven to provide not only physical benefits but also social and psychological benefits.

Ensuring access and inclusion for students with disabilities remains core to the University's efforts in ensuring inclusive education for all. The Disability Centre at Nasinu Campus remains a testament to FNU's commitment to enabling access to higher education for all regardless of disability. The Centre is adjacent to major learning spaces, an administrative block and a food court allowing students easy access to these facilities.

FNU's Technical, Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Pasifika courses allow those who have lost employment due to the pandemic to help hone skills that could help them find re-employment or start a business. TVET is also a potential solution for fresh high school graduates. These courses ideally aim to create comprehensive skills development and training that meet the needs of the labour market and enhance economic growth. The University is consistently restructuring programmes to ensure compatibility with the workforce because it is imperative that there is inclusive growth, one that ensures the participation of the vulnerable and enables economic opportunities for those in lower-income groups.

We encourage all students to utilise available resources that will help them realise their full potential. FNU is not solely focused on high intellectual performances, but rather identifies, and activates student strength and builds on their existing skills and knowledge.

The University's motive is to build a resilient education system that can respond to the needs of all learners, particularly the vulnerable. This means that returning to the way things were pre-pandemic is no longer an option. FNU, like all other institutions, has the responsibility of recovering losses and inequalities aggravated by the pandemic. The intention is to drive education to a better position where all students can thrive, regardless of their circumstances.



Outreach activities assist prospective students



The Fiji National University's Division of Marketing and Communications (DMC) held several outreach programmes across the country during the Semester 1 Enrolment Drive Campaign to provide new and continuing students academic counselling and assistance with their admission and registration process. The roadshows were in addition to the guidance and assistance that students received at any FNU campuses.

Representatives from various colleges along with the DMC staff were stationed in coordinated mobile units in urban and peri-urban locations for several weeks to serve students at their doorsteps. Additionally, FNU representatives visited communities, schools and

industries to create awareness of university courses and identifying areas for industry partnership.

Chevalier Training Institute Director, Father John Fong, while commending FNU's efforts to reach out to communities, said the initiative provided students greater encouragement and motivation to pursue tertiary-level studies.

"FNU's visit has brought great joy and hope for all here at the Chevalier Training Centre (CTC)," he said.

"This is because a ray of hope has again emerged for our dear young men here in the school. Opportunities that were lost when they had not completed their secondary education, have again been renewed with this visit from the FNU team. Dreams that once seemed impossible, are being made possible by this partnership."

Ballantine Memorial School Vice-Principal Emi Veilawa said it was imperative that students understood the various study options that were available to them.

"The outreach activity conducted by FNU staff, visiting, sending the university prospectus and application forms was excellent," she said.

"Our students are always motivated to study at FNU in the fields of Teaching, Economics, Accounting, Business Study, Nursing and Medicine. In the end, they graduated and were able to find themselves a job."

The FNU outreach team plans to conduct similar forums with Career Teachers and School Principals along with more community outreach activities later in the year to ensure no learner is left behind.

SHARMA JOINS Trade Course at FNU

Tanisha Sharma has always been interested in baking, so when it was time to choose tertiary study options, taking up a course in baking and patisserie at the Fiji National University (FNU) was an easy decision.

Enrolled in Trade Diploma in Baking and Patisserie offered through the College of Business Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS), Sharma (*pictured, below*) is enjoying her baking classes at the Namaka campus in Nadi.

"Becoming a student was quite an easy transition for me overall, probably because I knew this was exactly what I wanted to do and where I wanted to be. I couldn't wait to start my academic journey at FNU after I had completed my secondary education. The classes are fun and exciting as I had imagined," she said.

The former Drasa Secondary School student is adapting well to the new study environment.

"My university experiences thus far have been amazing. I have learned and experienced so many new things in such a short period, and it has gone by so fast. I am still discovering all the opportunities that FNU offers me. FNU is a very welcoming place, and from the first day, I felt at ease."

According to Sharma, the courses are exciting and have allowed her to experience some new things in baking.

"I have already mastered the basics of baking. I was always in charge of desserts and became the family's official baker. I am fascinated with pastry and have spent many hours in the kitchen covered in flour. I am so passionate about baking, working with pastries, and creating desserts for people to enjoy."

"I am happy to be part of the FNU. After completing my education, the qualifications that I will gain will be most rewarding. From day one, I have become part of a broad network of creative classmates, industry experts and a team of staff dedicated to helping me succeed."



Matnan pursues DENTISTRY DREAM

Marciarose Matnan travelled 5000 kilometres away from home in order to pursue her academic ambitions and help communities on her island nation.

Matnan (*pictured, above*), from Yap island in the Federated States of Micronesia (FSM), is a first-year Bachelor of Oral Health student at the Fiji National University's (FNU), College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' (CMNHS).

Along with her colleagues, Matnan had the opportunity to introduce herself and explain why she chose to study Dentistry during a meet and greet session organised by the College's School of Dentistry and Oral Health.

"Back home, betel nut chewing is a major part of our culture, but one that has dire consequences," the 20-year-old said.

"Most people back home in FSM chew this (betel nut) daily and this impacted most of our communities because of the high rate of oral cancer."

"I chose this field of study because I want to graduate, return, and contribute to my community."

World Health Organization (WHO) studies reveal that over 80% of people over 15 years of age that lived in Yap chewed betel nut. It stated that overall, almost 30% of the total population of FSM used betel nut daily.

"I don't think a lot of people understand the health impacts that come with chewing betel nut, and I intend to play a role in creating awareness in the communities back home," Matnan explained.

"I want them to have all the information they need to make informed health decisions on their own."

"This is why I am grateful to be studying in Fiji through an Australian Awards scholarship."

Matnan said she was excited to begin her three-year studies, and become more acquainted with her peers and the academic, and support staff.

"I get to study with people from different backgrounds and I've already met a lot of great people, so I am definitely looking forward to an enriching student learning experience," she shared.

SISILIA MOKU

Age: 43

Programme: Basic Computing & Business Skills

Where are you from: Vatulele island

Reason for studying: I had lost my job as a childminder at the Shangri-La's Fijian Resort & Spa due to the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020. FNU has helped me to improve my computer skills and a better understanding of preparing a business plan.

What is your goal: To expand my *masi* printing business to overseas markets through online marketing and sales.



NIVKESH KUMAR

Age: 27

Programme: Electrical Engineering

Where are you from: Tuirara, Nasinu

Reason for studying: To gain theoretical and practical knowledge in electrical engineering. FNU has helped to increase my strength in my practical experience and theory work at outside electrical companies.

What is your goal: To become a qualified licensed electrician and own an electrical company.





LAL'S PASSION TO help students runs deep

Dipisha Rani Lal's desire to help fellow students inspired her to become a noquBuddy mentor at the Fiji National University (FNU).

The 20-year-old is currently studying Bachelor of Public Health at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS).

"The noquBuddy initiative has allowed me to find efficient and effective ways to solve issues that arise for our mentees. Not only does this help those who seek help, but it also allows me to handle similar situations/scenarios when I face difficulties in other fields," commented Lal.

Lal (*pictured, left*), a second-year student, admitted she faced difficulties adjusting to university life when she first joined. However, with time and the help of her friends, she was able to settle in quickly.

Given her experience, Lal has taken up the challenge to assist first-year students to settle at the university.

"When I joined the university then, there were certain issues that I had to face, such as not being able to access Moodle, issues with school WiFi, and some other minor challenges," she said.

"Therefore, finding my way around these things was tough at first until I found solutions by asking my senior friends who are currently doing various other courses at FNU. So, I thought of taking this up and helping students who are in the same situation."

Lal has encouraged new students to sign-up for the noquBuddy programme and seek help from mentors at various FNU campuses.

Students interested in attending PAL sessions can check the OnlinePAL session schedule circulated weekly on FNUPR or visit the CLTE website on <https://clte.fnu.ac.fj/>

KANAROGO THRILLED to join FNU



Twenty-year-old Ciba Kanarogo is excited to commence her studies at the Fiji National University (FNU).

Enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) offered through FNU's College of Humanities and Education (CHE) at Natabua Campus, Lautoka, the Vanuabalavu lass describes her experience so far as 'excellent'.

"I was able to adapt to the new environment effortlessly despite being miles away from home. After finishing my secondary education at Saint Bedes College in Savusavu, I had already decided to follow my parents' footsteps and become a teacher," she said.

A confident Kanarogo (*pictured, above*) said she felt at ease as the University already had mechanisms to support first-year students.

"After receiving my offer letter and doing the enrolment formalities, it was a breeze for me to get acquainted with the learning environment at Natabua campus."

"The student academic services ensured that I received all the information relating to the enrolment process and even assisted me in enrolling into my units."

Kanarogo made up her mind from a young age to become a teacher, and it was an easy decision to make after receiving her Year 13 results. Passing with flying colours, she knew that her first preference would be FNU.

"Now, into a month of university studies, I could not be happier as I have received great support and a hands-on approach towards my academic journey."

"I love the fact that the lecturers are so accommodating and understanding. They are always willing to assist me in every possible way. It feels like a community here, and I always feel included, empowered and never pushed aside," she said.

For Kanarogo, studying to become a primary school teacher at FNU has been an overwhelmingly positive experience so far.

"The teacher-training programme is designed to prepare me to face the classroom confidently when I graduate. FNU will allow me to investigate and explore concepts and ideas to become a competent teacher," she adds.

With a keen interest in maths, Kanarogo wants to share that with her students in the future.

"I had incredible Math teachers, and they made me love numbers. I want to do the same for my students in future."

Family dream fuels SHARMA'S STUDIES



Thirty-seven-year-old Sandhia Jyotika Sharma is focused on becoming an entrepreneur after completing the baking and patisserie course that she is currently pursuing at the Fiji National University's (FNU) National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC).

Sharma (*pictured, above*) believes her life experience and the hands-on training at NTPC puts her on a solid platform to attain her personal goal.

"I believe that if you have a strong drive to achieve, age should not be a barrier to achieving your life objectives," said Sharma.

"My husband is a mechanic, and after completing this course, I intend to realise my family's dream of opening a business," she added.

Sharma's interest in baking prompted her to undertake formal training at FNU.

"I've always had an interest in baking, and then we decided to establish a business. Therefore, I opted to enrol to learn new skills and get a qualification that would assist me in becoming an entrepreneur."

"My family has been extremely supportive of my schooling, and we are working as a team to achieve our goals, whether it is my academics or assisting one another at home."

Sharma is originally from Ba but currently resides in Sabeto, Nadi, with her family.

"In life, one should not stop learning or have the perspective that learning ends at a certain age. Learning is a never-ending process in which we acquire new ideas, concepts, and experiences that we may use in our work to grow further," she said.

"The knowledge and expertise obtained from the short courses would aid you in your life since you can open a small business to support you and your family if there is a catastrophe, such as the COVID-19 outbreak that wrecked damage all over the globe," she stated.

"Individuals who study at the NTPC get real-world experience. The services and knowledge they receive from the trainer's heads help them have a stable future."

Students interested in the short courses can contact info.ntpc@fnu.ac.fj or call on 2417779.



PEER

Assisted Learning



MENTORS READY TO ASSIST

Yash Veer Deo, a noquBuddy mentor, says they are ready to provide guidance and assistance to new students who join the Fiji National University (FNU).

The 20-year-old is excited to be part of the noquBuddy Mentor programme and his advice to new students is not to panic and reach out if they require assistance.

According to Deo (*pictured, left*), being in new surroundings sometimes can be overwhelming, however, the noquBuddy scheme enables new students to overcome obstacles they may face in the first few weeks of the semester.

“New students have to remain calm and make use of the support services available at FNU, particularly the free support schemes from the Centre for Learning and Teaching Enhancement (CLTE), as they are designed to

assist students overcome problems that we have all faced at least once when we joined uni,” he said.

Deo is a second-year student in the Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management programme at FNU’s Nasese Campus.

“I was always interested in helping my juniors and assisting them in overcoming the challenges that I faced in my first year of studies so that they do not have to go through the same situation,” he said.

“Being a noquBuddy mentor has enhanced my written and verbal communication skills and improved my socialising skills too.”

“I feel extremely happy and proud to assist my juniors. I try to put myself in the shoes of a first-year university student and think about the types of answers that would be clear and precise to them.”

TAUSILI GAINS **valuable** knowledge through PAL

Lale Tausili learnt about Peer Assisted Learning through a virtual orientation session and instantly knew he needed to register as a participant.

In the short time he joined the virtual PAL meetings, Tausili (*pictured, right*) admitted learning new things.

“The useful presentation by the PAL leader provided me enough tips and tricks on how to navigate PBL (Problem-Based Learning), a method of teaching and learning which was very foreign to me,” he said.

“After learning so much from that presentation I was sold on the importance of being mentored and directed by another student who had already successfully experienced my current level of learning.”

“I think one of the important things is the advice that comes from a student who has been through PBL experience

already. The tricks of the trade, that’s what I am mostly looking for. I can learn pathology and physiology and all that but it takes experience to know which textbooks have pertinent information or which textbook is too detailed, where to start and how to easily memorise structures of the body, all that good stuff. These small but vital morsels of experiential knowledge make PAL sessions essential.”

“I think the PAL sessions are an amazing initiative, for PAL leaders to review their past notes while facilitating PAL sessions and also earn some extra cash, especially in this pandemic but also for PAL students like me who need a guide who may be more understanding of our situation given that they too are students like me.”

The 25-year-old Samoan said there are always opportunities to learn and concedes that he too would love to be a PAL leader in the future, showing students the ropes of studying at University.



LAL FINDS her voice through the MENTORSHIP PROGRAMME

First-year student Sonia Lal is not a confident public speaker and knew she needed help.

After learning about the Fiji National University’s Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme, Lal (*pictured, left*) was sure seeking help from those who have been through the same journey would best assist her.

Since joining, she has seen positive changes in herself both academically and personally.

“I first got to learn about PAL through FNUPR but I was not really looking forward to attending sessions as I was nervous,” she said.

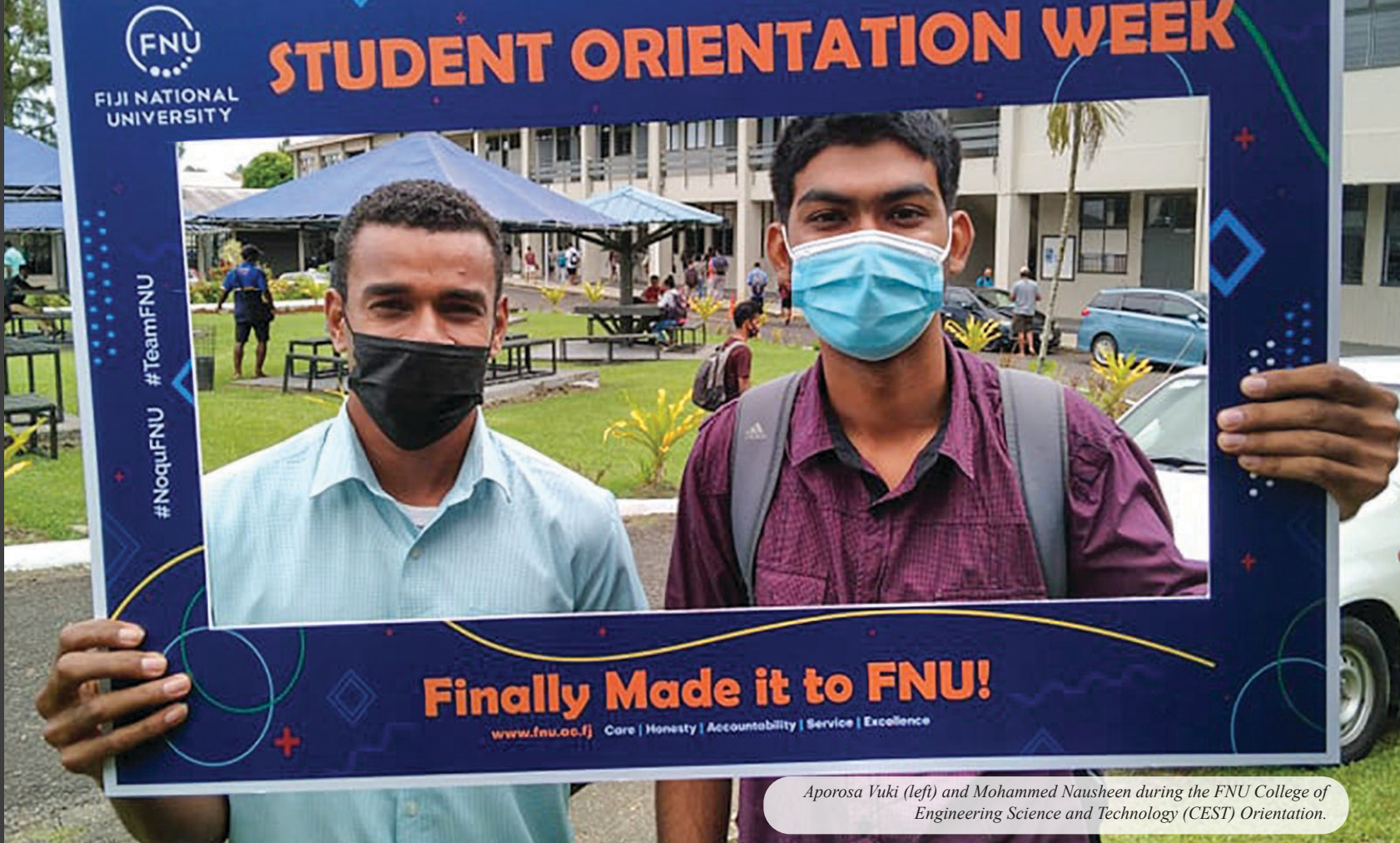
“I attended my first session with my friends and as the class commenced so did my interest. I’m comfortable

reaching out to my PAL leader and I’m learning a lot through his experience in law school. This guidance is giving me a lot of confidence as a new student.”

“PAL benefits me in ways where I could gain confidence in speaking and knowing what will be discussed and expected in my future lectures. It is beneficial in understanding hard concepts without the worry of being judged. I have also seen an overall improvement in my academic performance.”

Lal hopes to become a PAL leader in the future to help those who like her had struggled with public speaking, in the hopes it could better assist new students in the transition to university life.





Aporosa Vuki (left) and Mohammed Nausheen during the FNU College of Engineering Science and Technology (CEST) Orientation.

Duo undertake
TRADE COURSES

PRASAD HONoured TO COACH fellow learners



The Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) programme has the potential to help improve student learning. These are the words of Fiji National University's final year law student Joshua Prasad.

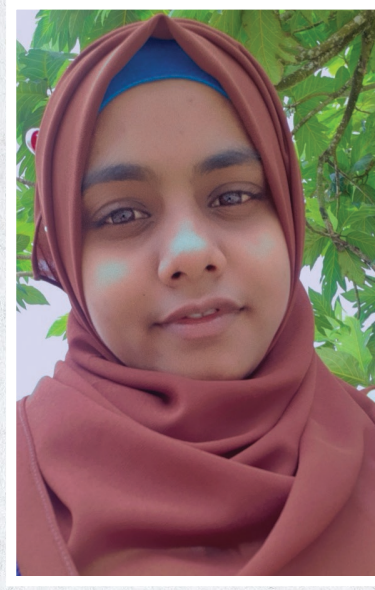
The Vanua Levu lad is a PAL leader at the University and has committed his time to assist students to become more competent learners.

"This year, I decided to mentor students under the PAL programme because I am confident that I will be able to reach out to a large number of students and effectively assist them," he said.

"The plan is to keep students engaged in the PAL sessions and help them understand the course contents in a better way."

Being a PAL leader is also beneficial to Prasad (pictured, above) as the role is helping him develop and grow personally.

"This initiative has given me an opportunity to be out there which improves my confidence and enables me to help students counter issues and also an opportunity to learn from them. This role has boosted my communication skills and has given me a clear perspective of collectivism."



PEER MENTORING is a vital tool in learning - **NISHA**

Peer mentoring will help students flourish in their academic careers, says noquBuddy mentor Zakiya Nisha.

"As a first-year student, I always wished there was someone to guide me through the first few weeks, but unfortunately I did not get that help," Nisha explained.

"When I found out about the noquBuddy programme at FNU, I decided to become a mentor and help the new students feel at home in their new place."

Nisha (pictured, above), 22, is a third-year student doing Bachelor of Science in Agriculture at FNU's College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry at Koronivia Campus.

"I get a lot of satisfaction helping the new students settle well at the campus considering the University life is very different from college life," she said.

"It is a privilege for me as a noquBuddy mentor to help year one students locate their class venues, lecture timetables, library and ITS services and help them figure out where their lecturers are based."

"My advice to new university students is to set high personal and academic standards for themselves and live up to them."

"Believe in yourself and settle for nothing less than your very best, and do not be afraid to seek assistance as we are here to help you."

ALI SETS GOALS as a student leader



Creating a more comfortable learning space for students is one of the prerogatives Alisha Ali hopes to achieve as a Peer Assisted Learning (PAL) leader.

Having gone through the trenches herself as a fresher, Ali (pictured, left) is eager to impart her knowledge and help others excel in their studies.

"As PAL leaders, we always try to create an environment that students feel comfortable in and feel free to communicate easily," she said.

"For those who may be reserved, we ask them personally if they are facing any

problems as one-on-one discussions make it much easier for students to ask questions."

The third-year Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery (MBBS) student said she has seen that mentored students have improved their exam results and have become more sociable.

"PAL sessions have improved my mentoring skills as well. I have become more aware of the concerns and doubts that PAL students have."

"I benefit from being a PAL leader as my existing knowledge gets refreshed and I also gain more knowledge with each PAL session. I hope to continue gaining more knowledge."

M

ohammed Nausheen knew he wanted to be a skilled tradesman and decided to pursue a study pathway at the Fiji National University (FNU) that would lead him to his career aspirations.

The soft-spoken but determined Nausheen visited FNU to complete his admission process for Semester 1 studies and enrolled in the Certificate 4 in Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning (RAC) course at the College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST).

The former Lautoka Muslim College student made it a priority to familiarise himself with the Derrick Campus facilities and services to ensure he was aware of his lecture and workshop locations.

“I am equally excited and nervous to begin university studies,” Nausheen shared.

“But I am glad I was able to find a course at FNU that was in line with my interests. Because of the pandemic, I have also seen the value of tradespeople as the work they do is important.”

“Even when the world was on lockdown, tradespeople were still working to provide people with the goods and services they needed.”

“I was always interested in this industry, and the operations and maintenance of equipment in this field so I am looking forward to the practical sessions of my course.”

The RAC course intends to provide students with the necessary skills and knowledge to install, service and maintain refrigeration and air conditioning units and equipment in line with industry standards.

Accompanying Nausheen on a tour of the campus was former Gospel High School graduate, Aporosa Vuki.

Vuki is also a first-year student in the Diploma in Mechanical Engineering course at CEST as it aligned with his interests and ambition.

“I am excited to start classes in this TVET (Technical and Vocational Education and Training) course and attended the orientation session at the College to learn where all my lectures and workshops will be,” he said.

“I’m grateful that 5,000 places for TVET studies are offered at FNU and supported by the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Service (TSLS).”

Vuki said he was also pleased to learn about the support services such as the Maths Help Hub that is available to him and other first-year and continuing students.



PRASAD EXCELS as a Building Management System (BMS) Technician

After gaining knowledge and experience from Fiji National University’s National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC), Aman Navneet Prasad is excelling in his role as a Building Management System (BMS) Technician in the refrigeration and air conditioning trade field.

The 34-year-old said he enjoys working in the trade field and every day he gets to learn new things, which helps him gain experience and work efficiently.

“I chose to become a tradesman in air-conditioning for multiple reasons compared to other jobs. My favourite one is that you get to work without spending four years studying for a Degree, and I do not have to struggle to find a job, I learn specialised skills and become multi-talented at the same time,” he explained.

“I am working very hard to achieve my long-term goal of owning an air-conditioning company that will be the best in the future.”

Currently, Prasad (*pictured, above*) is employed by Tappoo Group of Companies in Lautoka as a Technician, and his role is to maintain building services like air-conditioning systems, electrical equipment, water pumps, generators, escalators, elevators, and fire services, as well as building repair/maintenance.

“My job is not only beneficial to me but also to others. It gives a sense of connection and satisfaction when the job is delivered with clean workmanship.”

Prasad, who graduated with a Level 3 Trade Certificate in Refrigeration and Air-Conditioning from FNU’s NTPC, said the tutors and trainers at FNU helped him gain a recognised qualification in 2014, which ensured him a stable job.

“There is a lot of investment in the properties, and this has also increased the demand for Heating, Ventilation and Air-Conditioning (HVAC) technicians to deal with the heating and cooling systems in the buildings. In homes, office buildings, schools, hospitals, and retail establishments, air conditioning has become the norm,” he said.

“When an air conditioner goes out, it can be inconvenient and even dangerous in hot climates where children and the elderly are susceptible to heatstroke. With this trade, you are helping them and contributing to healthy living.

“I believe FNU is best when it comes to Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET) in Fiji as there are so many people who are working as tradespeople in Fiji after gaining qualifications from FNU.”

Prasad said young people should give their best in whatever trade they are working in and, one day, they would surely be rewarded.

“Throughout your career, there are many ways to gain experience, such as internships, jobs, or volunteer opportunities. These are great ways to develop your skill set in your chosen field,” he said.

“If you find yourself in a discouraging situation, such as an unsatisfying job or a strict manager, focus on the positives. Know that these experiences can shape you to become a stronger, harder-working professional in your field.”

“When you apply for a job or internship, you’ll likely be competing with other candidates. Because of this, it is important to keep your skills current regardless of your industry. This means staying up to date with various technology and industry trends to help you gain an advantage over other candidates.”

Prasad has thanked his employer for helping him grow professionally and personally.

Teirabwati dreams of becoming **KIRIBATI'S LEADING MARINER**

C

onsidered one of the few females from her home country to pursue Nautical Science as a programme of study, Mereta Teirabwati knows she has a lot riding on her shoulders.

The first-year student at Fiji National University’s Fiji Maritime Academy has never been on a ship before and could potentially become one of Kiribati’s leading mariners.

What was initially her father’s dream, has now become hers and while she is navigating uncharted waters, the knowledge that she could excel in, what is a predominantly male-dominated field, has motivated her to see her academic journey through.

“This is my first year and I have learnt new things,” she said.

“I have never been on a ship before and here I am learning about it. My parents wanted me to take this course to fulfil my father’s dream, so I am doing this for him. I want to make my father proud of me.”

Having been granted a scholarship, Teirabwati (*pictured, right*) feels she has been given an opportunity to better her family’s circumstances.

“Back home, it’s kind of tough. Sometimes, I didn’t have money for school, but I was so fortunate I got a scholarship. I had to work and study hard to be able to get here.”

The 19-year-old’s transition to everyday life in a different country has not been easy.

“It’s different here in Fiji. Back home we speak our own language and here we speak English, but I’ve made a few friends and am slowly coming to terms with things here.”

Teirabwati believes she is in the right environment to succeed given the resources available at her disposal.

“There are very good facilities here that I believe will help me in my studies. I know I will have to make a lot of sacrifices to become a captain.”





SCAN TO REGISTER

Talanoa with our Alumni



Yeshnita Devi (centre) believes that her academic qualifications have enhanced her ability to achieve professional objectives.

Yeshnita Devi began her tertiary studies at the Fiji National University (FNU) in a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) course 12 years ago. Last year, she graduated from FNU for the fourth time with a Masters in her field of study.

Growing up on her family farm in Labasa, Devi knew from a young age that she wanted to be an agent of change in the lives of young children. After realising the positive influence and role teachers played in her learning journey, Devi knew she also wanted to follow the same career path.

After completing her primary education at Vunicuicui Sanatan Dharam Primary School in Labasa, Devi undertook high school studies at Holy Family Secondary School and Labasa College.

Education

In 2009, Devi received a PSC scholarship to undertake the Diploma in Primary Education at the Lautoka Teachers College (LTC), which later merged with other national tertiary institutions the following year to form FNU.

"I was so happy to receive the scholarship as I knew this meant I would be one step closer to my dreams," Devi said.

"FNU has contributed tremendously to my student

DEVI UPSKILLS in Education at FNU

and graduate experience due to the qualified and friendly staff, the support services, campus life and the connections I established during my studies."

Devi was also proud to point out the fact that she has gradually upskilled her qualifications at FNU over the years.

"I knew I would always choose FNU as the institution where I would continuously add to my skills and knowledge base through the courses I undertook at the university."

In 2014, four years after graduating with her Diploma, Devi enrolled as an in-service student at the Labasa Campus to undertake the Bachelor of Education (Primary) course.

Despite the pandemic, Devi showed that nothing would hinder her determination to continue learning as she graduated from FNU in 2020 with a Postgraduate Diploma in Education.

Last year, she added one more certificate of qualification to her belt when she completed the Master of Education programme.

"There is always something new to learn, even if you have been in the same industry for years," Devi explained.

"Being a teacher means we always have to be aware and utilise the latest learning requirements, trends, mindsets and methodologies and curricula used. I believe that my academic qualifications have enhanced my ability to achieve my professional objectives."

"I love sharing ideas and knowledge and watching my students become inspired and resilient learners has given me a sense of accomplishment."

Career

In her 12 years of teaching, Devi has taught at three primary schools in her hometown, Seaqaqa Primary School, Vunicuicui Sanatan Dharam Primary School and Uluibau District School.

"I enjoy being employed by the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts and being able to impart knowledge to our future leaders," Devi shared.

"I believe that when you educate children, you are educating families, communities and nations."

"I am fortunate also that I was able to continue learning whilst being a teacher."

Motivation

Devi said she was able to achieve all that she could with the support of her husband, parents and in-laws.

"My partner and family have always supported my ambitions. This is why I was able to balance my work commitments as a teacher and in-service teacher and family obligations as a wife, mother and daughter."

"Although I did face challenges along the way, this support combined with the skilled and empathetic lecturers at FNU made everything feasible."

Words of Wisdom

In addition to this, Devi shared that time management and understanding the priority of each of her assigned tasks during studies and at work was an important work ethic that she encouraged everyone to practice.

"Be organised. It sounds so simple but is very effective when you look back on your work and realise you can complete your tasks on time," she said.

"Manage your work and ensure that you also make time for breaks and leisure activities to relieve stress."

"Be confident enough in yourself to work independently but equally open-minded as a team player."

Alumni Connect

Graduates of FNU and its former institutions can register to be part of the exclusive Alumni Connect portal and remain connected to their classmates and the University.

Registered alumni can receive news and updates on key University activities, read alumni success and feature articles, scholarship and upskilling opportunities, networking events and professional development and training seminars.

To register, please scan the QR code at the top left corner of this page.

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FNUNIKUA wants to HEAR FROM YOU

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

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