



INSPIRATION,

Innovation and Discovery



FNU COMMITS TO BAN PLASTIC BALLOONS

TAUKATEA MAKES SACRIFICES TO ACHIEVE GOAL AT FNU

SCAN FOR
ECOPY





FNU Inspires Innovators



Bula vinaka! I am pleased to write this column for the June edition of *FNUNIKUA*. The month's theme is Inspiration, Innovations and Discovery. At the Fiji National University (FNU), we inspire our students and ensure they become great innovators to be able to discover their full potential in all aspects of life.

It is worth recalling that a diamond can only be formed through the application of immense heat and pressure, and once polished, it becomes a precious gem. FNU makes you a precious gem that has been polished, and you are now ready to shine brightly in whatever field of work you choose. Here at FNU, we strive to impart knowledge in a manner that is engaging and pleasurable, while simultaneously cultivating personal growth.

As University students, you are at the forefront of knowledge, constantly seeking inspiration, driving innovation, and unearthing new discoveries. Today, we acknowledge and honour your commitment to improving the world through your relentless pursuit of knowledge and creativity.

Inspirations are the catalysts that ignite our passion, broaden our horizons, and push us beyond our

perceived limitations. As students, you encounter inspiration in various forms. It may be a thought-provoking lecture, a conversation with a tutor, or a book that opens you up to new understanding. These inspirations shape your aspirations, encourage you to dream big, and provide the fuel needed to propel your journey towards success.

But inspiration alone is not enough. It is the bridge between ideas and actions, and that bridge is built upon innovation. Innovations have the power to transform our world. Innovations push us to question, experiment, and explore new possibilities. As University students, you are privileged to be in an environment that nurtures and encourages innovation. This aligns to our FNU commitment of placing students at the centre of everything we do to provide them with an enriching Student Experience.

As you embark on this journey of inspiration and innovation, remember that discovery lies at the heart of it all. Discovery is the process of unearthing hidden gems of knowledge and uncovering new frontiers. It is an adventure that requires curiosity, perseverance, and an insatiable thirst for learning. Through discovery, you contribute to the ever-expanding tapestry of human understanding. You stand on the shoulders of giants, building upon the discoveries of the past and paving the way for future generations.

As a University, we are collectively on this journey of Inspiration, Innovations and Discovery. A few of these key initiatives and achievements are highlighted below;

'No Balloon' University

FNU has committed to banning plastic balloons and pledged to plant 1000 sandalwood trees across all its campuses around the country. This was announced during the World Environment Day celebrations at Lautoka's Natabua Campus earlier this month. This is aligned to the 2023 theme 'Solutions to Plastic Pollution'.

THE Ranking

It is a milestone achievement for the University to be ranked in the Times Higher Education for the second time, and I congratulate every member of the FNU family who has been associated with this initiative. FNU has maintained its ranking and overall scores for the 2023 Times Higher Education (THE) ranking, holding its overall position at 801-1000 from 1,591 global institutions in 2023, compared to 801-1000 from 1,410 institutions in 2022. The Impact rankings measure how an institution's research, stewardship, outreach and teaching deliver against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) – a blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all.

Innovations for Higher Productivity

Following the success of last year's Breakfast session – Productivity Talk, FNU's National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC) held a second session this month. This event has now become an excellent platform for promoting Productivity programmes amongst all stakeholders, as part of NTPC's commitment to advancing Fiji's Productivity Movement in partnership with the Ministry of Employment, Productivity, and Industrial Relations.

Career Discover for High School Students

FNU commenced with its nationwide 'Career Discover for High School Students' outreach this month as well. The annual high school visits by the University will ensure that upper-level high school students are provided with first-hand information on FNU's programmes, entry pathways, University highlights and career opportunities aligned to potential fields of study.

The visits will emphasise the University's commitment to ensuring its prospective students are well-informed before making decisions on further studies. We value our prospective students as much as our current and graduate students.

A virtual session will be conducted for maritime schools in the first week of August. For more information, contact the FNU Outreach team via outreach@fnu.ac.fj

FNUSA and VC's Leadership Conference

FNU held its inaugural Fiji National University Students' Association and the Vice Chancellor's Leadership Conference from 19-22 June at the FNU Natabua Campus. This conference served as a platform to foster collaboration, exchange ideas, and explore leadership innovative strategies.

In conclusion, I wish everyone a great semester break, and I encourage students to do their part to make everyone proud. Looking forward to seeing all the new and old faces in the upcoming Semester!

If you've made up your mind – or are still deciding – FNU is accepting New Applications for Semester 2 studies! Visit our website on www.fnu.ac.fj to find out more or walk into any of our FNU campuses to submit your applications.

Text us Toll-Free on 857 for Vodafone and Inkk users if you still have queries.

Vinaka

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba
Acting Vice-Chancellor

Proud Father happy to graduate with son

(From left to right) Metuisela Koroi and Iliave Koroi

It was a proud moment for Metuisela Koroi, who graduated with his son Iliave Koroi from the Fiji National University's (FNU), Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA).

The duo had successfully completed the Deckhand Fishing course at the Academy.

Fifty-year-old Koroi, who is a Crew Liaison Officer for Hangton Pacific Company Pte Limited, has a wealth of knowledge and expertise in managing crew operations.

He plays a pivotal role in ensuring smooth and efficient coordination between the company and its crew members.

"I am one of the happiest people, to graduate with my son, as only fortunate people get to experience the celebration of achieving something in life together," he said.

The proud father said that he was happy to graduate

with his son as only fortunate people get to experience the celebration of achieving something in life together.

"I am getting old and probably coming to the end of my career, but my son Iliave, is beginning his journey in the fishing industry."

Koroi said he has over 30 years of experience working at sea, and he is excited to share that knowledge with his son.

"I have been going out to sea for almost three decades now and have experienced a lot of things while being on ships. During these times I have also encountered several storms and adverse weather conditions," he shared.

"One needs a heart of a lion as one would be staying away from friends and families for long, and not see the land for long. Therefore, everyone must prepare well for the challenges and work to the best of their ability."

19-year-old Iliave said he looked forward to learning from his father's advice and experience, which had

motivated him to take up a career in the fishing industry.

"I am very excited to be part of this new journey in the fishing industry. FNU has assisted us significantly by training us well and imparting the skills and qualifications we require to succeed in this industry," the younger Koroi said.

"Working out at sea is very challenging, and it requires a lot of mental preparation. I am blessed to have my father by my side so that I can rely on him for assistance or guidance."

The FMA's rigorous programme focused on providing students with both theoretical knowledge and practical experience in basic sea safety, nautical expertise and effective by-catch mitigation strategies.

By addressing the critical issue of by-catch, with a particular emphasis on the impact on sea turtles, the FMA has played a pivotal role in fostering a more sustainable fishing industry.

FNU Commits to Ban Plastic Balloons, Plant 1000 Sandalwood Trees

The Fiji National University (FNU) has committed to ban plastic balloons and pledged to plant 1000 sandalwood trees across all its campuses around the country.

This statement was made by the FNU's Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba while officially opening the World Environment Day celebrations at Lautoka's Natabua Campus this month.

The theme for this year's celebration was 'Solutions to Plastic Pollution'.

Professor Nabobo-Baba, joined by the FNU's Senior Leadership Team (SLT), Natabua Campus students and staff, highlighted that the ban and pledge were a positive step forward for FNU. The event also included staff from the Division of Capital Projects and Infrastructure (DCPI), who led the project.

She also paid tribute and acknowledged how the students and staff of Natabua Campus were championing environmental conservation & sustainability.

"The celebration really aligns well with our FNU objectives to contribute to SDG (Sustainable

Development Goals) and there are many sustainability initiatives across FNU."

Pro-Vice-Chancellor TVET and Sustainability Initiatives Committee (SIC) Chair, Dr Isimeli



Professor Nabobo-Baba and FNU's SLT members at the World Environment Day event

Tagicakiverata encouraged staff and students to be role models of change after the official launch of the 'I Recycle Hub Programme' at the FNU's Derrick and Natabua Campus next month – a vital sustainability initiative that FNU will champion.

"This programme aims to improve our staff and students' behaviour and advocate the 3Rs of Reduce, Reuse and Recycle in our homes and within our communities, or any other forums/gatherings they are part of," he said.

Director Capital Projects and Infrastructure, Niranjwan Chettiar added that these initiatives implemented by the University aligned with the Strategic Plan and Sustainability Plan 2021-2026.

- Key objectives of the Sustainability Plan includes;
- \$300k reduction in power consumption over five years.
 - Divert 20% of waste from landfill through recycling.
 - Reduction in carbon emission by 25%
 - 40% rainwater for nonportable use.
 - Achieve 71% clean energy over five years.

Productivity factors highlighted

Productivity is an essential aspect of the prosperity of the nation, individual, and organisations where one needs to ensure that efficiency and the development of the skills of the workers are paramount.

These were the words of the Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation (FCEF) Manager Membership Services, Research, and Communication, Savenaca Baro.

He made these comments at the Fiji National University's (FNU), National Training and Productivity Centre's (NTPC) Breakfast Session Productivity Talk held at the Grand Pacific Hotel in Suva earlier this month.

In his presentation, Baro informed the participants that, as per his organisation's survey, there were

numerous factors affecting productivity in Fiji. These factors include availability of resources, water quality, water cleanliness, energy supply, policies, and legislation.

"Water disruption is causing many issues with productivity, as we have seen that the workers are not able to turn up to work on time or are not able to make it because they do not have water available to them," Baro revealed.

"Water quality is also affecting the ability of food manufacturers to produce well enough or stock production to deal with that. The other issue is water cleanliness, which is affecting the machines they have, and another issue is that of energy supply; inconsistent energy supply affects both production and productivity."

Baro further mentioned that the current policies and legislation also affected productivity.

"The factor is the cost of doing business and the ease of doing business, something that has been an issue for the past couple of years. Policies and legislation need to change to allow businesses to operate in a better and fast way," he said.

"We try to deal with these issues with capacity building and being able to provide the way forward by providing the opportunities for members, organisations, and the private sector to have access to information

and training that would allow things such as a 5S Certification from the FNU team, which we believe would help our members improve productivity, and to ensure organisations are more efficient and doing more."

"This is achieved through training, support, and release of information, and this is something we try to do to help our members, and this would mitigate issues affecting production. We believe if we have a positive culture, then it will support productivity."



Fiji Commerce and Employers Federation, Manager Membership Services, Research, and Communication, Savenaca Baro.



Dina Solanki and Tariq Shah

Couples' hard work pays off

Graduation is a special day for any student, but to be graduating with your partner makes it even more special.

The power couple, Tariq Shah and Dina Solanki, graduated from the Fiji National University's (FNU), College of Business, Hospitality, and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) this year.

Shah completed his Executive Masters in Business Administration

(EMBA) while Solanki attained a Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting. Shah highlighted that they were extremely grateful to the University, and the support from their parents, in assisting the couple achieve their qualifications.

"There is nothing that we have not struggled with, we had to go through a lot of pressure, and then to be finally

standing here with our degree means more than a lot to us," the 37-year-old said.

"There was a lot of contribution from both our parents. They have truly supported us, when we needed them, especially during COVID, my mother-in-law stayed with us for six months to care for our babies."

"When she returned home, my mother came to stay with us for the next six months. This was such a great help as we tried to complete our studies," Shah said.

For Solanki, finding the balance between work, motherhood and studies was a challenge. Using her children as motivation propelled the young mother to success."

"I challenge myself for my kids – if I can do it then they can do it as well – I want to inspire them as a mother, as a professional, and give them good ethics for work, life and studies," she shared.

"I also struggled with my pregnancy,

I was in and out of the hospital on most occasions, which meant completing my assignment in the hospital sometimes. We struggled a lot to get here, the physical and mental stress that you are trying to deal with, together with a time constraint as well."

The mother-of-two added that it was an extremely emotional moment for her dad to be present at the ceremony to witness her graduation.

"For Tariq's parents – this is the first time for them to attend a graduation ceremony, and to witness their son graduate with a Masters was an auspicious moment for us as a family."

"It is a proud moment for us, we have struggled a lot to get to this day, and I am so happy that both our parents were present to witness this moment."

The couples' advice to others was to slowly work through their struggles, as they would ultimately achieve their goals.

Sustainability at FNU

The Fiji National University (FNU) is committed to contributing towards the national Sustainability efforts and initiatives undertaken to address global issues affecting the environment.

In an inspiring partnership, FNU has joined forces with Waste Recyclers Fiji Ltd and the Pacific Recycling Foundation to pilot the I-Recycle Hub at its campuses.

The Hub aims to promote the recycling of various materials such as glass bottles, batteries for electronic remote controls, papers, cardboard, plastic bottles, plastics, and aluminium cans.

This transformative initiative will be launched as the I-Recycle pilot project, strategically placing specially designed bins across FNU's Samabula and Natabua campuses for students, staff, and visitors to promote and participate in.

Division of Capital Project and Infrastructure, Director, Niranjwan Chettiar, a driving force behind this campaign, emphasises FNU's recognition of climate change's dire local and global effects.

"It is important that we are leading the fight in



FNU staff during a tree-planting event

undertaking more duties to protect the environment and collaborate with organisations that have the same motive," Chettiar said.

"The University will also be provided with data to aid our monitoring and evaluation and shape future activities."

In the latest Times Higher Education (THE) ranking, FNU has improved in the overall scores released by the Times Higher Education World University Rankings.

The Impact rankings measure how an institution's research, stewardship, outreach and teaching deliver against the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDGs) – a blueprint to achieving a better and more sustainable future for all.

FNU held its overall position at 801-1000 from 1,591 global institutions in 2023 compared to 801-1000 from 1,410 institutions in 2022.

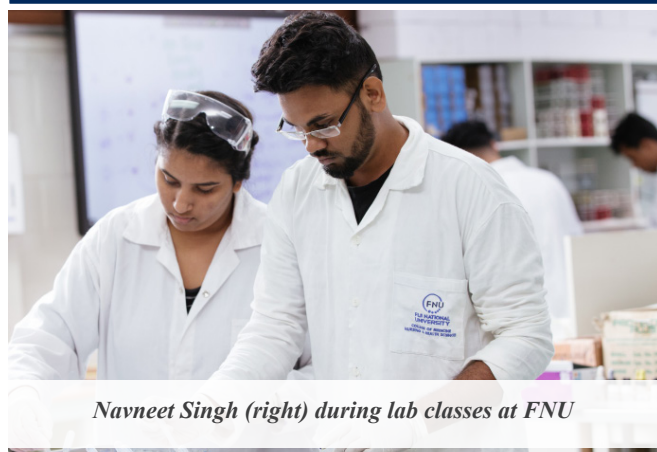
The Partnership for the Goals (SDG 17) saw an improvement in its 2023 ranking of 401-600 from 1,625 institutions up from 601-800 from 1,441 institutions in 2022. Similarly, Climate Action (SDG 15) improved its score from 33.2 in 2022 to 35.1 in 2023, ranking at 401-600 from 735 institutions.

The newly introduced categories – Decent Work and Economic Growth (SDG 8) and Quality Education (SDG 4) – made their debut in the 2023 ranking. SDG 8 ranked 401-600 from 960 institutions, while SDG 4 ranked 601-800 from 1,304 institutions.

FNU Pro-Vice-Chancellor Research and Innovation Professor Roland De Marco said the University was playing its role in taking steps to address the array of sustainability challenges faced by the globe and the Pacific Islands region.

"Given that FNU was established in 2010, together with our strong commitment to sustainability and impactful research, we are proud of our 2023 THE Impact Ranking," Professor De Marco said.

Not All Heroes Wear Capes, Some Wear Lab Coats – Singh



Navneet Singh (right) during lab classes at FNU

Navneet Singh is now a successful medical laboratory scientist after graduating with a Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science (BMLS) from Fiji National University's (FNU), College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences (CMNHS) in 2022.

Originally from Lautoka, Singh chose to pursue this career because it was his father's dream. However, with time, he realised that it was the right field for him since working as a medical lab scientist contributed to saving countless lives every day.

"Medical laboratory scientists and technicians play a pivotal role in our medical and healthcare systems," the 25-year-old said.

"Approximately 70% of diagnoses are given through the expertise of medical laboratory scientists."

He further stated that during the COVID-19 pandemic, people began to realise that medical lab workers were unsung heroes, as they helped in the life-saving testing and diagnosis of numerous people.

Singh revealed that even though studying away from home was a challenge, he was thankful for FNU's support services that helped him adapt to his new chapter in life.

"It took time to adjust, but the friendly environment and workshops that were conducted to help first-year students were helpful. Resources like the 24/7 free Wi-Fi were readily available, which helped us study and keep in touch with loved ones back at home."

"Studying BMLS could get very intense sometimes; however, the well-equipped medical lab facilities, together with highly trained and experienced lecturers and tutors, were a great help," Singh added.

He said the practical skills he gained at CMNHS were proving to be extremely beneficial to his career, as the manual tests taught at University helped him understand the principles of automated tests.

"BMLS is a four-year programme, with three years of study and practicals and a year of clinical attachment with research. The final year was interesting, educational, and filled with discovery as we had hands-on practice with clinical samples while conducting and presenting a research paper."

Singh presented a research paper on "The Prevalence of Leptospirosis in Fiji from 2017 to 2021".

He hopes to pursue postgraduate studies at CMNHS soon, with a keen focus on molecular diagnostics.



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Taukatea makes sacrifices to achieve goal at FNU

Sacrificing many months away from his family to start his tertiary education at the Fiji National University's (FNU), Natabua Campus in Lautoka is something Mwakatui Taukatea will never regret.

The 20-year-old lad from Buakonikai village on Rabi Island moved to Lautoka at the beginning of the year. He is pursuing the Bachelor of Education (Secondary) (Mathematics & Computer Science) programme at the College of Humanities and Education (CHE).

Taukatea, who is also a hostel resident on campus, said he wanted to achieve his goal of becoming a teacher in a quiet environment, and the peaceful environment in Lautoka was the perfect spot for him.

"I only get to see my family through video calls, otherwise the only time I get to physically be with them is during the semester breaks when I return home," he said.

The second eldest child of four siblings, he is happy to be the first member of his family to pursue tertiary studies. Once he graduates, Taukatea would become the first-ever teacher in his family.

He said his motivation to study hard stems from his family, who worked behind the scenes to ensure that his goal is accomplished.

"I am really close to my mother and when I think of her at times, I try to distract myself, so I go and mingle around with my iTaukei, Indo-Fijian, and Rotuman friends because they are my family here," he said.

"Whenever I would speak to my mum, she would advise me to pray when I am feeling down, so that also helps me as well."

"My future plan is to go back to Rabi and teach there, and this is a way for me to give back to my people," he added.

He added that he was excited to return to FNU in Semester 2 to complete his studies.



Mwakatui Taukatea at the FNU Natabua Campus in Lautoka

Innovative Research on Aquaculture Species



Fiji National University academics, Sumilesh Pal and Regina Singh, recently presented papers at the World Aquaculture Conference, 2023 in Darwin, Australia.

Pal, who is currently enrolled in the Master of Science in Fisheries programme, is conducting research on the Black Lip pearl and Mabé pearls, which are emerging commercial aquaculture species in Fiji.

Both species are prominently found in Fijian waters. *Pinctada margaritifera* (black lip pearl oyster), locally known as Civa, has been cultivated as one of the major commercial species for the pearl industry.

"Pearl oysters are mainly valued for their pearls and shells, while the tissue and meat are less important," she said.

"The current rise in fertiliser prices provides an opportunity to develop high-nutrient organic fertilisers from pearl oysters that can be utilised by local communities. This resource of the pearl is not optimally utilised in several parts of the world. Meanwhile, *Pteria penguin* (Mabé pearls), locally known as 'Melamela,' is a community-based project, involving women and children in the pearl culture."

"This study aims to investigate the bioconversion of the waste byproducts of the black lip pearl oyster towards the development of organic fertiliser."

Singh's research is on the growth yield of co-cultured sea grapes (*Caulerpa lentillifera*) with blacklip oyster *Pinctada margaritifera* from Namarai Village.

"It was the first time I attended such a conference, and a mixture of emotions shook me up days before my travel. Looking ahead, I can see myself with all the expertise in aquaculture from around the globe, discussing, networking, and most importantly, trying to create a change with the different topics that we presented on," Singh said.

"The conference brought together young researchers, academics, and industry experts to discuss the latest trends in aquaculture, fostering collaboration and sharing knowledge."

"Aquaculture speakers provide profound insights to an engaged audience, enriching discussions and contributing to the advancement of aquaculture in Fiji and globally."

Aquaculture is the controlled process of cultivating aquatic organisms, especially for human consumption.



FNU Scholars, Sumilesh Pal (above) and Regina Singh (left), at the Aquaculture Conference in Darwin, Australia



FMA student shares Korean cadetship experience



Mereoni Liga Tooyalewa and Inia Tarai excel in Korean Government's cadet training programme

Two students from the Fiji National University (FNU) were recently selected for a three-month cadetship in Korea as part of their practical learning component at the University.

The duo, Mereoni Liga Tooyalewa and Inia Tarai, are part of the Korean Government's fully-sponsored cadet training programme.

Fiji Maritime Academy's (FMA) Diploma of Nautical Science student, Mereoni Liga Tooyalewa, said her cadetship at the Korean Institute of Maritime and Fisheries Technology (KMFT) continues to be an enriching experience.

Tooyalewa, after having spent close to a month in Korea, said the knowledge and lessons that she has learnt in this short time were 'life-altering'.

"It has been good so far! I am enjoying every bit of this programme that we have been selected to be a part of. I have learnt so much – the equipment here at the Korean Academy is so advanced, especially the simulators," she shared.

"The Korean academy prioritises discipline, very much like FMA. We have learnt of the importance of safety onboard a vessel, as well as the usage of individual equipment."

From Tau Village in Nadroga, Tooyalewa said she is grateful to the FNU and Korean Government for making it possible for her to be trained internationally.

"Inia and I are fortunate to be given this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, there are so many cadets from Asian countries here and we are creating a global network."

KMFT is a maritime education and research institute operated by the government of South Korea, located at Yeongdang-dong, Nam-gu, Busan, with an auxiliary campus on Yeongdo Island near Busan Port.

Journey of self-discovery at FNU

First-year Bachelor of Nursing student, Jasna Navisha Prasad, said she was excited about continuing her amazing journey of self-discovery at the Fiji National University (FNU) in Semester 2.

The 20-year-old says she chose to study nursing at FNU as it provided the best services and opportunities for its students, such as affordable tuition fees and reasonable accommodation fees.

Prasad is undertaking the Bachelor of Nursing at the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) at the Tamavua Campus.

"Studying at FNU was one of the best choices I made since it has set me on the path to turn my dreams into reality not just for me but for my family," she said.

"The hardworking healthcare workers during the COVID-19 pandemic inspired me to pursue my career in nursing. It was evident as to how much each nurse sacrificed just to provide care for the sick and needy during the pandemic, and I wanted to be able to provide care for people just like they did," said the Sigatoka lass.

Prasad stated that studying at FNU's School of Nursing opened doors to explore digital learning through the Moodle platform.

"I was taken by surprise because notes, assignments and even means of communication was done on the digital platform. Although the first few days were challenging, the friendly ITS staff helped me to become well-versed with Moodle operations."

"As a first-year nursing student, the practical component was a major highlight during this first semester as I got to learn a lot during the clinical hours because the registered nurses taught us a few things that we would learn during Semester 2."

"Apart from that, the well-resourced library is an asset when it comes to assignments and exams," added Prasad.

She also commended the extracurricular on-campus activities that helped her develop holistically, such as sports competitions.

"Everyone has a dream and here at FNU you are given the chance to discover yourself as you pursue your dreams and work towards a fulfilling career."



Jasna Navisha Prasad: Aspiring Nurse on the Path to Success



FNU Chancellor Semesa Karavaki (sitting left with garland) with the Minister for Education, Honourable Aseri Radrodro and FNU Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba with FNU students and staff.

FNU hosts first Leadership Conference

The Fiji National University (FNU) successfully held its inaugural FNU Students' Association (FNUSA) and Vice-Chancellor's Leadership Conference at its Natabua Campus in June.

The conference was officially opened by the Minister for Education, Honourable Aseri Radrodro, who was also accorded a traditional welcome ceremony by the FNU community.

Honourable Radrodro was joined by the FNU Chancellor and Council Chair, Mr Semesa Druavesi Karavaki, members of the FNU Council, the Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, FNU Senior Leadership Team (SLT) members, the FNUSA National President, Mohammed Iqbal, student leaders and staff.

In his opening address, Honourable Radrodro

pledged his support towards initiatives that promoted leadership in Fiji's education system.

"The commitment and passion you have for shaping the leaders of tomorrow is commendable," he said.

"I will expect you to discuss employment challenges and how we as young people can encourage solutions for those. I will expect you to discuss good community values, I will expect you to discuss nation-building initiatives and how we can as a people advance and develop our natural resources further without harming our natural habitats."

He explained to the students, that as leaders they must be ensured that they are equipped with the necessary skills to leverage technology and innovation to create employment and contribute to Fiji's economy sustainably.

Professor Nabobo-Baba highlighted that the leadership conference was a continuation from the Girit Day and Ratu Sukuna celebrations held at FNU – both of which celebrated leadership bringing Fiji to what it was today.

"The leadership conference is predominantly about our various student leaders from the various FNU campuses convening here. As senior leaders and student leaders, it is a good time to reflect and to discuss strategies moving forward," she said.

"Together with students, the inaugural conference also features the senior leadership team, and senior staff of FNU who will discuss topics such as sustainability, the digital age, how to enhance students' study, female leadership, collaborative teaching and learning; as well as alumni engagements and issues that matter to student leaders, and leaders in general, at FNU."

FNUSA National President, Mr Mohammed Iqbal said the event provided a platform for students to voice their concerns and perspectives, as well as understand the University's strategic vision and current issues faced by the tertiary education sector.

"I am certain that positive outcomes will be delivered following the four days conference," he said.

The four-day leadership conference took place from 19-22 June 2023.



Naitasiri Secondary School Vice-Principal Asinate Lagilagi (centre) with students

The Fiji National University (FNU) began its annual high school visits in the Central Division on 19 June. The Fiji-wide outreach campaign will also cover high schools in the Western and Northern Division.

During the visits, FNU representatives provided awareness and advice on FNU's programmes and entry requirements, application processes, facilities, and support services available and the career opportunities available to students.

The Year 11, 12 and 13 students expressed their gratitude to the FNU teams who travelled across rivers and through rough terrain to ensure all high school students were provided first-hand access to information about FNU.

Dawasamu Secondary School Principal, Joeli Matia said the visit was timely as the students were preparing for mid-year examinations.

"After hearing from the FNU team, the students are now more aware of the study pathways available and can work towards it," he said.

Dawasamu Secondary School, Head Boy Josefa Vosaniyalayala, said he was grateful for the opportunity to speak to the team.

"I am so thankful to the team from FNU for the enlightening session, especially for schools like us in the rural areas. Due to our location, we are often deprived of the chance to get firsthand information from academic institutions like FNU about our tertiary studies," he said.

Career Discovery for High School Students

Principal of Naitasiri High School, Luke Roverove added that FNU's commitment to its prospective students was evident in its teams travelling to all high schools around the country.

"Thank you so much to FNU for taking the time to visit Naitasiri High School in the morning, even in the cold," he stated.

"We are so grateful for your enthusiasm and willingness to provide our students with valuable insight and educational opportunities. Your visit was an invaluable experience for our students, and we can't thank you enough for your generosity and commitment to our school."

Naitasiri High School student, Kelera Dawn added that she looked forward to joining FNU in the coming year.

The Central Division visits will conclude on June 30. This will be followed by the Western Division from 3-14 July, and the North from 17-28 July 2023.

Virtual sessions will be conducted for maritime schools in the first week of August.



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MY FNU

Talanoa

with our **Alumni**



Petueli (left) finds success at Barmingo Contract Mining in Australia

Petueli travels the world with a Trade Certificate

Michael Petueli did not let failure dictate his journey, nor his future. With a goal etched at the back of his head, he set his mind to fulfilling it.

From Vatukoula in Tavua, Petueli is travelling the world with a Trade Certificate in Heavy Mobile Plant attained from the former Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT), which is now the College of Engineering Science and Technology (CEST) under the Fiji National University (FNU).

Education

Petueli attended Marist Convent School, and then one of Fiji's prominent secondary school, Queen Victoria School (QVS) before pursuing his tertiary studies at the Fiji Institute of Technology (FIT).

With a goal to travel overseas, he applied to enlist with the British Army. However, he failed in his application twice.

"In 2002, when I was in Year 11, I first applied to the British Army. However, I failed the interview, but I did not give up. The following year, I applied again to the British Army, and faced failure again, this left me shattered."

"When I got home that day, my parents asked me what I wanted to do next and if I had applied anywhere else. I said No. My Dad said, 'Well son, you have nowhere else to go, but underground'."

"Growing up in Vatukoula, you end up in the mines when everything else fails. I accepted my fate and in December 2003, my mining career took flight, and I started as a trainee miner at 19 years old."

During this time, Petueli joined FIT's four-year Apprenticeship Scheme as a Heavy Diesel Mechanic and graduated with a Trade Certificate in Heavy Mobile Plant in 2009.

"I really enjoyed my time at FIT's Samabula

Campus, staying at the hostel. Coming from Vatukoula to Suva, the struggle and temptations were real, and there were many distractions, but I never took my mind off my dream of going overseas."

"In December 2006, I was a year away from graduating when the mine closed, and in April 2007, I was lucky to be one of the

very few that got called back to work to complete my Apprenticeship."

"At this point, I realised this was my second chance at life, and began to work on myself and my priorities."

Career

Petueli now works as an HD Maintenance Fitter, Field Services with Barmingo Contract Mining in Australia. Barmingo is one of the world's largest hard rock underground mining services companies, with operations in Australia, North America, and Africa.

"I travel to all Barmingo mine sites and carry out maintenance works, and commission on all our underground heavy machinery fleet, drills, loaders, trucks, and more," he said.

"In 2011, I reached a breakthrough in my career. After eight years at Emperor Gold Mine, Vatukoula, an Australian company offered me a job, and I moved to Western Australia."

"While I was working in Australia, my parents split up. This was a hard time, but I got through it. In 2012, I was offered another job and moved to New South Wales."

"Today, I am travelling the world with my FIT/TPAF Trade Certificate, I have worked in Papua New Guinea, Indonesia, Africa, Ghana, Botswana, and all over Australia. Growing up, these were countries I thought I would never set foot on."

Motivation

"Never give up on your dreams! When one door closes, another will always open, remember that! Hard work will always pay off in the end, one way or another."

"Finally, do not let peer pressure get to you, know your worth! Also, it is okay to say no."

"I met my wife in Tavua in 2000, and we rekindled years later. I am now happily married with six kids, have bought a home and settled in Brisbane, Australia. Life can be tough at time but teach yourself to journey on. Ka vinaka na vosota. (Your sacrifices will pay off)."

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.



Petueli cherishes his loving family of five beautiful children alongside his wife



The **FNUNIKUA** is a monthly newsletter which aims to promote the University's activities to the wider community. This newsletter is produced by the Public Relations and Communications team at the Division of Marketing and Communications.

Publisher: Fiji National University | **Editor:** Charlene Lanyon | **Design & Layout:** Luke Salababa
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