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FNU

NIKUA

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DISCOVERING

EDUCATIONAL

Pathways to Success



HOPE IN THE HIGHLANDS

JOINT RESEARCH TO STUDY KAVALACTONES

SCAN FOR
ECOPY





Embracing Opportunities



Bula Vinaka!

I am honoured to address you in the July edition of the FNUNIKUA newsletter of the Fiji National University. As the Acting Vice-Chancellor of Fiji National University, I am pleased to connect with you and share some important updates and initiatives that will shape our educational journey.

FNU prioritises your academic aspirations and provides you with the necessary guidance to achieve them. At FNU, we offer multiple entry pathways, allowing students the option to begin their studies at the Certificate or Diploma level before progressing into their chosen field.

Bridging Boundaries

As Fiji's national university, we are committed to offering inclusive and high-quality education to all Fijians. This means that anyone who wishes to pursue tertiary studies, whether at the undergraduate or postgraduate level, can do so at FNU. For those already in the workforce, our programmes are designed to accommodate their working hours with flexible class times, allowing them to upgrade their qualifications while maintaining their professional commitments.

Our Outreach Team has been visiting secondary schools all around the country, meeting with the secondary school students and teachers, and holding discussions on the programmes and courses students can pursue when they undertake tertiary education.

The team has been working relentlessly to ensure that young students are given the right information on the programmes and courses. The team has been crossing rivers and travelling across mountains and rough terrains to reach these schools.

At FNU, we recognise the importance of empowering young people with opportunities for

acquiring quality education, skills training, and innovative and sustainable learning. Therefore, we are committed to continuously reviewing our learning and teaching resources and programme quality to ensure that we remain relevant and responsive to the demands of the national and regional markets.

As you embark on your educational journey at FNU, be rest assured that you will study in a supportive and enriching environment. We encourage you to seize the opportunities available to you, explore your interests, and make the most of the resources and programmes we offer. Together, we will strive for excellence, innovation, and lifelong learning.

Semester 2, 2023

As we welcome our new and continuing students back onto campus in July, I'd like to encourage our students to strategise, set your goals, and maintain a focused mindset. Remember that success is judged not just by grades, but also by the knowledge you gain, the skills you build, and the personal growth you experience. Take advantage of every opportunity that comes your way and make the most of your time at Fiji National University.

Dean's Coffee with Leaders Series

Earlier this month, our College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies or better known as the CBHTS, hosted the fifth Dean's Coffee with Leaders Series, where the French Ambassador to Fiji, Kiribati, Nauru, and Tuvalu, Mr François-Xavier Léger was the Chief Guest.

The aim of this initiative is to bring the industry into our classrooms and allow us to interact with our stakeholders. By involving industry professionals in our educational journey, we can ensure that our curriculum remains relevant, up-to-date, and aligned with the job market's needs. These sessions will also provide you with a broader perspective on various industries, career paths, and emerging trends. The knowledge and insights gained from these interactions will enhance your employability and equip you with the skills and competencies required to succeed in your chosen field.

Memorandum of Understanding Signings

Recently, Fiji National University signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Janty Bondwell Ltd. The MOU will focus on advancing ICT products, alumni member promotions, and

internship and employment opportunities for FNU alumni. Additionally, Bondwell, as a special token of appreciation for the new partnership, has announced a 15% discount on all their ICT products through their online store for the next five years.

Partnering with Aspen Medical

Aspen Medical and the Fiji National University (FNU) have entered into a Memorandum of Agreement (MoA) that facilitates student placements in healthcare and various clinical settings within the medical institution.

Under this partnership, students and staff from the College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences (CMNHS) will have the valuable opportunity to gain industry experience through placements at the Lautoka and Ba hospitals. This collaboration aims to benefit the participants significantly, allowing them to receive firsthand exposure and practical training.

Launch of the Partnership

FNU and the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus (PHAMA Plus) Program have joined forces to launch a collaborative research initiative focused on locally grown kava.

The initiative aims to enhance the consistency and reliability of Fiji's kava production while promoting the export of high-quality kava products. To achieve this, FNU's College of Engineering, Science, and Technology (CEST) and PHAMA Plus have come together to conduct a comprehensive study. The research will specifically examine the kavalactone content of various kava varieties cultivated in Fiji. Kavalactones are the chemical compounds found in kava responsible for its relaxing properties.

I am confident that we will achieve great things when paired with dedication, hard work, and enthusiasm. Let us embrace the opportunities that come our way, overcome challenges with resilience, and create a brighter future for ourselves and our nation.

Wishing you all the best for a successful and fulfilling Semester 2!

Vinaka

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba
Acting Vice-Chancellor

Students attend Leadership Conference



Participants at the Conference with the Chief Guest Minister for Education Honourable Aseri Radrodro.

The Fiji National University Students’ Association (FNUSA) plays a vital role in representing and advocating for students’ interests at the Fiji National University (FNU).

FNU is a leading tertiary institution in Fiji, offering various academic programmes across multiple disciplines. FNUSA serves as the official representative body for FNU students, working to address their concerns, improve their educational experience, and safeguard their rights.

The FNU Students Association (FNUSA) was proud to partner with the Office of the Acting Vice-Chancellor to host the first-ever inaugural Leadership Conference at Natabua Campus in June.

The four-day conference featured the University’s senior leadership team and faculty members discussing various topics with students. Topics included artificial intelligence, sustainability, and the importance of women in leadership.

FNUSA also acknowledged the presence of the Minister of Education, Honourable Aseri Radrodro, as the Chief Guest, FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council, Mr Semesa Druavesi Karavaki and Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba at the conference.

Some of the Strategies concluded during the Leadership Conferences were: -

- **Goal Setting:** Setting clear and measurable goals for the Leadership Conference, aligning them with FNUSA’s vision, mission, and objectives. Identify the desired outcomes, such as enhancing leadership skills, fostering teamwork, and developing action plans for student advocacy.
- **Engage Key Stakeholders:** Collaborate with relevant stakeholders, including FNUSA members, student representatives, University staff, and external speakers. Seeking their

input, involvement, and support in planning and executing the Leadership Conference and ensuring that diverse perspectives and voices are represented.

- **Agenda Planning:** Developing a comprehensive agenda encompassing various topics and activities relevant to leadership development. Including keynote speeches, workshops, panel discussions, interactive sessions, networking opportunities and balancing theoretical knowledge with practical skills and real-world case studies.
- **Expert Speakers and Facilitators:** Inviting experienced professionals, experts, and motivational speakers to share their knowledge and experiences in leadership. Ensure that the speakers are engaging, dynamic, and capable of effectively inspiring and empowering FNUSA members to take on leadership roles.
- **Skill-Building Workshops:** Conduct workshops that focus on developing essential leadership skills, such as communication, teamwork, problem-solving, decision-making, and conflict resolution. Provide hands-on activities, simulations, and role-playing exercises to facilitate skill acquisition and practical application.
- **Peer Learning and Mentoring:** Promoting peer learning and mentoring opportunities during the Leadership Conference and encouraging FNUSA members to share their experiences, challenges, and best practices in leadership. Facilitate mentorship programmes where experienced student leaders can guide and support emerging leaders.
- **Action Planning:** Dedicating time for strategic planning sessions where FNUSA members can collectively develop action plans and

initiatives for student advocacy. Encouraging them to identify critical issues, set goals, outline strategies, and allocate responsibilities for implementing their advocacy efforts.

- **Networking and Relationship Building:** Provide networking opportunities for FNUSA members, university officials, and external stakeholders to connect. Foster relationships that can enhance collaboration, knowledge sharing, and future partnerships to benefit student advocacy.
- **Evaluation and Feedback:** Incorporate evaluation mechanisms to gather feedback from participants about the Leadership Conference. They assess the effectiveness of the sessions, speakers, and activities and utilise the feedback to improve future conferences and refine FNUSA’s leadership development initiatives.
- **Sustainability and Follow-up:** Ensure the outcomes and learning from the Leadership Conference are sustained beyond the event. We are developing a plan for follow-up activities, including regular meetings, training sessions, and mentoring opportunities, to reinforce and build upon the leadership skills and knowledge acquired during the conference.

By implementing these strategies, FNUSA is certain it can create a dynamic and impactful Leadership Conference that empowers its members, fosters collaboration, and enhances their capabilities as influential student leaders.

Mohammed Iqbal
National President
FNUSA

New Students Choose FNU For Tertiary Education Journey



The Fiji National University (FNU) has been the choice of pursuing studies at tertiary level for a group of new students based at the university’s Namaka Campus.

The group of students, 19-year-old Seraseini Vitilevu, Siteri Saukuru and Fellisa Marafono and 32-year-old Trevor Reggi from Vanuatu were warmly welcomed to the university – and the campus – during the 2023 Semester 2 Orientation session.

Vitilevu is pursuing a Certificate in Management (Level 5), Saukuru is undertaking a Bachelor of Commerce (Marketing and Information Systems), Marafono is pursuing a Bachelor of Hospitality and Hotel Management while Reggi is enrolled in the Bachelor of Commerce (Banking and Industrial Relations & Human Resource Management) programme.

Vitilevu said she was content to now be part of the FNU family. “I chose to study at the FNU to broaden

further my knowledge in the field that I am currently working on,” she said.

Saukuru said residing in Nadi and having the FNU Namaka Campus a few miles from her home was a great advantage.

Marafono highlighted that the University offered a lot of opportunities for students, which she was grateful for.

“If anyone wishes to join the university, it is very easy to do so because of the variety of courses and programmes offered,” said Fellisa.

Reggi, who is a former journalist with the Vanuatu Broadcasting and Television Corporation, said he was excited to pursue studies in a different career path and explore the many opportunities available.

Orientation sessions were also held at various FNU campuses around the country to welcome new and returning students.

noqu Buddy Profiles

Name: Diana Sovau
Programme enrolled in: Bachelor of Dietetics and Nutrition
Why did you become a noquBuddy mentor?



I became a noquBuddy mentor because this volunteering programme helps me develop my leadership, communication, and interpersonal skills through interaction with mentees. I was a mentee last year, and the mentor assigned to me was very helpful and friendly. She helped me navigate life at the Fiji National University and gave me some meaningful advice. Thus, I decided to volunteer and “give back” by helping other first-year students.

Full Name: Avishek Ashwindra Narayan
Programme enrolled in: Bachelor of Information System
Why did you become a noquBuddy mentor?



I joined the noquBuddy mentorship programme to support our mentees in finding effective solutions to their challenges. By sharing my own experiences and learnings, I aim to help them navigate similar situations and overcome obstacles in various fields. When I started university, I encountered obstacles such as accessing Moodle, checking course units, and dealing with Wi-Fi issues. Through guidance from my senior friends and lecturers at FNU, I found solutions. Inspired by this, I became a mentor to assist students facing similar struggles. I encourage all new students to join the noquBuddy programme and seek guidance from mentors across our different FNU campuses.



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Joint research to study Kavalactones



FNU's CEST research team led by Professor Tibor Pasinszki (second from left) and his team of research Deepti Darshani Devi Shilvee Shobhna Prasad, Dr Visheshni Chandra with the PHAMA Plus National Facilitator PHAMA Plus Programme Fiji Dr Rohit Lal (left) and Navitalai Tuivuniwai Country Manager PHAMA Plus Fiji (right).

The Fiji National University (FNU), in collaboration with the Pacific Horticultural and Agricultural Market Access Plus (PHAMA Plus), is conducting research that looks at the kavalactone content of different kava varieties grown in Fiji.

Kavalactones are the chemical compounds in kava from which its relaxant properties are derived.

The research is headed by the Dean of the College of Engineering, Science, and Technology (CEST), Professor Tibor Pasinszki, and includes Dr Visheshni Chandra, Deepti Darshani Devi, and Shilvee Shobhna Prasad as part of the research team.

The global Kava Root Extract market was valued at USD 148 million in 2022 and is expected to increase further.

Professor Tibor Pasinszki said the research aimed to assist farmers, consumers, and merchants in selecting the strongest, or best kava, by finding the relationship between the kavalactone content of Fiji kava and its plant type, plant age, nutrient content of the soil, and kava growing area.

“Kava has well-known medicinal and relaxant effects. It is widely used as a pain reliever, muscle relaxant, remedy for anxiety, nervousness, and insomnia, and is useful in certain cancer treatment. It is a group of chemicals called kavalactones that is responsible for this. There are six major kavalactones, and their total and relative amounts determine the efficacy of kava’s relaxant properties.” Professor Pasinszki said.

Team member Dr Chandra added that “A robust

database for chemotypes of various kava plants as per kava-producing regions does not exist yet. The correlation between quality, kavalactone content, and chemotype, is yet to be established.”

FNU Researcher Devi said the research is the first systematic study on the chemotype and kava lactone content of all varieties of kava plants in all regions of Fiji.

Prasad added that “After the research, we will be able to understand the factors that influence the strength and efficacy of kava and how this is related to kavalactone content and chemotype. The research will explore the relationship between the kava-producing area, soil type, variety, climatic effect, and the relative ratio of major kavalactones.”



Ashley Ashvalyn Mani

Mani credits FNU for her success

Ashley Ashvalyn Mani is now a Senior Assistant Health Inspector for the Ministry of Health and Medical Services after graduating from the Fiji National University (FNU) in 2021.

Mani attained a Bachelor of Environmental Health from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS). She also completed a Post Graduate

Diploma in Applied Epidemiology last year.

The 22-year-old said her programmes of study highlighted her passion for public health and ensuring the wellbeing of people.

“This passion drives me to work tirelessly in my role as a Senior Assistant Health Inspector. Everyone deserves access to clean, safe environments, proper sanitation, and disease prevention measures. Through my work, I aim to positively impact the health and lives of individuals and communities,” she shared.

The Lautoka lass said that there were several reasons behind her choice to pursue further studies at FNU.

“FNU has a strong reputation for its health and medical programmes in Fiji, making it an ideal choice for

me to gain comprehensive knowledge and skills in my field of interest.”

“Also, FNU’s curriculum is designed to meet industry standards and demands, ensuring that graduates are well-prepared for their professional careers.”

“Additionally, FNU offers a supportive learning environment with dedicated faculty members who are experts in their fields. The opportunity to study at FNU allowed me to receive a quality education, practical experience, and ample career opportunities in the health sector.”

Being a female in a traditionally male-dominated field presented certain challenges, Mani shared. She stated that one of the biggest issues is the existence of stereotypes and biases, which sometimes led to the underestimation of female professionals’ abilities.

“Overcoming these challenges required me to stay focused on my goals, believe in myself, and work hard to prove my competence. I have consistently demonstrated my knowledge, skills, and dedication to my work, which has helped me gain recognition from my colleagues,” she said.

Mani is currently pursuing a Master of Applied Epidemiology at FNU’s CMNHS. She stated that the faculty members’ expertise, the availability of research opportunities, and the inclusive learning environment were key factors that influenced her decision to upskill at FNU.



Ahmadiyya Muslim College Principal Mohammed Mashud Ali (middle) with Head Boy Laisenia Belau and Head Girl Sheetal Shartika Chand

Ahmadiyya Muslim College principal, Mohammed Mashud Ali is supportive of Fiji National University’s (FNU) aim to support the people, economy, and society of Fiji and the broader Pacific region by offering high-quality education and training to enhance employability.

Ali said the Naduna Campus in Labasa provided people in the North with opportunities in further studies to pursue their career aspirations.

During the recent high school visits conducted in the

Northern Division, the programmes and services offered to students in the North were highlighted by the FNU team.

The students and teachers were also informed of the new programmes offered at Naduna Campus – such as the Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3) programme from the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF).

“Many of the students look forward to the FNU’s diverse range of programmes, and they were very eager

School principal commends North campus

to join FNU’s Naduna Campus. Whenever students needed to travel to Viti Levu, it was very difficult with the expenses and the accommodations which they had to arrange” Ali said.

“With FNU here in the North, students can still pursue tertiary studies and achieve their goals.”

Naduna Head of Campus, Pardeep Lal, said the certificate programme in agriculture would be beneficial to the Northern students.

“High school students who take up agriculture will now be able to obtain tertiary education in agriculture right in Labasa without having to travel to Viti Levu,” Lal said.

“The campus also has an ideal location for an agriculture programme as there is land availability. The natural environment of Naduna is an added advantage.”





Team FNU travelling in a boat to Wainimala Secondary School.



Students of Wainimala Secondary School attending the Career Discovery Session.

Hope in the Highlands

Approximately 102 kilometres from the city of Suva, nestled in the foothills of the majestic Naitasiri Highlands, sits Wainimala Secondary School. The Fiji National University's (FNU), Career Discovery for High School Students team had the honour and privilege of visiting the students last month as part of their Central Division tour. Known for their athletic prowess, the students were excited to hear about the many opportunities FNU had to offer them in terms of tertiary education. The boarding school caters to the educational needs of students from nearby villagers, and even offers vocational studies. Head of the School, Maciu Koroitamana, said that he was grateful for the team that travelled for more than

four hours by road, and then by boat, to visit his school and encourage his students to pursue further studies after completing high school. "We are so thrilled to be informed about the opportunities that await us at our university, the Fiji National University," he said. "For our students, this is the only opportunity where they get to mingle with academic staff, and I thank them for the presentation and the one-on-one discussions which allowed students questions regarding their tertiary studies at FNU." Koroitamana called the visit a blessing, saying that it would help the students in the near future. "We are looking forward to applying and having the chance to learn at our very own university, so that our

students can get the qualification they need. This will also allow them to become better citizens and become part of the workforce that Fiji currently needs." Students at the session said they were grateful for the hope that FNU offered them after high school. FNU's Career Discovery for High School students aims to leave no child behind by providing important information about tertiary education after high school. The team has completed the Central and Western Division tour, travelling as far as the highlands of Naitasiri, Navosa and Ba. The team were in the North at the end of July visiting schools, and will also visit Taveuni and Ovalau schools during the outreach session. A virtual session will be conducted for maritime schools in the first week of August.

Mother-daughter duo part of outreach activity



Dr Sofia Ali (left) with her daughter Naqsheema Shareen Ali

A mother-daughter duo has teamed up with fellow staff of the Fiji National University (FNU) during the Career Discovery for High School Students initiative in the Western Division. The annual visits to high schools commenced in the Central Division on 19 June and will conclude in the first week of August after completing the Northern and virtual school presentations. Assistant Professor in Education at the College of Humanities and Education (CHE), Dr Sofia Ali, was joined on the visits by her daughter Naqsheema Shareen Ali. The latter is an Assistant Instructor at the College of Business, Hospitality, and Tourism Studies (CBHTS). Dr Ali, who has been in the teaching profession for more than 30 years, said the high school visits were important as they provided students with the information they required about the various study and career pathways available. "They help students make more informed decisions about their education and career choices, while also fostering a connection between classroom learning and real-world applications," she said. "High school students often have limited knowledge about the various career paths available to them. By visiting high schools, you allow students to learn about a wide range of careers firsthand." "By bringing professionals from different industries to high schools, you bridge the gap between theory and practice." "High school is a crucial time for students to explore different career options and make informed decisions about their future, by interacting with

professionals during these visits, students can gather valuable information about different industries, job roles, required qualifications, and career progression." Dr Ali also shared that hearing personal stories and experiences from professionals could instill a sense of purpose and drive in students. She mentioned some common questions such as, "What career options are available in this field?" "What qualifications and education do I need for this career?" "What is the work environment like in this field?" "How do I gain practical experience or internships?" and "What advice do you have for someone starting in this field?" She said the questions were raised by the students. "As a dual-sector university, we offer various programmes based on the students' career choices," she highlighted. Her advice to students who are still undecided on what career path to take is to trust their instincts, gather information, seek guidance, and be proactive in exploring their options. "The outreach to high schools for our careers programme is a very encouraging and effective way to encourage students to decide on their career focus and selection of the appropriate learning journey. This is evident in Pillar 1 of the FNU Strategic Plan 2021-2026 on Education for Employability," she added.

Student Testimonials



"Thank you, FNU, for visiting our school today! It is very important for students to choose their career paths at this time, so they are sure of what they want to become when they leave secondary school. After completing my secondary education, I wish to become a software engineer. I have chosen this career as it is an in-demand field and there are many opportunities for this career path. Vinaka, FNU!"

Shivnesh Naidu
Headboy
Tavua College



"I take this time to thank the Fiji National University for bringing the Careers' Discovery session to high schools, especially as Navosa is far away from the urban centres. The University coming right to our doorsteps gave the students and teachers more opportunities be able to discover their career paths, and this made it clear to them. I am thankful to the management for sending the Career Team all the way to Navosa. Vinaka vakalevu!"

Kiniviliame Naciqa
Principal,
Navosa Central College



"My dream is to study at the Fiji National University and pursue my dream. I learnt so many things from FNU's Outreach Specialist, Rusila Uluilakeba, especially in my chosen career path as I want to become a Biosecurity Officer. She provided me with the academic and career advice that I needed, from the cut-off marks to the entry requirements."

Verenaisi Grace Naruku
Headgirl
Kavanagasau College



FNU's high school visit worth the climb



Students of Reverend Thomas Baker Memorial School.

The Fiji National University's (FNU) Career Discovery team travelled along the rough terrains of the Nadroga/Navosa highlands to reach the remote school memorialising the late Reverend Thomas Baker.

Reverend Thomas Baker Memorial School at Nanoko rests on the mountain top, offering the students with a peaceful, natural ambience and spectacular views of Nadroga.

From Nanoko Village, the school Headboy, Asaeli Nasogiri said FNU's team visiting the school as part of the Career Discovery for High School Students

outreach programme helped him seal the deal of his chosen career path.

The Year 13 student of Reverend Thomas Baker Memorial School wishes to pursue Civil Engineering at FNU.

"I am an Applied Technology and Physics student, with a dream to study Civil Engineering at the Fiji National University!" the 20-year-old said excitedly.

"The presentation by FNU's team made me aware of the vast range of programmes being offered at FNU and the choices we have as students - vinaka, FNU!"

Reverend Thomas Baker Memorial School Principal, Amele Nailevu added that the school was fortunate to have FNU at their school.

"I have been at this school for the last three years, and from what I have observed, most of our students join FNU. I think it is a good idea that FNU visits our school regularly to keep our students updated on the programmes that FNU offers. Thank you for coming!" she added.

Empowering Students Through Education

Savusavu Secondary School Assistant Principal, Shamal Karan, firmly believes that Fiji National University's (FNU) outreach activity served as an empowering platform where students can establish goals and pave the pathway towards their successful careers.

The impactful Career Discovery for High School Students visit by FNU to Year 12 and Year 13 students enlightened them about the diverse programmes, courses, and student services offered by FNU.

Karan expressed the positive impact of the session, stating, "After the session, the students were highly intrigued by the programmes and expressed their eagerness to further research and connect with FNU graduates. The presentation sparked their curiosity and encouraged them to explore new avenues of learning."

Highlighting the school's fortune in having the FNU team present, Karan emphasised the importance of expert guidance in helping students make informed decisions about their educational paths.

"The students were in dire need of someone to provide guidance on the programmes and courses available to them after completing secondary school," he said.

"The FNU team's visit created awareness and shed light on the university and the diverse programmes it offers. This knowledge is vital for the students to obtain the qualifications they aspire to achieve, as some of the programmes and courses were previously unknown to them."

"Their newfound awareness will undoubtedly shape their future enrollment decisions, enabling them to embark on a path towards success."



Senior students of Savusavu Secondary School attending the presentation.



Student Testimonials



"As a female technical science student, I was happy to find out that FNU offers females the opportunity to study and venture into traditionally male-dominated fields like engineering. I was also pleased to know that FNU provides practicals in addition to theoretical knowledge provided by experienced lecturers, this will add to my experience before I enter the workforce. This makes me feel excited about joining FNU!"

Doretta Simmons
Head Girl
Labasa SKM Sangam College.



"I am aiming to become a doctor in the future and the Career Discovery session by FNU was beneficial in providing vital information that will help me in my journey towards achieving my dream."

Mesulame Sakealevu,
Xavier College.



"As an educator, I was glad that the team from FNU could come to our school in Vatukaloko at such a perfect time as we have just launched our TEST week! Our students were able to get firsthand information about the various career pathways that can venture in by pursuing further studies in both TVET and higher education programmes."

Ms Vilimaina Rokosoatuvusa
Prinicipal
Vatukaloko Secondary School.



"I want to become a Bio Security Officer because I have a keen interest in Agriculture and Biology subjects. I also want to play an active role in helping keep Fiji free from pests and diseases."

Valentina Savanaca
Year 13
Head Girl
Saint Bedes College





Seini Tabualevu (left) at the symposium.

Students Pleased to Be Part of Symposium

Students from the various schools that are part of Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences were glad to be part of their Health Professional Education Symposium that was held last month in Suva.

The symposium, organised by the CMNHS Associate Dean Learning and Teaching, Dr Odille Chang and her team, with the theme: “Innovate and Rejuvenate: The Transformation of Pacific Health Professional Education”, brought together local and international health professionals, academics and for the first time – students.

The inclusion of students in this year’s symposium was beneficial as academic staff had the opportunity to have robust discussions about how they can enhance the learning and teaching processes. The symposium provided a platform to explore evidence-based strategies, novel approaches, and cutting-edge research that will shape the future of healthcare education and ultimately improve patient outcomes.

“The Health Professional Education Symposium was interesting and interactive. We had the opportunity to learn and engage with guest speakers from Australia, New Zealand and Singapore,” said student participant and Year 5 MBBS student, Seini Tabualevu.

“We also had a wholesome engagement with our teaching staff about how we as students feel about the curriculum and workload, as well as other issues that have an impact on our learning at the college.”

“I was glad that we had the chance to have discussions with academic staff and I am hoping there will be more modern and interactive learning sessions,” added Tabualevu.

Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences Year 3 student, Derickson Tari added that as a regional student, he was glad to be a part of the Health Professional Education Symposium as he learnt ways in which he could be a better leader in the medical and health profession.

CEST awards top-performing students

The Fiji National University’s (FNU), College of Engineering, Science, and Technology (CEST) recognised Adrian Chand and John Denzel, who were awarded the CEST Student Awards. The duo were selected as the top-performing students based on their academic performance.

The award is given to acknowledge student excellence in engineering and science.

CEST has established an annual student award, which is granted to four of its top students each year. The selected students will receive an award of \$500 together with a prize certificate.

Chand is a third-year student enrolled in the Bachelor of Civil Engineering with Honours, while Denzel is enrolled in the Certificate in Fitting and Machining (Level 3) programme under the National Apprenticeship Scheme.

“I am thankful to the College and the panel for recognising me for my hard work, commitment, and dedication towards my studies,” Chand said.

“I believed in myself and kept working hard, which helped me win the award. The journey has been very remarkable, meeting new people from around Fiji. The lecturers are also very helpful as well.”

“I like the challenge in the engineering field as it requires you to solve problems. Once I finish my education, I plan to work here and contribute towards the nation’s development.”

Denzel said one should fully commit to their endeavours to achieve a successful outcome.

“My academic journey has been challenging but rewarding as well, as I managed to learn and gain experience while going through the apprenticeship programme,” he said.

“I am from Labasa and joined the apprenticeship programme in 2019. I strongly recommend that youth join the apprenticeship programme to learn and discover their hidden talent.”



Adrian Chand (left) with Dean CEST Professor Tibor Pasinszki (middle) and John Denzel.



University Librarian Dr Udy Shukla presenting documents to Head of Campus Labasa Pardeep Lal.

People of Lawaki Village in the Cakaudrove Province in Vanua Levu will be able to expand their knowledge on various topics through the construction of a village library. The Fiji National University (FNU) was able to contribute to the establishment of the community library.

FNU’s Labasa Head of Campus, Pardeep Lal said discussions regarding the project began in 2022. Although the community faced challenges, they were committed to the vision of having the facility available for the children and community members.

“This project took approximately ten months to

FNU contributes to community library

complete. Now, the community library enables children and adults to engage in reading activities, which greatly increases their literacy levels,” the College of Humanities and Education (CHE), School of Arts and Humanities lecturer said.

Community members from Lawaki and the neighbouring villages use the library for reading, research and assignments. The library will also enable students to engage in collaborative learning whilst conducting their studies in the afternoons and evenings.

“There are also plans to equip the library with computers later on. This will enable children and adults to gain IT literacy. Discussions are currently ongoing with stakeholders, including FNU, to see how this could be further supported,” Lal said.

“The FNU University Librarian further supported training the village women to manage the library. Library management will be a voluntary service by the women in the village.”

“The women were part of a one-day workshop on library management matters such as book issue and return, labelling of books and numbering. This workshop was attended by 10 village women who are trained to manage a community library. The training was conducted by the University Librarian and two FNU librarians.”

Lal stressed that corporate social responsibility and community support were critical, as it was an important aspect of FNU’s Strategic Plan vision of enhancing community engagement and collaboration.

“I must acknowledge UK-based couple, Peter and Margret Long, who run and manage the Children of Fiji organisation for their support and funding, and I also thank the South Pacific School Aid-Australia and Fiji Book Drive leader Fiona Luth for providing library books for the community library. Community projects require great commitment, cooperation, and collaboration with partners and this library is a testament to such collaboration”.



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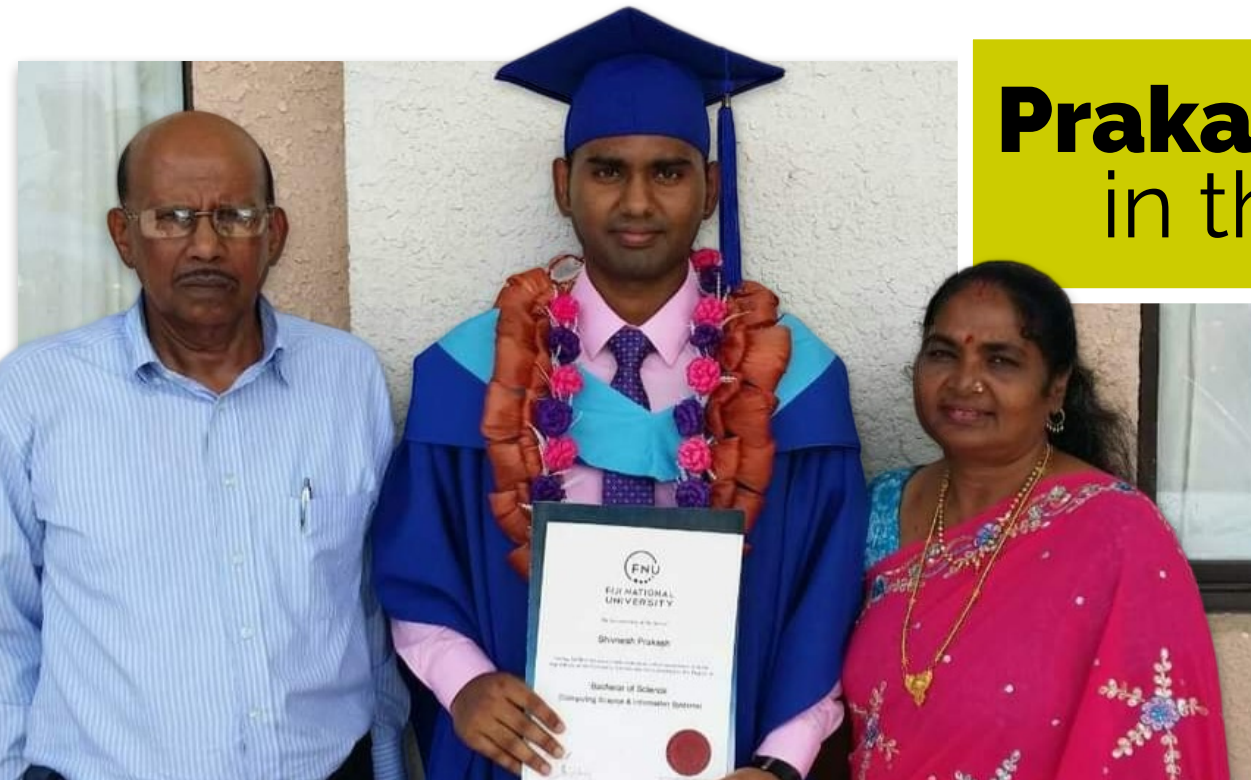
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Shivnesh Prakash with his parents.

Prakash flourishes in the IT sector

Meet Shivnesh Prakash, a highly accomplished Systems Analyst at the Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) and Communications. With a strong academic foundation in Computing Science and Information Systems, Prakash brings a wealth of expertise and experience to the table. His journey has been defined by a passion for leveraging technology to empower businesses and drive innovation.

Born and raised in Suva, Prakash grew up in Valelevu, surrounded by rich history, vibrant festivals, and a close-knit community. This made him develop a deep appreciation for the cultural heritage and values of the region.

Prakash is the youngest of four siblings and boasts a loving and supportive family. His parents, Dharam Prakash and Bela Prakash instilled in him the value of education from an early age. His father served as a Deputy Manager for the Life Insurance Corporation of India (LIC) before retiring, while his mum dedicated herself to creating a nurturing home environment.

Education

Prakash completed his primary and secondary education at Rishikul Primary School and Rishikul Sanatan College. During his time at Rishikul, he excelled academically and held positions of responsibility, such as being a junior librarian and a form prefect.

This provided him with valuable leadership opportunities and experience.

After completing his secondary education,

Prakash pursued a Bachelor of Science degree in Computing Science and Information Systems at Fiji National University (FNU). The programme aligned perfectly with his interests, and he graduated in 2016.

Prakash gained practical experience during his attachment/internship at FNU's Nasinu campus in the IT support department.

"After high school, I was grateful that FNU had offered this programme which I was really interested in doing, close to my home," he shared.

"I chose this field to contribute to technological advancements, improve efficiency, and make a positive difference in people's lives."

"After completing all my units, I then did my attachment/internship at FNU, Nasinu campus in the IT support department as part of the compulsory practical component of the University's programme."

Career

"Immediately after graduation I started working as an IT assistant at Investment Fiji. After six months, I was then promoted to IT administrator where I worked on that role for two years".

Subsequently, he worked for Datec and held positions at Investment Fiji and Pricewaterhouse Cooper Fiji. Currently, Prakash serves as a Systems Analyst at the Ministry of Trade, Co-operatives and Small and Medium Enterprises and Communications.

"A systems analyst is responsible for analysing an organisation's systems and processes, identifying areas for improvement, and recommending solutions to enhance efficiency and productivity. What I enjoy is the opportunity to solve complex problems and

contribute to improving organisational processes," he said.

"I get to work with different stakeholders, learn about diverse industries, and apply analytical and technical skills to develop effective solutions. Additionally, the role often involves working with a team and engaging in continuous learning, which can be intellectually stimulating and rewarding."

Throughout his educational journey and professional career, Prakash encountered various challenges that tested his resilience, determination, and time management skills. These experiences nurtured his ability to overcome obstacles and fueled his drive to excel academically and professionally.

Motivation

Prakash's advice to the university students is to get involved in Campus Life. The Fiji National University offers a vibrant campus life with numerous extracurricular activities, clubs, and organisations.

He further said that students should take advantage of opportunities to get involved in areas that are aligned to their interests.

"I was an active member who took part in university life activities as it boosted my confidence and I made new friends," he shared.

"Juggling work responsibilities with personal life, relationships, and self-care can be a continuous challenge. These challenges taught me resilience, determination, and the importance of perseverance. They fueled my drive to succeed and pushed me to excel academically and professionally."

"Through hard work, dedication, and the unwavering support of my family, I was able to overcome these obstacles and achieve good grades throughout my primary, secondary and university education."

"I am grateful for the challenges I faced as they shaped my character and made me stronger. They taught me the value of education, the importance of empathy, and the power of resilience. I carry these lessons with me as I continue to pursue my aspirations and make a positive impact on the world."

Today, Prakash continues to embrace the values instilled in him by his family and uses his expertise to make a positive impact in his field. He remains committed to ongoing growth, personal development, and contributing to the betterment of society.

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.

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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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