

CELEBRATING SUCCESS

Shaping Futures



HISTORY UNFOLDS: FNU'S FIRST LOCAL PHD STUDENT GRADUATES

EMOTIONAL MUA CLUTCHES FATHER'S WRISTWATCH AT GRADUATION

SCAN FOR
ECOPY



You are not just graduates; you are ambassadors of FNU!



Fiji National University (FNU) Chancellor and Council Chair, Mr Semesa Karavaki bestowing student with degree at FNU's graduation ceremony at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.

Bula Vinaka!

Graduation signifies a significant milestone in the lives of students, marking the culmination of their hard work, commitment, and dedication. The memories created as you walk up to the stage to receive your awards and celebrate your achievements with loved ones will endure a lifetime.

I extend a heartfelt vinaka vakalevu to every student who graduated from the Fiji National University's (FNU) April Graduation Ceremony.

It was an honour and privilege as the Chancellor and

FNU Council Chair to have witnessed 1592 students graduate over the four graduation ceremonies this month.

In the face of future challenges, remember how far you have come in your academic journey. As part of the FNU family, we take pride in your transformation into well-rounded individuals. You are not just graduates; you are ambassadors of FNU, poised to contribute to societal betterment.

The education imparted here not only equips you for professional success but also instils values like integrity, empathy, and a commitment to lifelong learning.

As you embark on the journey beyond these walls, embrace every opportunity for growth. Challenges are stepping stones to greater achievements, and success is a testament to your potential.

I commend our academics, support staff, and Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, for their dedication to FNU's vision. To the families and friends of the graduates, your unwavering support is acknowledged and celebrated.

Reflect on the knowledge gained, friendships formed, and challenges overcome. This ceremony symbolises your growth, accomplishments, and the limitless opportunities ahead.

The FNU Council remains committed to realising the University's strategic goals, supported by the Fijian Government and stakeholders, in nurturing academic aspirations.

During the ceremonies, we also heard motivational and inspiring words from our esteemed Chief Guests - the President of Fiji, His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere, Deputy Prime Minister, and Minister for Education, Tourism and Civil Aviation, the Honourable Viliame Gavoka, Fiji Pine Limited Executive Chairman, Ratu Rakuia Vakalalabure and Minister for Lands and Mineral Resources, Honourable Filimoni Vosarogo. The Vice-Chancellor also shared aspiring success stories from each College to show the impact and importance FNU makes in the lives of an individual.

I encourage our graduates and guests who were present to take these words to heart as they go out into the world and pursue their career goals.

I look forward to hearing about the achievements and success of our graduating class of 2024. Congratulations to our graduates! I wish you success as you embark on this new chapter to pave the way for a brighter tomorrow for Fiji!

Mr Semesa Karavaki
Chancellor and FNU Chair of Council

FNU is proud of you!



Fiji National University (FNU) Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba bestowing student with degree at FNU's graduation ceremony at the Vodafone Arena in Suva.

Bula vinaka and welcome to another month! It is an immense privilege to pen this message for the April edition of the *FNUNIKUA* theme, “**Celebrating Success, Shaping Futures.**”

This theme resonates deeply with your educational journey and the profound transformation you have undergone since stepping onto our campuses nationwide.

In April, Fiji National University proudly celebrated its 2024 Graduation ceremony. On behalf of the entire FNU family, I extend heartfelt congratulations to our graduating class of 2024!

A total of 1592 students graduated during the four ceremonies scheduled during the four sessions of the April graduation ceremonies, whereby 861 of these graduates were female. In terms of gender parity at the national level, we at FNU have maintained gender equality in our rolls over the years, and of the total graduates, 196 of our students have received postgraduate qualifications, 766 at the undergraduate level and 629 have graduated with a Diploma or Certificate.

The graduation ceremonies are not just about individual achievements; it is a celebration of the collective success of FNU. We take immense pride in nurturing a diverse and vibrant learning environment that empowers students from all walks of life.

While we honour the accomplishments of our graduating students this month, I want to take a moment to address those of you who are still on your educational journey. Your time will come, and when it does, it will be a testament to your hard work and perseverance.

As Vice-Chancellor, I urge you to stay focused on your goals, remain steadfast in your pursuit of knowledge, and never lose sight of the dreams that drive you forward. Remember that success is not defined by the destination but by the journey itself. Each day, you are one step closer to realising your dreams and making a meaningful impact on the world around you.

So, to all our students who are yet to graduate, I encourage you to embrace the challenges that lie ahead, seize every opportunity for growth and learning, and never underestimate the power of your potential. Your future is bright, and Fiji National University is here to support you every step of the way.

Congratulations to our graduating class and may the spirit of achievement and determination continue to guide us all on our educational journey.

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba
Vice-Chancellor

Highlights from April Graduation



Diploma of Nautical Science graduates from the Pacific Centre of Marine Studies (PCMS) at the graduation ceremony.



Sitiveni Naqica attained his Certificate in Agriculture (Level 3).



Regional student, Hazel- Grace Kalotap graduated with a Bachelor of Science in Forestry from the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF).



Andrew Rageci receives his Certificate in Music (Level 3) qualification.



Wati Tomasi Mocevakaca completes her Master of Science in Agriculture.



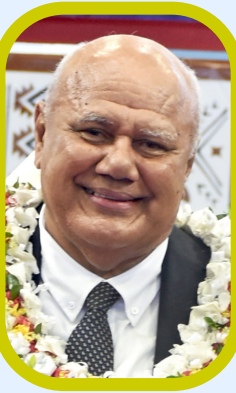
TOUCHING MOMENT...Grandmother Sereana Ducia received a posthumous award on behalf of her grand daughter, late Ulamila Elisabeta Jane Naisau Daunabou, who graduated with a Diploma of IT (Advanced Leadership) at FNU's April Graduation Ceremony.

Chief Guests' Key Quotes



“The Fiji National University’s work programme strongly aligns with our nation’s National Development Plan, as well as Government’s Look-North Policy. On this front, I am pleased to note that representatives of the University recently met with the Cakaudrove Provincial Council in Taveuni to embark on its educational endeavours. FNU’s presence not only signifies a strategic effort to strengthen ties with the people in the North, it reaffirms, also, its commitment to serving communities residing outside of Viti Levu. The redevelopment of the Naiyaca Campus represents a significant progress in providing quality educational opportunities to the people of Macuata, Bua, Cakaudrove provinces, and beyond. This demonstrates FNU’s dedication in making higher education and Technical and Vocational Education and Training or TVET more accessible and aligning our efforts with Government’s commitment to equitable resource distribution.”

His Excellency Ratu Wiliame Katonivere
President of the Republic of Fiji
College of Humanities and Education (CHE) graduation session



“Parents, spouses, siblings, and the staff of FNU, as we reflect on this momentous occasion, let us not only celebrate the achievements of these graduands but encourage the graduates to join Fiji’s human resource so we can boost our economy and continue to compete at the regional and global market. I challenge everyone to reaffirm our commitment to lifelong learning, growth, and service to society for betterment of our Fiji and humanity.”

Honourable Viliame Gavoka
Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for Education, Tourism and Civil Aviation
College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies (CBHTS) & College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) graduation session



“Education is a powerful tool for change. It is a proven tool that empowers socially, economically, politically, culturally. Therefore, it is a powerful tool for nation-building. It is the safest platform to develop our nation’s education pathways for bright and prosperous future.”

Ratu Rakuita Vakalalabure
Executive Chairman, Fiji Pine Limited.
College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET), College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS), Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) & National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) graduation session

History Unfolds: FNU's First Local PhD Student Graduates



The first local Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) graduate from the Fiji National University Dr Jasmine Hussain.

Dr Jasmine Hussain has stamped her mark in the history books, breaking barriers and being a beacon of inspiration for all Fijians - becoming the first local PhD student to graduate from the Fiji National University.

Dr Hussain is currently serving as a Lecturer in Social Education at the FNU’s College of Humanities and Education (CHE), based at the Natabua Campus in Lautoka.

At the heart of her thesis are the Indo-Fijian Muslim women, an ethnic sub-category minority.

“My study investigated the evolution of the New Indo-Fijian Muslim women by exploring freedom, the fundamental concept in Simone de Beauvoir’s work,” highlighted Dr Hussain.

“Jean-Paul Sartre’s framework of political economy and Thandika Mkandawire’s notion of transformative social policy were also used to understand the changing landscape of freedoms.

“Simone de Beauvoir was a twentieth-century French and internationally renowned philosopher and among the first to address the position of women in society.

“Like Beauvoir, Sartre was also a French philosopher, and together they inaugurated what is now known as Existentialism, the philosophy of freedom and existence. Mkandawire was an African economist with a deep interest in development and the significant role of social policy in engendering change.”

About Dr Hussain

A sensitive, friendly, hard-working, caring, detail-oriented, and versatile Dr Hussain traces her roots back to Valebasoga, Labasa, where her grandfather, who was an indentured immigrant, settled.

Growing up, she spent her formative years in the Hidden Paradise of Fiji, Savusavu, completing her secondary level education at All Saints Secondary School and Labasa College.

She is passionate about social science and citizenship education, including gender and women’s studies, identity, social and cultural change, freedom, educational leadership, and social policy.

“I graduated as a primary school teacher and taught in Rakiraki, Ba, and briefly at Lautoka before pursuing an academic career at the Fiji National University,” said Dr Hussain.

“Before joining FNU, I attained a Master of Arts

degree from the University of the South Pacific under the prestigious AusAid Scholarship.

“In my Masters thesis, for the first time, a study examined the challenges female primary school teachers encountered in advancing to educational leadership in Fiji. My intellectual curiosity and commitment to understanding various aspects of women’s

lived experiences and advancing studies on women in Fiji enabled me to pursue my PhD here, for which I was awarded a Fellowship.”

She describes her achievement as an insightful and an incredibly rewarding one, having her academic journey take her to as far as the Teesside University in Middlesbrough, England, and Paris (home of Simone de Beauvoir and Jean-Paul Sartre), marking her first experience in Europe under the then ‘FNU Student Exchange Programme’.

“Numerous factors motivated me, and these included



Dr Jasmine Hussain honored with a traditional ceremony, ‘dabedabe’.

improving my career prospects, a passion for research and producing new knowledge, and the aspiration to discover new things while learning, unlearning, and relearning,” she added.

Dr Hussain added that pursuing her PhD locally meant within the comfort of her home.

“When the FNU PhD Fellowship was awarded to me, I knew my fate had been sealed. I also saw the opportunity to do my PhD at FNU as equally competitive as going abroad.

“This is because CHE houses some of the most renowned intellectuals in the region who come with international branding and are grounded in their respective theories, and methodologies,” she added.

“FNU has expanded its capacity for research over the years and offers enabling opportunities, which include research funds, short attachments, and conference travel, which, in my view, offer a holistic approach to developing one’s intellectual potential and are important precursors to attaining a PhD. As a rapidly expanding university, the prospects of advancing your intellectual development at FNU are not only promising but also rewarding.”

She also noted that with her attainment, education meant importance as it raised aspirations and the potential to achieve them, but most significantly, it expanded one’s freedom by enabling opportunities for transcending a situation through economic empowerment.

Her advice to students and women intending to pursue a PhD is: “Attaining a PhD is no easy feat, especially if you’re a woman. Embrace intellectual independence and solitary work; engage critically with loads of academic reading in addition to perseverance as you wade through the numerous challenges that life throws at you. Most important of all, trust in yourself and, to borrow from my principal supervisor, stay the course!”

She acknowledged her supervisors, the FNU Dean for the Centre for Graduate Studies, Professor Nii-K Plange, the FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo Baba, and Associate Professor Asinate Mausio.

“I dedicate my thesis to my parents and am eternally grateful for their love, support, and prayers,” she added.

Dr Hussain shared that the exciting moment would be cherished for a lifetime and shared with the whole FNU community, her family, friends, and the nation.



Noeli Jack Tamanikaisawa.

FNU Ventures to Increase **Access to Education to Cakaudrove**

A recent visit by the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to Taveuni Island revealed strong community backing for increased educational opportunities on Fiji’s Garden Island and for the people of Cakaudrove.

Led by the FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council, the Vice-Chancellor, and the SLT representatives from FNU, the team concluded a successful week-long visit to Taveuni Island and yielded significant progress on multiple fronts.

The primary objective of the trip was to attend the Cakaudrove Provincial Council meeting on the invitation of the Fiji’s Speaker and Tui Cakau, Ratu Naiqama Lalabalavu. Our team was also present to answer questions related to FNU services to Fiji and to explore the potential for increased educational opportunities on the island. The FNU team engaged with other stakeholders and the people of Cakaudrove as well as visited two secondary schools. Tui Cakau has enabled the FNU to return to the site of the proposed FNU Centre on the island. The proposed establishment of an FNU centre on the island resonated deeply with the people’s desire for easier access to education.

“We were honoured to be part of the Cakaudrove Provincial Meeting alongside the Tui Cakau, key government officials, members of civil society, and the esteemed representatives of the Cakaudrove people.”

“We were also incredibly humbled by the recognition from the Tui Cakau in his acknowledgement of FNU’s

potential to bridge the educational gap and support community development for the people of Cakaudrove. As the national university, FNU is here to serve the people of Fiji!” Vice Chancellor noted.

“We go to the people; we find out what is needed, and we try to best address these needs using valued partnerships. That is the type of leadership we have at FNU, embodying our values of: Care, Honesty, Accountability, Service and Excellence,” Professor Nabobo-Baba added.

According to the FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba, this is aligned well with the strategic vision and values of the university towards accessible education for all.

The visit also highlighted potential partnerships with Niusawa Methodist High School and South Taveuni Secondary School to pilot Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programmes, replicating the Nevada University model.

Preliminary discussions were also held with the Expatriate Farmers’ Cooperative to establish an institute focused on organic farming and sustainable livelihoods, targeting post-secondary school graduates. While details are still to be finalised, two potential sites for industrial attachment have been identified.

The site for the proposed Taveuni Centre has been identified. Additionally, interest was also expressed for a centre in Savusavu on Vanua Levu.

Tamanikaisawa ready to face the sea

Noeli Jack Tamanikaisawa opened a new door of opportunities for himself after he successfully graduated from the Deckhand Fishing programme, sponsored by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF)- Pacific at the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS).

The 20-year-old said he had never been out at sea to work formally but had a lot of enthusiasm and passion to work on fishing vessels.

“I am happy that I have completed this programme, and this has equipped me with the right knowledge and skills that I can use to earn a living,” Tamanikaisawa said.

“I am grateful to my family, instructors, and sponsors for allowing me to complete this programme.”

The Pacific Centre for Maritime Studies (PCMS) celebrated the graduation of 15 deckhand fishing students in a ceremony.

FNU Pro-Vice-Chancellor TVET and Chief Guest at the graduation, Dr Isimeli Tagicakiverata, underscored the significance of the Deckhand Fishing Programme in addressing industry needs and fostering employability.

“Graduation day marks a significant milestone for these graduates as they transition into the maritime profession. Your upskilling here at PCMS not only enhances,” he said.

WWF—Pacific’s Regional Conservation Director Hanna Helsingén commended the graduates on their hard work and dedication, emphasising the importance of integrating conservation principles into maritime education.

“This graduation ceremony celebrates your hard work, dedication, and steadfast support throughout your journeys. The partnership between partners has been instrumental in promoting sustainable fishing practices and environmental stewardship within the industry here in Fiji,” she said.



FNU Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (second from left) and Minister of Lands and Mineral Resources, Honourable Filimoni Vosarogo, during the Cakaudrove Provincial Meeting in Taveuni.



FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council, Mr Semesa Karavaki(second from right), Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba (centre), and the SLT representatives during a visit to the Niusawa Methodist High School.

Former Fiji Rugby Player Graduates with Diploma



A successful sporting career does not negate the importance of education, and by investing in academic development, athletes can equip themselves with valuable skills and qualifications for a successful future beyond the game.

This rings true for former Fiji Rugby player and current Nadroga Rugby player Manueli Ratuniyarawa, who recently graduated with a Diploma in Wood Processing and Value Adding (Level 5) from the Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Agriculture, Fisheries, and Forestry (CAFF).

Ratuniyarawa, a forward on the pitch, exemplifies dedication to building a future beyond rugby.

With the relentless guidance of his father, he pursued academic development alongside his athletic pursuits.

“While all I wanted to do was play rugby, my father was the one who tirelessly pushed me to pursue an education and have a solid plan for the future. I dedicate my achievement to him,” said an emotional Ratuniyarawa.

“I wish he was here to witness this moment, a testament to his support. Unfortunately, he is admitted at the Lautoka Hospital.”

From proudly donning the national rugby jersey to serving his community in Nadroga as a police officer, he has now added a diploma to his list of achievements. Ratuniyarawa intends to further his educational pursuits.

The multi-talented Ratuniyarawa offered these inspiring words of advice: “Developing a resilient mindset and acquiring valuable skills are crucial for long-term success. No matter the challenges you face, perseverance is key. By overcoming obstacles and continuously learning, you can achieve your goals.”

Etonia Naba, one of Nadroga Rugby Club’s core coaches, highlighted the importance of education for young rugby players.

Naba emphasised the need for programmes that prepare these athletes for life beyond the rugby pitch.

“We want to empower and educate our young rugby players for life after rugby,” he stated.

“While some players will make it into the national teams or secure overseas contracts, the reality is that many will not make it. This is where education becomes crucial, as it will ensure a smooth transition after their playing days are over.”



Students from Fiji, Tonga, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, American Samoa, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Solomon Islands shared their heritage through traditional expressions.

CMNHS hosts Cultural Connections

Fiji National University’s (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences (CMNHS) hosted a vibrant celebration of Pacific Island cultures at its Pasifika Campus.

Students from Fiji, Tonga, the Marshall Islands, Samoa, Kiribati, Vanuatu, Tuvalu, American Samoa, the Cook Islands, the Federated States of Micronesia, and the Solomon Islands shared their heritage through traditional expressions.

CMNHS Outgoing Acting Dean, Dr Donald Wilson said CMNHS has been celebrating cultural connections for many years, where students from different countries come to make their dreams a reality.

“The College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences has a rich history of celebrating the diverse cultures represented within our student body. We believe this diversity strengthens our institution and enhances the learning experience for all,” Dr Wilson said.

“Cultural understanding is essential for providing compassionate and effective care. Our events support this vital aspect of our students’ development.

The Federated States of Micronesia Ambassador to Fiji, Carson Sigrah, has commended the hard work of the students.

“The students have put in a lot of hard work and dedication in coming up with the displays about their cultures, heritage, and traditions. I have been moving to different display booths to see the work put in by the students in promoting cultural diversity.”

“There is so much unity among the students at the College of Medicine, Nursing, and Health Sciences and in the whole Pacific. We all have something in common when it comes to different Pacific Island countries.”

Josaia Wainui, a fourth-year student pursuing a Bachelor in Medicine and a Bachelor of Surgery, said the event brought people from different backgrounds together to explore each other’s traditions, culture, and heritage.

“The Fijian display is all about Fiji, its people, together with the tradition and the culture, as we also have Drua on display, which signifies the voyage as our ancestors used the Drua to travel to Fiji, so this is important to us,” Wainui said.

“The cultural connection is our identity. Westernisation brought changes to Fiji, but our identity will remain the same, and it is important to show our young generation who we are, what our identity is.”

Locoloco thrilled to attain her qualification

Vitinia Ramatalei Locoloco, beamed with pride as she clutched her Diploma of IT (Advanced Networking) from FNU’s National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC) in Lautoka.

Locoloco who hails from Naidiri Village in Malomalo, Nadroga, travelled all the way from Lautoka at the crack of dawn to attend her graduation ceremony at Suva’s Vodafone Arena on 18 April, her heart overflowing with hope that her late grandfather would be looking down on her with pride and approval.

The 20-year-old was amongst the 134 graduates from NTPC who graduated at the April 2024 graduation ceremony that happened earlier this month.

“My late grandfather, Luke Ramatalei, was a constant source of inspiration in my life. He passed away in January last year, and I can only hope that he is proud of me today.”

“My father actually encouraged me to take this programme and with cybercrime on the rise, he felt it was an important area to focus on, and I wanted to do my part to combat this growing threat.”

“There were definitely challenges along the way, but to be here today, collecting this qualification- it is a feeling of pure joy! It feels amazing!”



Vitinia Ramatalei Locoloco.

Far from Home, Closer to Dreams



Emory Lauha.

Graduation is a huge achievement, a reward for all the hard work and sacrifices made over the years, but for some graduates, like Emory Lauha, the journey is even more poignant, marked by leaving loved ones behind in pursuit of a brighter future.

Lauha's decision to pursue his education at the Fiji National University (FNU) was not an easy one. It meant leaving behind the comfort of his home, family, and friends in Vanuatu to pursue a career in mechanical engineering, a passion ignited from a young age.

Lauha left home in 2020 to pursue a Diploma in Engineering (Mechanical) (Level 6) from the FNU's College of Engineering and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (CETVET), which he graduated from last Thursday.

Lauha acknowledges that his path to graduation was not without its challenges.

"It is not really easy to become a graduate. The journey came with its challenges, but perseverance and patience are important," said Lauha.

He understood that the sacrifices he made were not just for himself but for his loved ones back home.

"Missing loved ones is inevitable, but it is part of life. Overcoming challenges requires perseverance and patience. Even though I missed my family, knowing that my success is for all of us kept me going."

"This is a big day for me and my fellow graduates, so I thank God for his guidance and wisdom and dedicate this day to my family back home and the friends and family I have made here in Fiji."

Lauha is driven to continue his education at FNU highlighting the university's commitment to a well-rounded learning experience that blends theory with practical application.



Irene Anna Sagaitu.

Sagaitu ready to serve the people

Irene Anna Sagaitu is committed to enhancing oral health after she graduated with a Bachelor of Oral Health from the Fiji National University's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) during the April Graduation at the Vodafone Arena.

"The journey has been very challenging as we had to go through the COVID-19 pandemic when I started off with this programme," Sagaitu said.

"On graduation day, when I looked back, it was satisfying that I had overcome all the challenges and made it to the day which every student forward to."

Sagaitu who is originally from Rotuma, is passionate about serving the people.

"All our hard work has paid off, and now I am looking forward to the posting and starting my duty towards the people of Fiji.

"Dentistry has always been my passion, and I was fortunate to have completed my programme at FNU."

Sagaitu said nothing is impossible to achieve if one is dedicated to working towards one's dreams.

"I encourage people to choose the career path which interests them, and they have much passion towards it. This will make your career more interesting and meaningful.

"One also needs to put in hard work and commit themselves fully, and they will see the reward later."

Emotional Mua Clutches Father's Wristwatch at Graduation



Daiana Mua.

While waiting for her name to be called to finally receive her Bachelor of Education (BED) (Secondary) (English and Geography), Daiana Mua gripped onto the wristwatch of her late father, wishing for his presence on her special day.

The multitasking and enthusiastic student at the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Humanities and Education (CHE), based at Natabua Campus, lost her father last year.

Mua shared that her achievement was dedicated to her parents.

"He would have loved to have attended the ceremony, with him and his big smile, and then he would have quickly taken me back to Yasawa just so he could eat fish," she said.

She said the journey to being where she was wasn't an easy one.

"When you're young, you think that the world is your oyster, and you tend to make many mistakes; that was the case for me," said Mua.

"My parents finally had to step in and show some tough love. They encouraged me to enrol in Bachelor of Education (Secondary) programme in the two majors that I liked, Geography and English."

"Everything that happened from there was smooth sailing; I adapted well, made great friends, kept under the care of amazing lecturers, and took on responsibilities that were way out of my comfort zone and did a pretty good job at it."

Mua added that her passion to teach came from the heart.

"I like the idea that I can change the trajectory of a child's life for the better. For the short amount of time that they're with me, I can impart knowledge and show genuine care and concern for them as humans. Basically, apart from content in the curriculum, I can mould them into being a good person," she added.

She highlighted that at times, she felt that she was not doing enough and had the thought of failing a unit at one point.

Mua was part of the 516 students that graduated from the College of Humanities and Education on 16 April.



MY FNU

Talanoa

with our Alumni



Aqela Lewaisele Tubailagi Naimasi with her family.

Aqela Lewaisele Tubailagi Naimasi’s journey from her home in Wainilotulevu, Veinuqa, Namosi to academic success embodies the resilient spirit of human endeavour.

With maternal roots stretching back to the picturesque village of Nabukaluka, Waimaro in Naitasiri, Naimasi’s story is a testament to perseverance. As the eldest of three siblings, she understood the importance of setting an example and paving the way for her siblings.

Background

Aqela grew up in her village, Wainilotulevu under the watchful care of her parents, Maraia Duarara and Vereto Tubailagi.

Education

Her academic journey commenced at Nadakuni Village School, where she completed her primary education. Transitioning to high school, she embarked on a new chapter at Adi Cakobau School, immersing herself in her studies with passion and dedication, setting the stage for her future endeavours. Fate had other plans when she entered Nasinu Secondary School

Naimasi’s journey to academic triumph

for Form 7, where she crossed paths with the love of her life, her future husband, Kelevi Naimasi.

With aspirations of furthering her education, she enrolled at the University of the South Pacific (USP). However, life took an unexpected turn when their first child arrived, necessitating that she prioritises family responsibilities. Supported by the unwavering love of her husband and the assistance of their families, she made the difficult decision to put her academic pursuits on hold.

Despite her responsibilities as a mother, she remained determined to further her studies and chose Fiji National University for its reputation for equipping teachers.

“I knew for sure that graduating from this institution would equip me well for my career as a teacher,” she said.

Supported by her mother’s guidance, who herself was a dedicated educator, she enrolled at the FNU Lautoka Campus. Juggling motherhood and academics, she successfully earned her Higher Education Diploma in 2014, showcasing her commitment to her career goals.

“My mom, who is a schoolteacher, advised me to apply at FNU’s Lautoka Campus, and I am so glad that I followed her suggestion,” she said.

Her journey was not without its challenges. In 2017, as she ventured to complete her degree units in the Bachelor of Education programme, the unexpected call of relocation to France disrupted her plans. Undeterred, she embraced the opportunity, weaving her educational aspirations into the fabric of their new life in France.

Returning to Fiji, she resumed her pursuit of academic excellence, persevering through the completion of her degree units. In 2022, amidst the celebration of her graduation, she reflected on the winding path that had led her to this moment of triumph.

Fuelled by her passion for education and a desire to create positive change in society, she seized the opportunity to enrol in a postgraduate programme in social policy in 2023. Through hard work, determination, and the support of her loved ones, she navigated the rigorous curriculum, emerging victorious within a year’s time. Graduating with a Postgraduate Degree in 2024, Naimasi is currently pursuing her Masters in

“ Studying at FNU brings both enjoyment and opportunities. You’ll encounter new experience, make friends, and find study or assignment partners along the way. ”

Social Policy from Fiji National University.

“I am immensely grateful to my family, particularly my husband, whose unwavering support sustained me throughout my postgraduate studies. Despite being away on duty in Golan Heights during my graduation, his love and encouragement were always with me,” she said.

“I also extend my heartfelt gratitude to my two sons, Osea Nawaqa Naimasi and Nasoni Moceivei Naimasi, whose understanding and patience allowed me to pursue my academic aspirations. Their presence in my life is a constant source of strength and inspiration.”

Career

Naimasi commenced her teaching journey at Bhawani Dayal Memorial Primary School in 2015 as an assistant teacher, and since then, she has been steadily advancing in her profession. Presently, she is actively engaged in teaching and finds immense joy in interacting with young students.

“I have been upgrading my qualifications as I love learning. However, I love the profession of teaching, and I plan to continue teaching,” she said.

Words of Wisdom

“Studying at FNU brings both enjoyment and opportunities. You’ll encounter new experience, make friends, and find study or assignment partners along the way. However, it’s crucial to manage your time wisely and set clear priorities. Always prioritise submitting assignments well in advance and safeguard your work by sending copies to a secondary email address.”

“By staying organised and proactive, you’ll navigate your academic journey with confidence and success,” she said.

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:** Christal Kapoor | **Design & Layout:** Luke Salababa
Division Head: Director Marketing and Communications, Karen Lobendahn
Writers: Jennis Naidu, Pravin Narain, Nicolette Chambers, Fotagkauri Aisea and Grace Waqawaqa.
Contributors: FNU Chancellor and Chair of Council, Mr Semesa Karavaki | Vice-Chancellor, Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba.

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

Follow us on

