



FIJI NATIONAL
UNIVERSITY



VICE-CHANCELLOR'S WEEKLY MESSAGE

8 APRIL 2024

Dear All,

I hope our students are enjoying the mid-semester break with their loved ones, catching up on their studies, and preparing for the assignments.

Recently, I was on the beautiful island of Taveuni, Fiji, where I had the privilege of spending the week alongside a dedicated team from Fiji National University. Our mission was to forge deeper connections with the people of Taveuni and the Cakaudrove province and to explore ways in which FNU can better contribute to the growth and educational development of the Taveuni communities.

We arrived with open hearts and a genuine desire to learn. Our first days were filled with meaningful consultations, beginning with a very special attendance at the Cakaudrove Provincial Council Meeting. We engaged in discussions with key stakeholders, including traditional leaders and representatives from the tourism sector. These conversations provided valuable insights into the needs and aspirations of the Taveuni community.

Particularly inspiring was our visit to Niusawa Methodist Secondary School. We connected with passionate educators there and discussed FNU's strategic plan to expand access to higher education and TVET programmes across Fiji, particularly in rural and maritime communities. We explored ways to create targeted programmes and pathways, building on successful models such as those found in Nevada, USA.

In an effort to better understand the economic landscape of the island, we met with leading figures in the tourism industry, such as Ms Leba Pareti, Chief Executive Officer of Garden Island Resort, and Mr Richard Cammick, owner of Taveuni Island Resort and the renowned Rainbow Reef dive site. Their perspective on workforce needs and development opportunities will be invaluable as we tailor FNU's offerings to support this vital sector.

Mr Cammick shared his valuable experience in the Taveuni tourism industry, particularly the dive economy. We appreciate his advice, suggestions, and cautions regarding FNU's potential role in Taveuni. We look forward to continued engagement and collaboration with Mr Cammick and similar industry leaders in the future.

We met with the principal and teachers of Niusawa Methodist High School to discuss FNU's strategic plan for expanding access to higher education and TVET programmes in rural and maritime areas.

We shared the five key priorities of FNU's 2024–2026 Strategic Plan and also explored the possibility of replicating the Nevada University model, where targeted high schools pilot TVET programmes.

We also visited the stunning Lavena village on the northernmost tip of Taveuni. This was our first visit to this beautiful community, and we were warmly welcomed

by the village headman and youth. We will be conducting a full community visit tomorrow. Stay tuned for updates on this tomorrow.

We can already see the beautiful relationships and impacts that we are forging out of this island.

I am proud to report that our visit has already yielded tangible steps forward as we move to establish a new FNU centre on Taveuni. We have identified a proposed site and have begun the essential process of engaging with traditional leaders for their guidance and blessings. This community-driven approach is essential to ensuring that the centre truly serves the needs of the people.

As your Vice-Chancellor, I pledge that FNU will be a true partner to Taveuni and the Cakaudrove province. We believe deeply in the power of education to transform lives and unlock potential. While challenges will always be present, I'm inspired by the spirit of collaboration and shared purpose on this island. Thank you for being a part of this extraordinary journey with us.

FNU also concluded the Careers Teachers' Workshop last week at the Naduna Campus. I acknowledge the presence of the teachers who were part of the workshop in terms of taking the information back to our students. The teachers are the bridges between the students and their dreams, and it is important that we equip our teachers with the right knowledge about the programmes and courses offered by the Fiji National University and inform them about the Minimum Entry Requirements into the programmes and courses.

In the other events, I was informed that the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) held a wonderful Flag Raising Ceremony, followed by the vibrant Cultural Connection event. Students from across the Pacific Islands proudly showcased their unique traditions, cultures, and heritage. Events like these celebrate the beautiful diversity within our communities. They remind us of the richness of our individual identities and the importance of understanding where we come from.

I wish you all the best and a blessed week ahead.

Vinaka

Professor Unaisi Nabobo-Baba
Vice-Chancellor

