

FNU - EDUCATION AT YOUR DOOR STEP

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Josephine Lisi with her mother Venina Lutu (left) - **Photo Credit:** Adi Silika Damu

An Island's Pride: Taveuni Student Receives Historic FNU Offer Letter

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

The entire Fiji National University Roadshow booth in Somosomo was moved to tears as Josephine

Lisi received Taveuni's first-ever offer letter for the Bachelor of Science in Animal Science programme at the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF).

At just 18 years old, Lisi is the first person in her family to attend university. She initially aspired to become a nurse, but circumstances briefly dimmed that dream.

[Read more on Page 2](#)



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ONE STUDENT AT A TIME

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“I wanted to apply for nursing, but I later found out that I had missed the deadline, which left me quite disheartened,” Lisi shared.

“However, the FNU staff encouraged me not to lose hope. They provided excellent academic counselling, which helped guide me towards studying the Bachelor of Science in Animal Science at FNU.”

A resident of the Lutu Training Centre, Lisi has always had a deep love for animals and now looks forward with excitement to this new chapter of her life.

“If I cannot take care of people, that is okay,” she said.

“I will now take care of some of the most vulnerable living beings in our society – our animals.”

Her mother, Venina Lutu, could not hold back her tears as she watched her eldest

child return home with an offer letter in hand.

“We come from a very humble household, and I cannot thank the FNU team enough for bringing access to education and academic services closer to home for us here in Taveuni,” she said.

She highlighted the financial burden many families face when seeking tertiary education.

“Families can spend up to \$1,000 just travelling to enrol their children at institutions on Viti Levu or Vanua Levu. This makes it extremely difficult for low- to middle-income households, especially with the high cost of living.”

As a result, Lutu noted, many capable young people miss out on higher education altogether.

“FNU has brought hope and joy to the people of Taveuni and the surrounding islands. I hope they continue to think of those living in far-flung areas.”



Makereta Balemailodoni (left) with CHEL lecturer, Katarina Ruru at the Taveuni Roadshow venue. **Photo Credit:** Adi Silika Damu

For Mum - Sorowaqali



College of Engineering & TVET (CETVET) representative Shamal Narayan (left) with Dovirossa Cordelia Sorowaqali. **Photo Credit:** Adi Silika Damu

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

Dovirossa Cordelia Sorowaqali is no ordinary young woman.

She is driven by a single, powerful purpose – to provide for the mother who single-handedly raised her in their beautiful island home of Taveuni.

What began as a simple visit to the Fiji National University (FNU) Roadshow booth at Somosomo, Taveuni, for academic counselling turned into a life-changing moment.

Accompanied by her mother, Sorowaqali returned home that day with an offer letter to pursue a Diploma in Engineering (Electronics/Instrumentation & Control) (Level 6).

“I hope to join the military in the future, and a qualification in engineering will be a strong pathway towards my dream,” said the Vanuabalavu native.

“I chose FNU because no other institution provides practical experience the way FNU does. I am so emotional and excited to now be part of the FNU family.”

With pride and gratitude, Sorowaqali shared that her long-term dream is to one day gift her mother, a chef at Como

Laucala Island, a restaurant of her own.

“It is the least I can do in return for everything she has given me,” she said.

Her mother, Ana Voutoa, reflected on the sacrifices made along the way, recalling the many times she had to leave her daughter behind at the Niusawa Methodist Hostel while she worked tirelessly on Laucala Island to provide for her future.

“It was incredibly hard being away from my daughter, but I am thankful that my sister helped care for her,” said a tearful Voutoa.

“She was also the one who told us about the FNU booth. I immediately requested a day off so I could come and make sure my daughter enrolled at FNU, just as she had always hoped.”

Voutoa revealed that, like many parents working on surrounding islands, enrolling a child at university once meant taking one to two weeks off work and spending thousands of dollars to travel to the mainland.

“I want to sincerely thank FNU for thinking of families like ours,” she said.

“It makes us feel that our children’s dreams truly matter, and that we are not left behind.”

A Conversation That Changed Everything

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

The Fiji National University (FNU) College representatives empowered fresh high school leavers, like Makereta Baleimailodoni, to make confident and informed decisions about their future during the FNU Roadshow held at Somosomo on the island of Taveuni.

Originally from Nakasaleka in Kadavu, Baleimailodoni relocated to Taveuni with her family following the passing of her father in 2019 where she attended Niusawa Methodist High School.

“I found out that FNU was in town, and I knew this was my chance,” Baleimailodoni shared.

“I have always wanted to study at FNU ever since I was a child.”

Aspiring to become a teacher, Baleimailodoni initially found herself torn between enrolling in a Bachelor of Education in Early Childhood Education or a Bachelor of Education (Primary).

However, a visit to the FNU booth and a heartfelt conversation with Katarina Ruru from the College of Humanities, Education and Law (CHEL) brought her

clarity and confidence.

“After speaking with Madam Katarina, I knew exactly what I wanted to do. I did not feel pressured at all, just supported and encouraged,” she said.

She described the service she received at the booth as warm, caring, and genuinely welcoming, noting that the FNU team made her feel instantly at ease, as though she had known them for years.

Baleimailodoni will now pursue a Bachelor of Education (Primary) at FNU’s Naiyaca Campus in Labasa.

“I chose to study in Labasa because it allows me to stay close to home and the people I love,” said the 18-year-old.

“I am truly grateful that FNU is making education more accessible to people living in rural, remote, and maritime communities.”

The FNU Roadshow team visited the island of Taveuni from 10 to 13 January and again from 29 to 31 January—marking the first time in the University’s history that such an outreach was conducted on the island.



Students pursuing Early Childhood Education at Natabua Campus. **Photo Credit:** Vetaia Dakua

Proud Step Forward for Taveuni Student at FNU



Rodwell Maiqereqere. *Photo Credit: Wati Talebula*

BY WATI TALEBULA

Rodwell Maiqereqere, who hails from Vuna Village in Taveuni, has taken a proud step toward his future after enrolling in the Bachelor of Information Systems programme at Fiji National University’s Naiyaca Campus.

Reflecting on the experience, Rodwell described the enrollment process as smooth, efficient, and welcoming.

He shared that the support he received from FNU staff made the experience even more reassuring, especially as he navigated the process on his own.

“The process was fast and friendly,” Rodwell said.

“I really appreciated how it was handled, especially since no one came to do the enrollment for me.”

Rodwell expressed confidence and excitement about beginning his academic journey, noting that Information Systems has always been the field he aspired to study.

His passion for technology and systems has driven his decision, and he believes the programme will equip him with the skills needed to thrive in an increasingly digital world.

When asked whether this programme had always been his dream, Rodwell responded confidently, reaffirming his long-standing interest in the discipline. He sees this opportunity as a major milestone, not only for himself but also for his family.

Rodwell is the first in his immediate family to pursue the Bachelor of Information Systems programme, making his enrollment a significant achievement.

While one of his cousins has previously studied at FNU, Rodwell’s journey marks a new chapter and sets an inspiring example for younger family members back in Taveuni.

As he begins this new chapter at FNU, Rodwell is optimistic about the opportunities ahead and is eager to make the most of his university experience.

Levuka Roadshow Inspires Rokotunaceva

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

The Fiji National University’s (FNU) inaugural Roadshow in Levuka ignited a spark within Adi Alisi Seniloli Rokotunaceva to pursue a Diploma in Library & Information Systems (IS).

When the FNU team hosted its Roadshow in the historic old capital earlier this month, many attendees, including Rokotunaceva, were surprised to discover that students could receive instant offer letter upon application at the venue.

The 19-year-old approached the FNU booth, and her enthusiasm only deepened when she was offered her place on the spot.

“I thank FNU for bringing educational opportunities to our town, which made it so easy for me to apply for my programme,” Rokotunaceva, the daughter of Tui Levuka shared.

“Getting my offer from FNU was truly a proud

and joyful moment. It’s not just the start of my academic journey, but also a gateway to future opportunities for personal growth and success.”

Rokotunaceva revealed that her interest in digital technology has been longstanding, since her high school days, which motivated her to choose Library and Information Systems as her field of study.

“I’ve always been interested in computers and how they make life easier. Studying IS will help me gain the skills I need to contribute to modern solutions and prepare for a successful career,” she explained.

She also expressed that choosing FNU was an easy decision.

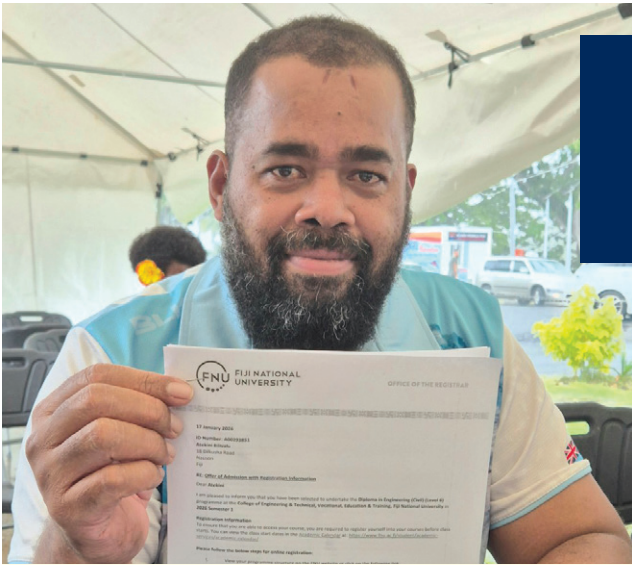
“FNU is close to my home, and pursuing my education here gives me a sense of responsibility to make the most of this opportunity. I feel motivated to contribute positively to the university community while striving to achieve my career goals,” she added.



Adi Alisi Seniloli Rokotunaceva during the FNU Roadshow in Levuka. *Photo credit: Luke Salababa*



FNU Roadshow team in the old capital city of Fiji, Ovalau, Levuka.



Atekini Bilivalu with her instant offer letter.
Photo Credit: Romeka Kumari

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

After a lapse of 15-years, Atekini Bilivalu has made an inspiring return to the Fiji National

University (FNU) to pursue a Diploma in Engineering (Civil) (Level 6) at the College of Engineering and Technical Vocational Education and Training (CETVET).

The 38-year-old made his way to the FNU Roadshow in Sigatoka on Saturday, 17 January 2026 eager to learn more about the Diploma in Engineering programme.

Unexpected surprise

His visit was met with an unexpected surprise — he was offered an instant offer

letter on the spot. An emotional moment for Bilivalu, who last studied at FNU in 2011 before leaving halfway through his studies.

Now working as a Technical Officer at the Water Authority of Fiji Depot in Sigatoka, Bilivalu is determined to achieve his educational goals.

“It’s never too late to chase your dreams,” he shared.

“Education is a journey, and I am committed to reaching my destination, no matter how long it takes.”

“At first I was a bit nervous to make a return to university life after years of staying away from formal education but after guidance from the FNU academic

staff, I was able to make my mind.”

“At the end of the day, I want to see myself with a university qualification. This is a form of upskilling for me as well in my current profession.”

Originally from Dilkusha in Nausori, Bilivalu is passionate about encouraging other students to pursue tertiary qualifications after high school.

“If I can do it after all these years, so can you,” he urged.

“You just need to take the first step and that is to check out the programmes offered at FNU.”

“Education opens doors, and it’s the best investment you can make for your future.”

One Household, Many Dreams at FNU

BY NAVINESH KUMAR

For the Roy-Singh family of Votua Housing, Korolevu in Sigatoka, education is not just a pathway to opportunity, but it is a shared family journey built on trust, aspiration, and belief in the power of learning.

When the Fiji National University (FNU) Roadshow arrived in the Rugby Town of Sigatoka on 10 January 2026, Alice Rita Roy made sure the whole family was there. Accompanied by her husband and children, Alice described the visit to the FNU booth as both exciting and reassuring, particularly as she watched her children take confident steps toward their future.

Her eldest son, Nitesh Singh, having completed a Bachelor of Education (Secondary) with a major in Agriculture at FNU’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF). He is now eagerly awaiting his graduation in April this year, a milestone that marks years of dedication and hard work.

Standing alongside him at the Roadshow was his younger brother, Ritnesh Singh, who officially enrolled in the Bachelor of Education (Primary) programme during the Sigatoka launch, making him the second child in the family to begin his academic journey at FNU.

For Alice, choosing FNU was a decision grounded in confidence and experience.

“I chose FNU for my children because there are so many programme options available, and the lecturers are very reliable,” she said. “I trust FNU, and I recommend other parents to send their children here to attain higher education.”

The family’s belief in FNU runs deep. Alice shared that even her youngest daughter, who is still in primary school, has already set her sights on a future at FNU.

“She has already made up her mind to study MBBS at FNU after she finishes high school,” Alice added with a proud smile.

Nitesh also praised the support provided at the Roadshow, noting how efficient and student-focused the experience was.

“The Roadshow team in Sigatoka was very helpful. The enrolment process was smooth and fast, and everything was clearly explained,” he said.

The Roy-Singh family’s story reflects the growing confidence many Fijian families have in FNU, an institution that not only offers diverse academic pathways but also walks alongside students and parents making their academic dreams come true.

From one graduand waiting the stage, to another beginning his journey, and a young daughter already dreaming big, FNU continues to craft futures, one family at a time.



Humaira Rehman with her mother, Rovina Rehman.
Photo Credit: Romeka Kumari

Humaira sees future in Customs

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

For young Humaira Rehman, the Fiji National University (FNU) Roadshow in Sigatoka was filled with a breakthrough, thanks to the unwavering support of her mother, Rovina Rehman.

Stepping into the busy Roadshow booth, Humaira found herself at a crossroads.

However, she was not alone in this journey; Rovina stood firmly by her side, acting as a pillar of strength and a source of quiet motivation.

“I came to the Roadshow with my Year 12 result not knowing what to do in life,” Humaira revealed.

Through a dedicated academic counselling session, the team helped Humaira navigate her options, while Rovina provided the maternal insight and encouragement needed to bridge the gap between doubt and decision.

“I was really confused and that’s when the FNU academic explained the programmes that I could take up,” she said.

The moment became one of triumph as she was presented with an instant Offer Letter to study for a Certificate in Customs (Level 4).

Reflecting on the day, Rovina shared her pride in her daughter’s milestone saying “As a mother, my greatest role is to be the foundation upon which my daughter builds her dreams. It was moving to see her find her path today.”

“I have always believed in her potential, and I know that in the field of Customs, she will find both a challenging career and a way to serve our country with integrity.”

Humaira, now looking forward to her new chapter, expressed how much her mother’s presence meant stating “I arrived at the Roadshow feeling lost, but my mother’s strength gave me the confidence to ask the right questions.”

“With her support and the guidance from the FNU team, I now have a clear goal. I am so excited to begin my journey into the world of Customs.”



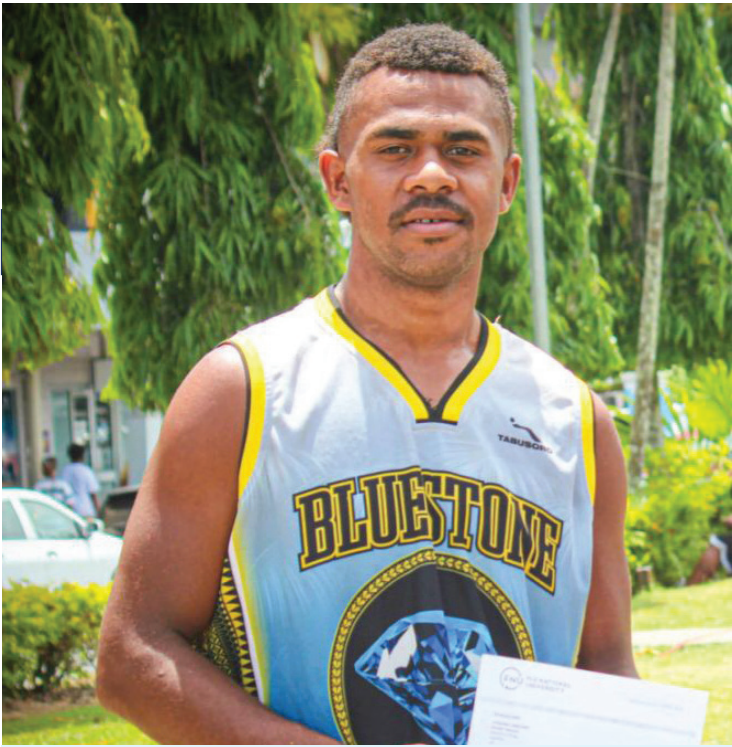
Alice Rita – Singh and family at the FNU Roadshow booth in Sigatoka.
Photo Credit: Navinesh Kumar



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Rusiate Valevatu with his offer letter
Photo Credit: Vetaia Dakua

Valevatu Paves the Way

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

Twenty-year-old, Rusiate Valevatu is setting an example for his four younger siblings, proving that determination and education can reshape a family’s future. After completing his Year 13 studies at Kavanagasau College in 2024, Valevatu returned to his village of Motokana in Navosa, Nadroga, where he spent a year working on his family’s farmland. While the work strengthened his roots, the desire to pursue higher education never faded. This year, he took a decisive step forward by enrolling in the Bachelor of Science in Forestry with Honours at the Fiji National University (FNU), receiving an instant offer letter during the FNU Roadshow in Sigatoka.

“I know my younger siblings look up to me, so I want to lead the way for them and show that education matters,” Valevatu said. He explained that choosing forestry felt natural, given his background. “I studied agriculture and biology in high school, and I come from a farming family. Forestry aligns perfectly with what I know and where I come from,” he shared. Returning to studies after a year away will not be easy, he admits. “It will take a lot of determination and hard work. University life will be very different from high school, but I am ready for the challenge.” Valevatu said seeing the forestry programme offered by FNU motivated him to apply. “I applied and received my offer instantly. I am truly grateful to FNU for this opportunity.”

One Visit to FNU Roadshow Changed Everything

BY NAVINESH KUMAR

Meet Jiyashna Sharma of Navua Town, the first visitor to the FNU Navua Roadshow earlier this month, taking another confident step forward in her education journey. Jiyashna is excited to further her studies this semester after enrolling in the Bachelor of Laboratory Science offered under the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences at the Fiji National University. Her journey, however, has not been without challenges. After receiving low marks in her Fiji Seventh Form Examination, Jiyashna admitted she was close to giving up on further studies and had started working instead. Everything changed when she heard about the FNU Roadshow in Navua last year and decided to visit the team for guidance. “I was surprised and very happy when I found out that I could enrol in a certificate programme,” Jiyashna shared. She went on to successfully complete her Certificate in Health Professions Foundation Studies (Level 4), a pathway programme for Year 12 and 13 students aiming for various health careers, providing foundational knowledge and skills, often with flexible online delivery for accessibility,

preparing them for diplomas, degrees, and entry into FNU. Jiyashna graduated in December last year, a milestone that opened the door to her current degree programme. “With the right guidance and friendly advice from the FNU personnel, my dream of studying at tertiary level was fulfilled,” she said. Now, Jiyashna is encouraging other students who may be unsure about their options to take advantage of the Roadshow. “If you’re not sure about your course or your next step, come and talk to the FNU team.” Her story is a powerful reminder that with the right support, it’s never too late to pursue your dreams. FNU Acting Director Marketing & Communications, Ella Bennion, said Jiyashna’s journey reflects the true purpose of the FNU Roadshow. “Jiyashna’s story is a powerful reminder that one conversation and the right guidance can change a student’s future. At FNU, we are committed to ensuring that no student feels excluded from their right to education. FNU is Hope, FNU is Opportunity, and FNU is Care. FNU's culture of care enables, empowers, and enriches individuals and communities to craft the futures they want.



Jiyansha Sharma, the first visitor to the FNU Navua Roadshow earlier this month.
Photo Credit: Navinesh Kumar

Graduation Aisle Sparks Inspiration



Muni Veeniteshni with her husband, Ashneel Dutt at the FNU Roadshow in Sigatoka. Photo Credit: Vetaia Dakua

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

For many graduates, walking down the graduation aisle to receive their certificate is a defining moment. However, that moment remained a dream deferred for Muni Veeniteshni. Veeniteshni completed her Bachelor of Education (Secondary), majoring in Home Economics, in 2020. However, the COVID-19 pandemic meant there was no graduation ceremony to mark her achievement. Instead, she quietly transitioned into the classroom, spending the next five years teaching Home Economics at Nawai Secondary School. “The dream of walking down the graduation aisle and collecting my certificate was something I always looked forward to, but it never happened,” said the Cuvu, Sigatoka resident. “It felt like an important chapter was left incomplete.”

That sense of unfinished business, combined with encouragement from her husband, Ashneel Dutt, inspired her to take the next step. Dutt, who teaches at Sigatoka Andhara Sangam School, urged her to seize the opportunity when the Fiji National University (FNU) team was conducting the Roadshow in Sigatoka this month. “My husband reminded me that it was not the end of the road,” Veeniteshni said. “He encouraged me to enrol and upgrade my qualification, not just for myself, but for our future.” Motivated by his support, she enrolled in the Postgraduate Diploma in Education and became the first recipient of a postgraduate offer letter during the roadshow. “Education has given me confidence, purpose and direction. This time, I am determined to walk that graduation aisle,” she said. “Returning to university is more than academic advancement for me, it is a renewed promise to myself that dreams delayed do not have to be dreams denied.”

Toniasau first in family to reach University

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

Akuila Baravilala Toniasau has achieved a momentous milestone as the first member of his family to attend university. Toniasau’s journey began when he received an instant offer letter during the Fiji National University’s (FNU) Roadshow in Rakiraki, offering him a place to study for a Bachelor of Commerce with a major in Professional Accounting. “I’m absolutely thrilled to be able to make my family proud,” Toniasau shared with a bright smile. “This offer means a great deal to me and my loved ones, especially because I am the first in my family to attain tertiary education.” The 18-year-old from the village of Togovere in Ra said his family’s support has been pivotal. “My siblings couldn’t pursue university due to financial challenges,” he explained.

“But I am incredibly grateful to my family for backing me on this educational journey. Their encouragement kept me motivated to reach this goal.” Toniasau’s decision to pursue higher education was inspired during a school visit by FNU’s Outreach team at his school, Penang Sangam High School in August last year. “The visit from the FNU team truly motivated me to work hard and aim for university,” he said. “I was able to ask questions directly, and their responses helped me clarify my future path and choose professional accounting as my major.” While acknowledging that transitioning from high school to university can be challenging, Toniasau remains optimistic. “Adapting to a new environment might be tough, but I trust in God’s guidance,” he said confidently. “This is a challenge I am willing to take on to bring pride to my family. They have high expectations of me, and I hope to make them proud one day.”



Akuila Toniasau receives his offer letter from an FNU official.
Photo Credit: Romeka Kumari

BY WATI TALEBULA

Two aspiring students from Ra Province have taken important steps toward shaping their futures after receiving their offer letters from the Fiji National University (FNU) during the Rakiraki Roadshow, highlighting the impact of bringing tertiary services closer to communities. Timoci Serewai has proudly embarked on his higher education journey after enrolling in the Bachelor of Education (Secondary) majoring in Industrial Arts. A former student of Nakauvadra High School, Timoci hails from Nokonoko Village, Saivou in Ra, and is the second youngest of 11 siblings. Receiving his offer letter at the FNU Rakiraki Roadshow marked a historic milestone for his family, as he becomes the first among his siblings to pursue tertiary education. “I am happy to have received my offer letter and I am looking forward to starting a new chapter of my life,” Timoci shared. He acknowledged the importance of the roadshow, noting that having FNU services available in his area made the enrolment and registration process far more accessible. The initiative, he said, saved students the burden of travelling long distances and encouraged more young people to consider

further studies. Similarly, Seini Lakai Vurutamana has taken a proud step toward higher education after enrolling in the Diploma in Customs (Level 6) at FNU. Seini hails from Dreketi, Nalawa in Ra, with maternal links to Rakiraki Village, Yale in Kadavu. As the only daughter among five siblings, she has become the first in her family to attend a tertiary institution—an achievement made even more meaningful following the passing of her father in 2020. She expressed her joy at receiving her offer letter and commended the dedication of FNU staff. “The staff were very helpful and made the process easier for me,” Seini said, adding that the guidance and support she received boosted her confidence to take this next step. FNU’s outreach services continue to play a vital role in supporting students like Timoci and Seini by providing enrolment assistance and career counselling directly within communities. Through initiatives such as the roadshow, FNU reaffirms its commitment to ensuring students do not have to travel far to access higher education, empowering them to pursue their dreams and craft brighter futures for themselves and their families.

Family Sacrifice Fuels Education Comeback



Uraia Nataliga with his mother Ravonu Tinai after receiving his offer letter at the Rakiraki Roadshow. Photo Credit: Adi Elenoa Cagi

BY WATI TALEBULA

A young man from Nokonoko Village in Ra has returned to education after taking time off to support his family following the completion of secondary school. Uraia Nataliga, a former student of Saint Francis College, Ra, completed Year 13 in 2023 and chose to work before continuing his studies. “I decided to work after Year 13 because I wanted to help my parents at home,” Nataliga said. “Both my parents are farmers, and as the eldest child, I felt it was my responsibility to support them.” Nataliga explained that assisting with farming and household duties gave him a deeper understanding of the challenges faced by rural families. “Working helped me understand the value

of hard work and patience,” he said. “It also taught me how to manage my time and communicate better with others.” After spending time in the workforce, Nataliga said he felt ready to return to education. “I have now decided to come back and start my tertiary education in Foundation Social Science,” he said. “I believe this program will help me build a better future for myself and my family.” He added that his experiences outside the classroom helped him mature. “Taking time off from studies helped me grow and understand my goals more clearly,” Nataliga said. Nataliga hopes his journey will inspire other young people who may have paused their education due to family responsibilities. “Education is important, and even if you stop for a while, you can always come back,” he said.

FNU Roadshow Empowers Ra Students



Timoci Serewai and Seini Lakai Vurutamana after they received their offer letters in Rakiraki. Photo Credit: Adi Elenoa Cagi



Lara Lokega. Photo Credit: Roshel Singh

Lokega Dares to Dream

BY CHRISTAL KAPOOR

Lara Lokega travelled from Lomawai, Nadroga, to visit the Fiji National University (FNU) Roadshow booth in Nadi. The former Lomawai Secondary School student chose to pursue a Diploma in Hospitality and Hotel Management (Level 5) instead of progressing to Year 13 after completing her Year 12 studies, following the guidance and encouragement of her mother. “I know I am not going to regret this decision, as I have always wanted to work in the tourism and hospitality industry,” said Lokega. “FNU was my top choice because not only is the Bonunqwele (Namaka) Campus close to home, but they also offer practical experience in all their programmes, which I am really looking forward to.”

She added that her experience at the roadshow was amazing, as all her questions about university life and application processes were answered on the spot, giving her even greater confidence in choosing FNU. “The staff were very approachable, and I found all the answers I was looking for. The processes were explained so clearly and well,” she said. Lokega is excited about meeting new people and wishes to advise young Fijians not to be afraid to ask questions. “Asking questions helps you gain more knowledge. Every question is a step towards learning and building confidence.” She also urged students to stay focused on their education, emphasising that it is the key to opening doors to a brighter and more hopeful future.

“The staff were very approachable, and I found all the answers I was looking for. The processes were explained so clearly and well,”

Ali Inspired by Father's Success

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS

Growing up surrounded by tools and machinery, Zaid Ali's passion for engineering was shaped early by his father's example. As a young boy, he often accompanied his father to work, observing firsthand the dedication and skills required to run an engineering business. Those are some of the moments that planted a dream that he has carried with him ever since, which is to one day follow in his father's footsteps and build a business of his own. However, any journey is not complete without its challenges. “Last year proved to be a difficult period for me

when my father fell ill,” he said. “The situation took an emotional toll and impacted my studies, resulting in a temporary setback but despite this I refused to give up on my dream.” His dedication to his dream paid off when he recently received his Offer Letter to pursue the Certificate in Engineering (Electrical) (Level 3) programme at the Fiji National University 2026 Roadshow at the Ba Bus Stand. Walking away with his Offer Letter, he expressed motivation, seeing the opportunity as a fresh start towards achieving his goals. Driven by determination and inspired by his father's legacy, Ali now looks to the future with confidence. His long-term goal is to establish his own spare parts shop, following in the footsteps of his father.



Zaid Ali after receiving his Offer Letter from the FNU 2026 Roadshow booth in Ba. Photo Credit: Nicolette Chambers

Young Ra Woman Sets Sights on Aquaculture Success

BY NICOLETTE CHAMBERS



Venina Saqakutu after receiving her Offer Letter in Ba.

At just 18-years-old, Venina Saqakutu of Drauniivi Village in Ra is already creating a determined path for herself towards a brighter future, driven by ambition and a clear vision for her community. Saqakutu recently took a significant step towards achieving her goals after securing an Offer Letter at the Fiji National University's (FNU) 2026 Roadshow in Ba. She will pursue a Diploma in Aquaculture (Level 5) at FNU's Ba Campus, a programme she believes will equip her with the knowledge and skills needed to craft her future. A former student of DAV College, she aspires

not only to successfully complete her studies but also to become the first person from her village to establish an aquaculture-based business. She has dreams that her future venture will contribute to sustainable livelihoods and economic growth within her community. “I am motivated to create opportunities for myself and inspire others back home,” she said. “I encourage young people to follow their passions, remain focused, and believe in their dreams. “Success will come if you trust the process and never give up.” As she prepares to begin her studies next month, Saqakutu is a living testimony that with vision and hard work, meaningful changes can begin with anyone.

Health & Hustle

From Rugby Field to Tech Path: CISCO Inspire Malolo U20 Flanker

BY ROMEKA KUMARI

From crunching tackles on the rugby field to configuring networks in a computer lab, Apolosa Drauna is proving that ambition knows no boundaries.

The Malolo Under-20 flanker, known for his physicality and discipline on the field, has taken a decisive step off it after receiving an instant offer letter from the Fiji National University (FNU) to study CISCO Certified Network Associate (CCNA) programme.

Upon receiving the offer letter during FNU's Roadshow in Sigatoka this month, it marked a turning point in the 18-year-old's journey.

"I never imagined I would receive an offer on the spot," he said.

Hailing from Namuka in Macuata Province, with maternal ties to Raiwaqa in Nadroga, Drauna said the opportunity aligned perfectly with a long-held dream.

"When I learnt that FNU offered CISCO, I was genuinely excited. Technology has always fascinated me, especially how networks are built and connected."

His interest began in high school, where he took tech science subjects and was introduced—briefly—to networking concepts.

"What I learnt then was very basic, but it sparked my curiosity," Drauna explained.

"This programme gives me the chance to really understand networking and work towards becoming a qualified network engineer."

On the sporting front, Drauna's credentials are just as impressive.

He captained Cuvu College team to the Dean's Rugby Competition in 2024 and recently featured as a prop for the Southland Broncos Under-20 side at the Coral Coast 7s,

where the team lifted the Bowl Final.

"Rugby will always be my passion," he said.

"My dream is to play professionally, but I also know the importance of education. I want to be successful on the field and secure off it."

That balance is deeply personal. Drauna credits his late father, Sanaila Drauna, who passed away in 2023, as his greatest inspiration.

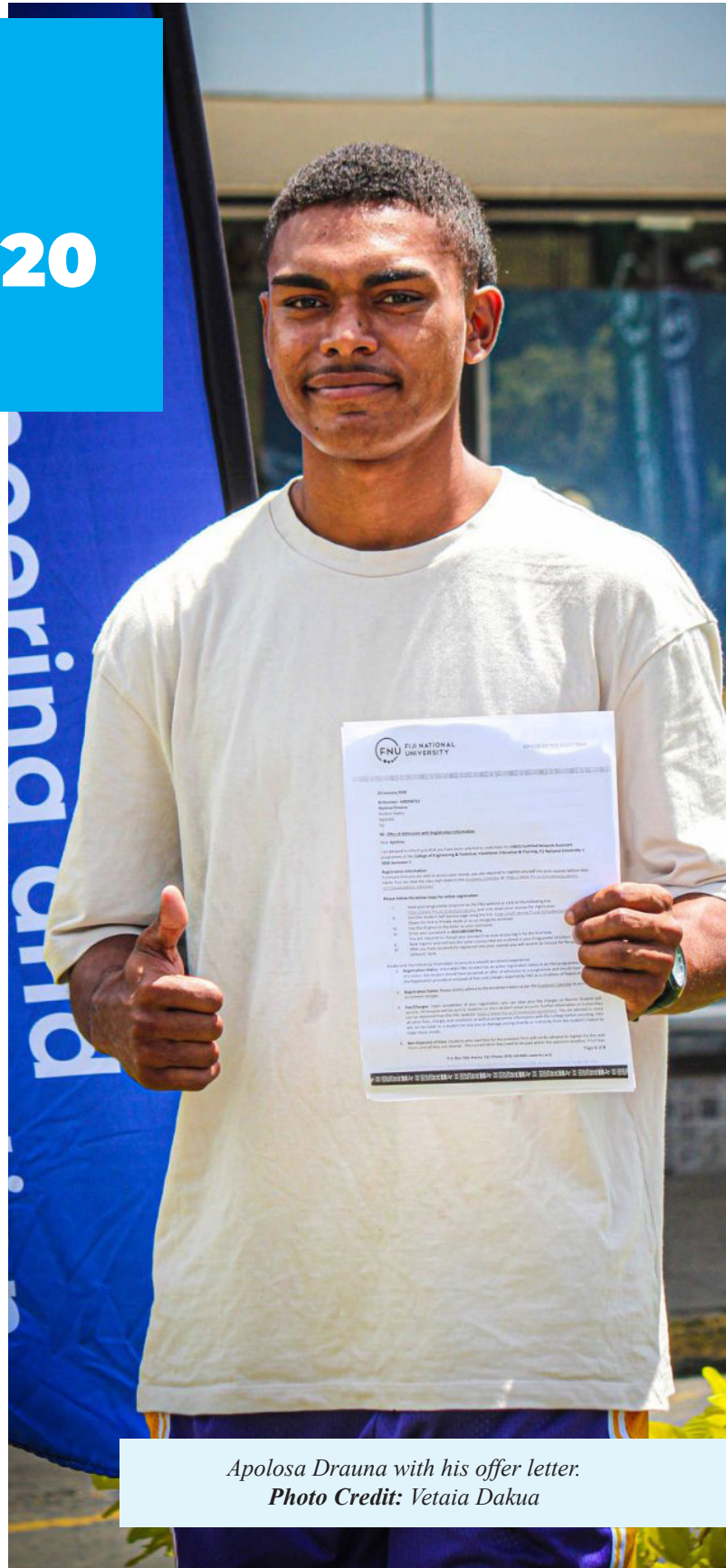
"I want to make my dad proud," he said.

"Pursuing CISCO alongside rugby is my way of honouring him."

He added that his mother, Rejieli Drauna, continues to urge him to strike the right balance.

"She always reminds me to stay focused, stay grounded and believe that I can excel in both rugby and academics. With her support, I know I can achieve more than one dream."

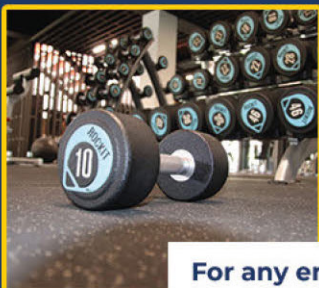
"Rugby will
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Apolosa Drauna with his offer letter.
Photo Credit: Vetaia Dakua



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INSIDE FNU is a monthly newspaper 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: Manager Public Relations and Communications, Navinsh Kumar

Design & Layout: Vetaia Dakua

Division Head: Acting Director Marketing and Communications, Ella Bennion

Writers: Navinsh Kumar, Christal Kapoor, Nicolette Chambers, Wati Talebula, and Romeka Kumari

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