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Press Release

A graduate in Tropical Agriculture scooped top honours at the Fiji National University graduation ceremony in Suva today (2 December).

Siwanjini Prakash collected the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Dux award and also the prize for the most outstanding practical student.

She is from Moto in Ba, where her family farms sugar cane. She said it was the farming background that interested her to enroll in the Diploma in Tropical Agriculture programme.

"I believe agriculture is a multi-discipline programme that people with a both science and arts backgrounds can study.

"Agriculture is also important to Fiji's economy."

Ms Prakash is the eldest and the first to graduate in her family.

She said her long-time dream had been to join the Fiji Sugar Corporation as a career.

"I grew up seeing people working for FSC and that has always been what I wanted to do."

Her first task after graduating is to get a job, she said.

Ms Prakash said that by choosing to study at FNU and having to come to Koronivia Campus had made her independent and taught her to be responsible for herself.

Another award winner was Mika Kavetani, who listened when the Government said it wanted all survey technicians to upgrade their knowledge.

He enrolled in the Diploma in Land Surveying and today collected the Gold Medal award from the College of Engineering, Science and Technology.

Mr Kavetani, 31, from Vanua Levu works in the Lands Department and was sponsored by the government.

He said the best thing about his studies at FNU was that they were practically oriented and were designed "to welcome people to the real world".

Reshma Ranjana was overjoyed yesterday when she found out that she was being awarded a gold medal for all the hard work she put in her studies.

She has started work in the freight department Air Pacific after a three month attachment that was part of her study programme.

She did a Diploma in Business Customs and said her area of work has people with qualifications but few jobs.

“I have been lucky that the place where I did my attachment has given me a full time post,” she said.

Ms Ranjana said she would celebrate the award with her family and friends in Nadi.

Another gold medal recipient, Loraiza Safiona Arzooz who graduated with a Bachelor of Imaging Science was speechless when she was awarded a gold medal yesterday.

Ms Arzooz has started working at Lautoka Hospital and plans to do further studies after two years of service.

“There is a lot of demand for what I have studied and I am glad that I made that choice few years ago,” she said.

Ms Arzooz said the best moments for her while studying were spent doing practicals at Lautoka and CWM hospitals.

“I am glad that I will be working towards improving the health system in the country,” she said.

Chaaya Chandra, gold medallist with a Bachelor of Pharmacy degree said she was looking forward to starting work in Fiji’s hospitals.

“I worked hard during the year and happy that the effort has been rewarded,” she said.

Ms Chandra is originally from Nadi. She said her years at FNU had been fun but there were difficult times as well.

More than 1500 joined the solemn procession of graduates at the Vodafone Arena in Suva to receive their certificates, diplomas and degrees from the Minister for Education, Filipe Bole, today.

A total of 35 outstanding students were awarded prizes and gold medals during the ceremony.

In this second year of its existence, Fiji National University graduated a total of 1562 students in Suva and will confer certificates, diplomas and degrees on a further 183 in Labasa on 6 December and 848 in Lautoka on 9 December.