

Wednesday July 10, 2013

We feed the nation

‘We feed the nation’ is the theme for Fiji National University’s 2013 Open Day, to be held on Friday 12 July.

FNU feeds the minds of students with the knowledge they require to feed the needs of a developing nation. Importantly amongst those needs is an ability to feed Fiji’s people: with good food, import substitution and through earnings from agribusiness, entrepreneurial activities, primary and secondary industry and exports.

Fiji government has invested strong support through funding, new programmes and scholarships to promote primary industries, especially agribusiness, and to encourage Fiji’s youth to become part of the effort.

FNU Registrar Jone Dakuvula said this year’s Open Day will display those opportunities to the fore, along with information about scholarships and how students can explore all the options that are becoming available.

Mr Dakuvula said prominent amongst these is the scheme introduced this year for a one year programme in agriculture, followed by mentorship and the allocation of land and start-up funds for housing and equipment to get young agri-entrepreneurs launched.

He said while the focus is on FNU’s College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry, Open Day visitors will also be given an appreciation of how all the various studies in all FNU Colleges have connection to rural and maritime development and the ultimate aim of feeding the nation.

The College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, which will open its Pasifika Campus, keeps the nation healthy for the work of development.

There are specialist departments with particular connections to the theme, including dietetics and nutrition that work on promoting healthy diets of local foods that combat the increasing problem of non communicable diseases.

The College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies, that will have displays and information booths on Derrick Campus, Samabula, has programmes in finance and business to help entrepreneurs run their enterprises while those in the hospitality programmes learn how to cook and present local foods to provide healthy meals and promote local produce.

The College of Engineering, Science and Technology that is based on Derrick Campus, touches the business of agriculture, forestry and fisheries in a multitude of ways, from mechanical engineering and construction skills, physics and alternative energy sources and environmental science to information technology, so important in this age of internet information resources.

The College of Humanities and Education also has its part to play in the ‘feed the nation’ story, not the least through training quality teachers to give all our children, including those in isolated rural and maritime areas, a quality education that will lead them to broader horizons, including in those needed for farming and fisheries occupations.

For those able to visit Nadi Campus, the School of Education, School of Aviation, School of Sciences and School of Maritime Studies will be open to visitors.

Ba Campus will also be open to show visitors the CBHTS and other programmes available there.

Sigatoka and Rakiraki Centres will have information and displays on the courses available from the School of Education, School of Aviation, School of Sciences, School of Maritime Studies, College of Business, Hospitality and Tourism Studies, and the National Training and Productivity Centre.

FNU's National Training and Productivity Centre, which provides short courses in vitally needed skills that provide technical and other support for development, will be available to give information on the wide spread of their activities throughout Fiji.