

FNU confers awards to the first ever Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours) graduates

Graduates from the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) were urged to use education as a tool and change the world at their graduation ceremony today in Suva

Chief guest Warren Yee, speaking to 248 graduating students challenged them to use their newly attained qualification, skills and knowledge positively at the work place.

Yee, Managing Director of Irwin Alsop Pacific Limited, reminded graduates that the University had prepared them well as they entered the job market, however learning never stops.

"The sea of knowledge knows no boundaries. This phrase reminds me that learning does not begin and end with a university education," said Yee.

He urged graduates to be open to learning from their more experienced peers and at the same time share their knowledge with those that may be new to advancements.

"All of us here today are the swimmers in the sea of knowledge, on our own continuous journey of learning without boundaries, whether at home, work, school, whether we are graduating today or here to support the graduates, we should strive to learn something new every day," commented Yee.

The chief guest said tertiary education lays the foundation for individuals to become independent and critical thinkers.

"University life and study builds your strength as a person. Do not forget those who supported you financially and emotionally during this journey, your parents, your friends, your study group and your lecturers," said Yee.

"It is important to remember that the certificates, diplomas and degrees you received today are paper qualifications, their real value relies in how you apply the training you received. To succeed in life, you also require personal value which if applied well will mold you into a responsible citizen."

FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey said he was proud of the wide range of programmes offered by College of Engineering Science and Technology as it provided employment to those working in different sectors including the land, air and sea.

"We train students to sail ships in various capabilities, service the vehicles that run on our roads, maintain our commercial aircraft, construct roads and buildings, as well as supporting a range of sectors from computing and pure sciences to food technology," said VC Healey.

Professor Healey said as Fiji's national university, it was mandated to offer study and training programmes that are targeted to meet the human resources needs of employers.

One of the main highlights of the CEST graduation was the graduation of students from the Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours) programme.

Two students Sitiveni Filipe Hicks and Taniela Lutumailagi were the pioneering students that graduated from this programme. Hicks and Lutumailagi said they were elated with their 'milestone' achievement.

"It's a great honour for us to be graduating from this programme. It's a dream come true," said Hicks.

"We would like to thank the University for its vision and commitment in developing this programme. As you know there is a great need for engineering in our country and this programme will certainly assist in fulfilling the demand in time to come," he added.

Hicks message to the future students is, "you are the author of your life, you have to make the best choices so that your story also has a good ending,".

"It's been a four-year long journey and we have learnt a lot from our lecturers and while on industry attachments. This is a huge milestone for us and we thank everyone for their support," said Lutumailagi.



Sitiveni Hicks and Taniela Lutumailagi are the pioneers of the Bachelor of Civil Engineering (Honours) programme

"Engineering is definitely not an easy subject but with determination and dedication anything is possible. For now, my focus is on finding a job and getting more experience. I also want to show the industry, the skills I have," he said.

Meanwhile two staff from the College of Engineering Science and Technology scooped the inaugural Vice Chancellor's award for Research.

The Vice-Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence was recently launched through the Pro Vice Chancellor's Research office to promote the importance of research and recognize individual researchers whose research achieved considerable impact and recognition outside the University.

Dr Rajeev Bhat, won the Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence, while Dr Patrick Mark Singh received the Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence for ECR (Early Career Researcher).

Dr Bhat's publications was cited 6,300 times, and carrying a h-index



Dr Rajeev Bhat won the Vice Chancellor's Award for Research Excellence

of 39. [A h-index indicates how productive and influential a researcher is in the field].

He has successfully undertaken and completed funded research projects, as well as supervised student research projects. He is a recipient of numerous other prestigious global awards, serves as a member on editorial boards of leading international journals, and is an invited associate academic at a number of international institutes. His contribution to knowledge is in the discipline of Food Science and Technology.

"I am honoured to be given this inaugural award and recognised for my work," said Dr Bhat.

On the other hand, Dr Patrick Mark Singh, an early career researcher who shared the same sentiments was recognized for achieving excellence in research as an Early Career Researcher with seven highly ranked journal papers; six best paper awards for conference papers and achieving a h-Index of 6. His contribution to knowledge is in the discipline of Mechanical Engineering. Dr Singh completed his PhD from Mokpo National University in South Korea earlier this year.

Tomorrow, students from the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) will graduate at the FMF National Gymnasium. The event which will be divided in two sessions commences at 9am. The second session starts at 2pm.

For more pictures, visit the FNU Facebook page.