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Press Release

FNU Students compete in National Model United Nations Competition

Lautoka, Fiji Islands. Nine inspiring young women from the Fiji National University (FNU) will be competing at the National Model United Nations Competition (MUN) in Washington DC from 6 to 11 November.

During the farewell ceremony for the students this morning, the Honourable Minister for Youth and Sports Lt. Col. Laisenia Tuitubou highlighted the importance of MUN in providing an exclusive space for women to break the traditional boundaries of leadership and to explore the power of their voices to cause positive change in the world.

“You are the new vanguard in our quest to have youth, especially women of all ages, take your rightful place in our country’s affairs. Become the agents of change, become people who do things, change the paradigm, make your communities better and ultimately you will make Fiji better,” he said.

Sara Conklin, advisor for the MUN team said in order to increase female empowerment programs, both FNU and Ministry of Youths and Sports decided to prepare a team comprising of women. Creating such exclusive programs will enable women to become future leaders on the national and global scale.

“Historically, however, gendered norms, behaviours and social relations have played a big part in disadvantaging women in government and particularly, as international ambassadors. MUN provides a space exclusively for women to break traditional boundaries of leadership and to explore using the power of their own voices to cause positive change in the world,” she said.

The Model United Nations is an activity that provides an educational simulation of international politics, diplomacy, and foreign affairs. This model will help build self-confidence of participants as they engage in public speaking, negotiation, research, writing and group work.

“To best represent a country, students need to advocate for their country’s policy in prepared speeches to their peers. However, they also need to be prepared to think critically very quickly, about where their assigned country would feel comfortable compromising based on their understanding of the values most important to the country. All this is possible only with a careful understanding of the facts of the topic and the solutions that will create meaningful change,” she Ms Conklin.

During the five days’ event, the team will take on the role of another country. As part of the Model UN’s core, Team Fiji will shed their host country identity and simulate a position of another United Nations Member state, which is Canada. This will give the team an opportunity to dive deep into the works of international relations and work among 200 countries with varying cultures, languages, religion and identities.

Final year Bachelor of Education (Primary) student, Ms Maria Matai Ratulutu, who is the head of delegation, said it was an honour to be selected under the Model UN program, even though the task required exhaustive preparation and attending to weekly meetings.

“This platform gives us an opportunity to step out of our comfort zone and manage our time properly, juggling between studies and conference preparation. I am really excited to be part of this female team and showcase to the world what we women have to offer, as I believe in women empowerment,” she said.

The all-female Team Fiji will be competing against men in the conference, their skills and talents will far outweigh any traditional expectations of gender and leave Fijian women, as well as women around the world, inspired to do the same.

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About the Fiji National University: The Fiji National University (FNU) was established through the merger of 7 government-owned tertiary institutions in Fiji, and commenced operations from 1 January 2010. The constituent institutions are found at over 40 different locations across Fiji, and collectively offer Certificates, Diplomas, Advanced Diplomas, Degrees, Postgraduate qualifications and Skills Upgrading for those who are already in employment. Approximately 30,000 students pass through the University each year. Over the last six years of its operations, the University has registered major achievements with regard to new programme delivery, quality improvements and contribution to research and publications via its 5 Colleges: The College of Humanities & Education (CHE), the College of Medicine, Nursing & Health Sciences (CMNHS), the College of Engineering, Science & Technology (CEST), the College of Agriculture, Fisheries & Forestry (CAFF), the College of Business, Hospitality & Tourism Studies (CBHTS) and the National Training & Productivity Centre (NTPC).