

Thursday 3 May, 2018

PRESS RELEASE

Graduates urged to 'unlock' Fiji's true Agriculture potential

Suva, Fiji Islands. Graduates from the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) were strongly encouraged to take up commercial farming and assist in unlocking Fiji's true potential in the Agricultural sector.

Speaking to graduating students from CAFF and National Training and Productivity Centre (NTPC), Chief Guest, Permanent Secretary for Agriculture, David Kolitagane said there was an important need to expand the Agricultural sector in Fiji.

Kolitagane said young graduates, with fresh and innovative ideas, had the potential to take this industry to greater heights.

"We are searching for entrepreneurial spirits who will go into farming and become competitive players in the commercial agriculture," said Kolitagane.

"You must respond to exciting challenge and realize opportunities. With the enabling environment created by government, you are encouraged to make use of your skills and bring new innovative ideas into the resource base sector for the development of our nations and in achieving our national objectives," he added.

The PS said with climate change being a frightening reality, Fiji needs to ensure that its policies as well and research and development strategies are aligned to ensure sustainability, availability, accessibility and affordability of safe and nutritious food for every Fijian.

"We are promoting organic farming with more climate-resilient and environmental sustainability. To adapt to climate change, more efforts will be directed towards research and development," said Kolitagane.

FNU Chancellor, Ikbal Jannif said there were a few exciting projects lined-up for the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry this year.

"Construction of the \$3 million Veterinary hospital is scheduled to commence in a few months. While this project is underway, we are looking at providing another clinic at the campus to cater for student practicals," said Chancellor Jannif.

"The development of a new piggery shed with waste disposal to be converted to biogas, is expected to be ready by the end of July this year. The most recent development is the Instructional Aquaponics Complex that assists students who are learning the culture of fish and crops," Jannif added.

Today's joint CAFF and NTPC graduation saw more than 220 students graduating.

Saisi Navatu Vunibaka, a Trade Diploma in Agriculture graduate said he was over-whelmed to complete his studies.

“I have had a passion for agriculture from an early age. I faced a lot of challenges over the years but this did not stop me from pursuing my studies. I’m grateful to my grandmother, mother Joana Vunibaka and Uncle Lisala Dyer for their unwavering support and belief in me to achieve my dreams,” said Vunibaka.

One of the highlights was the graduation of five students with special needs from NTPC’s Diploma in I-T Networking TAFE programme.

PS Kolitagane commended the students for their hard work, dedication and perseverance.

“This is special and a tremendous achievement for these five graduates and NTPC. I extend my most sincere and warm congratulations to you. The Fijian Government is committed to building a smarter and more inclusive Fiji,” said the PS.

Special needs student Ilikini Sukaciba originally from Tavuki, Kadavu could not hold back his emotions as he received his certificate.

“I never thought that I would come this far. My mother is in Vanua Levu and unfortunately could not be here today. It’s an emotional moment for me because my aunt Nina Tuamoto who had raised me and brought me to Suva to further my education unfortunately passed away last year. I dedicate this achievement to her and the rest of my family,” said Sukaciba.

Meanwhile Shandika Sharon Naidu, Director Human Resources at Malolo Island graduated with a TAFE Advanced Diploma of Leadership and Management and was the recipient of a Special Award.

Naidu thanked her organisation and family members for their support.

“This was an interesting programme. After this I plan to pursue my Masters in Human Resources,” said Naidu.

The Fiji National University May graduation continues tomorrow with the College of Humanities and Education.

Full details of the graduation are provided below:



 **MEDIA INVITE**

The Vice Chancellor of the Fiji National University
cordially invites you to the

GRADUATION CEREMONIES

COLLEGE OF HUMANITIES AND EDUCATION [CHE]
to be held on **Friday 04 May, 2018** from **10am** at the **FMF Gymnasium, Laucala Bay, Suva**
and **COLLEGE OF MEDICINE, NURSING AND HEALTH SCIENCES [CMNHS]**
to be held on **Tuesday 08 May, 2018** from **10am** at the **Novotel Convention Centre, Lami.**

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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).