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PRESS RELEASE

Employment rate of FNU graduates high – VC Healey

Suva, Fiji Islands. Majority of the students from the Fiji National University (FNU) are able to secure paid employment within four months of completing their studies.

Speaking at the opening of the International Youth Fellowship (IYF) World Culture Camp in Suva last night, FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey said graduate employability is important as it indicates how the institution is performing in terms of meeting the employment demand.

“FNU is a vocational, dual-sector university and we have put great emphasis on the importance of achieving high rates of graduate employability,” said Prof Healey.

“Our surveys of students graduating each April, roughly four months after they completed their studies, show that 80-90% consistently report being in paid employment and this is in line with many developed countries. So this is a good sign for students who are intending to join the Fiji National University.”

Professor Healey said FNU was proud to partner with IYF once again as it shared its noble vision of creating a better educated society.

IYF was established as a worldwide youth organisation and international non-governmental organisation by Pastor Ock Soo Park in South Korea in 2001.

IYF’s vision is to:

- Raise next generation leaders who possess intellectual and humble character with a global insight.
- Provide realistic solutions and strive for the development of human welfare through various social service activities.
- Pursue improvement of mutual understanding and unity between countries and nationalities through various international exchange activities.

“As Fiji’s national university, FNU shares this noble vision. Fiji has a large population of young people. Half our population is under the age of 29. Fiji is currently in our ninth year of unbroken economic growth. To continue at this impressive rate of economic growth, we need to invest in the skills and education of our young people, to develop them into the leaders of tomorrow,” said VC Healey.

In 1960, South Korea was an undeveloped agrarian economy, still suffering from the aftermath of the 1951-53 civil war, which has divided the Korean peninsula ever since.

The rapid reconstruction and economic development that took place in the latter decades of the 20th Century has been called the “Miracle on the Han River”. Per capita GDP rose from US\$154 in 1960 to reach US\$13,00 by the mid-1990s and has doubled again since, to reach over US\$28,000 today.

The rapid growth and development was built on investing in the education of South Korea’s young generation. In the 1960s, less than 10% of young people enrolled in tertiary education. From the late 1970s, this

percentage increased dramatically, and today over 90% of high school students in South Korea stay on for some form of tertiary education – either technical and vocational education or higher education.

Educating young people created a highly skilled and productive labour force in South Korea, allowing the development of household name companies like Samsung, Hyundai Kia and LG to innovate and export to the rest of the world.

Tertiary education in South Korea is made relevant for the needs of business and its colleges and universities have fostered very close links with the major employers.

“Fiji is on a similar journey of investment in the education of our young people, which is underpinning our rapid economic growth. Back in 2006, only about 16% of Fiji’s school leavers went on to tertiary education,” said Professor Healey.

“12 years later, with the establishment of FNU as the country’s national university in 2010 and the introduction of the Tertiary Education Loans Scheme (TELS) to cover tuition fees and living costs in 2014, the percentage of young people who enrol in tertiary education has leapt to 60% which is a four-fold increase.

“FNU has sought to emulate the Korean example, by building and maintaining very close links with industry to ensure that our graduates are highly-employable and ‘day one work-ready’.

“All our programmes are co-designed with ‘Industrial Advisory Committees’ to ensure they meet employers’ needs and all our students undertake an attachment to prepare them for the labour market.”

More than one thousand people gathered at Thurston Gardens last night for the opening of the IYF Fiji Camp. The guests, majority of who were secondary school students, enjoyed a night of empowering speeches and entertainment.

President of Fiji, His Excellency Major-General (Ret'd) Jioji Konousi Konrote conducted the official opening and also present was the Minister for Youth and Sports Laisenia Tuitubou and other invited guests. The IYF Fiji Camp will be held for three days. The FNU team will be present during the three-day event to provide academic counselling to students and the general public.

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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).