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Press Release

Fiji National University gives \$5,000 sponsorship

Suva, Fiji Islands. The Fiji National University (FNU) today presented a \$5,000 cheque to the United Blind Persons of Fiji (UBP) as part of its sponsorship of the Student of the Year category in the inaugural Disability Gala Awards Nite 2018.

The cheque was presented by FNU Vice Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey to Rajnel Prasad, the Chair of the Awards ceremony.

The event, which aims to recognise the contributions and achievements of students with special needs, will be held at the Grand Pacific Hotel (GPH) in Suva on Saturday 27 October.

Professor Healey said the University was honoured to partner with UBPF given the important role it plays to empower those with visual impairment as well as its contribution towards national development.

The VC said FNU is committed to ensuring that tertiary education is accessible to everyone in Fiji, regardless of challenges people face.

“We welcome the new Disability Gala Awards Nite as a way of acknowledging and celebrating those who have succeeded against the odds and made a contribution to Fiji,” said Professor Healey.

“While there are a range of special schools for young people with disabilities, going on to tertiary education is much more of a challenge. Universities and tertiary colleges are large organisations, where disabled students are in a tiny minority and can easily lose their way.”

“In the universities, we have tried hard to provide a range of support services to blind, deaf and mobility-impaired students and we have a small and dedicated team. But we recognise the hurdles and challenges that disabled students have to overcome to succeed in their tertiary studies.”

The Fiji National University Student of the Year Award, which is one of seven awards that will be up for grabs on the evening.

Professor Healey said FNU is delighted that UBPF agreed to add the category of Student of the Year to celebrate the achievements of disabled students and inspire future generations.

“We are pleased that, as part of our mission to support the educational aspirations of all Fijians, we have been chosen as the sponsors for the new Student of the Year Award,” Professor Healey added.

Nominees for the Student of the Year will be considered under the following criteria:

- Has to be a student attending any of the three Universities in Fiji and living with a disability;
- Needs to have completed 80% of his or her course and is on his/her final year of studies/attachment;
- Has been consistent and is self-motivated to succeed;

- Is actively involved in other extra-curricular activities apart from academic work;
- Has shown remarkable endurance and fortitude to succeed against all odds;
- Has participated at University activities and functions; and
- Has joined and has been actively involved in any university student committee.

Chairperson of the inaugural Awards, Rajnel Prasad acknowledged FNU for being the first organisation to confirm its sponsorship for the ceremony.

Prasad said it was important to hold such an event to recognise the achievements and contribution of people with visual impairment. He said such events will also inspire others to strive for higher goals.

“With this awards ceremony UPB is trying to motivate young people living with disabilities to actually make use of the resources around them,” Prasad added.

The other six categories for the 1st Disability Gala Awards Nite 2018 are:

1. Youth Group of the year
2. Entrepreneur of the year
3. Senior Manager of the year
4. Sports Person of the year
5. Best Entertainment Group of the year
6. Premium Awards (Life Time achievement awards)

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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).