

Tuesday 8 August, 2018

Press Release

India-Fiji Centre of Excellence of IT to be established at the Fiji National University

Suva, Fiji Islands. The Fiji National University (FNU) today formalised a partnership with the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) from India to establish the India-Fiji Centre of Excellence in Information Technology (CEIT).

The formal agreement which was signed at Nasinu Campus, sets out the operational requirements for the new CEIT to be set-up at FNU's College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST), Derrick Campus in Samabula.

FNU Vice Chancellor, Professor Nigel Healey said as Fiji's national university, FNU was delighted to be partnering with C-DAC. The CEIT project is supported by the Government of India and the Fijian Government.

Professor Healey said this new partnership comes hard on the heels of a major leap forward by FNU in its digital capability.

"Under this partnership between C-DAC and FNU, the Government of India will be funding the equipment for computer laboratories at the new India-Fiji National Centre of Excellence in IT, which will be housed in dedicated facilities in A Block at Derrick Campus," said Professor Healey.

"C-DAC will provide blocks of intensive six-months training, at one of the C-DAC teaching centres in India, for six FNU IT staff, to allow them to upgrade their skills and qualifications and teach in the new CEIT. This training will be fully funded by the Government of India, including tuition, flights and accommodation."

C-DAC will also base its own experts at FNU for extended periods of secondment, to help launch the India-Fiji CEIT and develop a suite of IT training programmes.

The new India-Fiji CEIT will be the next stage in the exciting journey of connecting Fiji to the world and making FNU a full player in the digital academic community.

So far this year FNU has:

- Connected the University to AARNet, the submarine cable that connects the Australian and US universities, to give FNU superfast broadband speeds and access to a wide range of educational and research software.
- Established a centre for distance and flexible learning to allow more course content to be accessible online from anywhere.

- Rolled out the open learning commons project, to convert out libraries from dreary book stacks to social learning spaces where students and staff can access a huge range of journals and eBooks through wifi.
- Began the project to migrate the University to Banner, a comprehensive university management information system, which will move all our processes and data storage online.
- Worked with Walesi and the Digital Fiji project to provide comprehensive wifi coverage across all our campuses (not just in buildings and libraries). This was launched by the Minister for Economy and Attorney General Aiyaz Saiyed-Khaiyum today.

Professor Healey acknowledged the Government of India for being given the opportunity of working with C-DAC. He also thanked the Fijian Government for supporting a number of digital connectivity projects being undertaken by FNU.

Meanwhile, His Excellency, the High Commissioner of India, Vishvas Sapkal acknowledged FNU for providing the facility to establish the new centre.

HE Sapkal said after the completion of this project, the facility will become the hub for telemedicine and tele-education.

“Once CEIT is established, it will act as a hub to connect the best of the hospital from India just through the click of the mouse. Best universities throughout the world will be connected with this tele-education hub.”

The Minister for Economy and Attorney General Aiyaz Saiyed-Khaiyum briefly met VC Healey, HE Sapkal and the team from the Centre for Development of Advanced Computing (C-DAC) at Nasinu Campus this afternoon.

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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).