

**THURSDAY 23 AUGUST, 2018**

## **Press Release**

### **FNU staff awarded scholarship to pursue Master's degree in China**

**Suva, Fiji.** It was a dream come true for Fiji National University (FNU) staff, Ashmit Kumar after securing a scholarship from the Chinese Government to pursue his Master's Degree in Crop Genetics and Breeding.

Kumar, an Assistant Lecturer with the Department of Crop Production at the College of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry (CAFF) will study at the Graduate School of Chinese Academy in Agricultural Science based in Beijing.

The twenty-four-year old said he was pleasantly surprised when contacted by the Chinese Embassy and informed of the scholarship.

"I was thrilled to hear that I was considered for the scholarship. This indeed is a great opportunity for me to pursue my dream," said Kumar.

"I had applied for the same scholarship last year, but I was unsuccessful. I applied again this year and made it. So I'm really happy."

Coming from a farming background, Kumar said his interest has always been to assist with the development of the Agricultural industry in Fiji.

"I have opted to study genetic diversity to improve molecular breeding techniques of rice varieties. Rice is one of the important cereal crops and the consumption of rice is very high in the world," commented Kumar.

"This is a 3-year program and I will do my research in China since the rice varieties are normally the same with very little variations. Also, today in modern agriculture, crop improvement is the answer to most of the problems, whether it is linked to pest diseases, soil types or climatic conditions. Therefore, the idea is to learn the concept on how we can apply these techniques successfully in Fiji."

Kumar said he's excited to commence his studies in China and hopes to return as a qualified Crop Genetic and Plant Breeder.

He departs for the People's Republic of China on Monday, 3 September, 2018.

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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).