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Press Release

International student cherishes Fijian education experience

Suva, Fiji. Twenty-one year old American Beau David Mourer did not expect he would be fortunate to travel more than 7000 kilometers to undertake a 12-week course in Climate Change and the South Pacific and Environmental Impact Assessment.

Mourer, an undergraduate University of Michigan student, was part of an international student group that recently completed their course with the Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Engineering, Science and Technology (CEST) at the Nabua Campus

"It was a wonderful opportunity for me to visit the South Pacific. I've heard a lot about Fiji and I'm so thrilled that I had the opportunity to travel and study here," said Mourer.

"Being in the same class with the Fijian students has been a learning opportunity. Having talanoa sessions with them enlightened us with the issues prevalent in the Pacific and how the Pacific Islanders overcome them with a big Bula smile," the foreign student added.

Mourer was part of a group of ten students from Canada and the US that attended FNU under the '*Semester in Development: Fiji Program*' which is part of a MoU between FNU and Youth in International Development/Insight Global Education, Canada (IGE). The organisation was originally founded in 2013 as a dedicated student travel initiative, developing unique international internship and study abroad options for students keen to gain international development experience. It has ongoing exchange programmes with High Schools and Universities in Ecuador, Uganda, East-Africa and Fiji.

"I feel very fortunate to have been part of this project. I am still not fully accustomed to the 'Fiji Time' lifestyle but it has defiantly taught me an enormous amount of patience, something that I will take with me for the rest of my life."

The soft spoken student was an intern with the Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF) during the course of his study at FNU.

"I enjoyed my time at RPF, this experience has taught me so much about myself, as well as this side of the world – something I could have never gained anywhere else," said Mourer.

"It was a challenge to be attending the lectures while being an intern but I am thankful to have been given this opportunity."

The University of Michigan student said he will forever cherish the moments exchanged with the Fijian students.

The students who completed their program last month were hosted to a farewell organised by the College.

Acting Dean CEST, Salabogi Mavoia said the initiative was a good platform to encourage greater interaction between local and overseas students.

Mavoia said the partnership also increased FNU's profile in the international arena.

“The courses undertaken by IGE participants were offered in a specially-designed manner,” said Acting Dean Mavoia.

“With this collaboration, we are developing stronger relationship with emerging organisations and networks within and outside the Pacific – as well as North American Higher Education Institutions.”

“Courses offered at FNU under this partnership will get recognition in North American Higher Education Institutions,” Mavoia added.

As a part of the exchange program, the IGE participants engaged in voluntary work with organisations such as Save the Children Fiji, International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN), Reproductive and Family Health Association of Fiji (RFHAF), Citizens Constitutional Forum, Rainbow Pride Foundation (RPF), Fiji Locally-Managed Marine Area while studying at FNU.

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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).