

FNU Gifts authentic fans to graduates while supporting women community projects

To make graduations memorable and support grass roots entrepreneurship development, the Fiji National University (FNU) is gifting an authentic and traditional artefact, iri (fan) to all its graduates.

FNU Alumni Relations Manager, Artilla Devi said that the authentic local gift was selected to mark the important achievement of the graduating students as well as support women in our communities.

“Giving them a tangible item in the form of an iri is a small gesture from the University and one that represents our lifelong connection with the graduating students,” she said.



Leanne Ratulevu and Nalini Devi making the iri for the FNU graduates.

FNU Director Marketing and Communications, Jenies Mudiliar said, “When we were initially mulling the idea of giving our graduates a graduation souvenir, we wanted to it be something close to our culture while at the same time assisting grass root communities with their livelihood. We were environmentally conscious as well and had decided that we will not be going for off the shelf, single use products. The Graduation Iri met all these criteria and was perfect for our tropical graduation setting.”

FNU selected the Ba Women’s forum, which is an umbrella organisation made up of 87 women’s club in Ba to craft the 1400 iri.

Dr Maria Doton, President, Ba Women’s Forum said that the women at the training centre are taught and up-skilled to be empowered and FNU iri was one such product they are specialised in doing.

“Twenty-six women were permanently assigned to do the iris with 3 trainers supervising them. The raw materials used in making these iris were sourced out from the main producers to make sure that the supply is sustainable and regular. The vau (hibiscus fibre) came from Lau, the masi from Vatulele, and the fine magimagi are imported from the Philippines,” said Dr Doton.

To ensure durability the supervisors did quality check to ensure the iris are secured properly.

Dr Doton admits it was not an easy task to meet the order.

“The challenge we faced was the quality of the raw materials, which was beyond our control due to the rainy weather which affected the drying and printing of the masi and vau,” she said.

The well-known dentist and community advocate thanked FNU for giving them the opportunity to make the iris for the 2019 graduates as this economically empowered their members.

“The women have financially gained from the production and this economic empowerment made them contribute to their families’ needs. This opportunity has also given them an avenue to create a specialty product for their future income,” she said.



FNU graduates with their authentic fans gifted by the University.