

FNU Medical College takes a lead role in research

The Fiji National University's (FNU) College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences (CMNHS) is taking a lead role in ensuring its research activities are relevant and responsive to the needs of the government of Fiji and the Pacific Island Countries (PICs) as a whole.

This after the College recently restructured and endorsed an integrated virtual research institute – the Fiji Institute of Pacific Health Research (FIPHR).

World Bank Health Economist based in Suva, Dayo Obure said it was a credible venture to bring research under one umbrella within a country and also the Pacific region.

“From the World Bank perspective, we do a lot of advisory and analytical work within the Pacific Health, and it is good for us to have all this information available (under the College).”

“This is a very good venue to be able to have research (data) available for people,” Obure commented during the first Research Stakeholders Meeting held at the Tanoa Plaza on July 26.

Meanwhile, CMNHS Dean, Dr William May opened the meeting saying, “FIPHR has been designed to support and ensure that our College’s research grows substantially”.

“Under the guidance of our newly appointed Associate Dean Research, Associate Professor Dr Donald Wilson, the ambition of this Institute is strategic action in four priority areas to support Fiji and our neighbouring PICs in:

- sustainably developing healthier communities by focusing on knowledge creation;
- exchange, integration and application through research;
- innovation and research capacity needed to address health and wellness; and
- inform the region’s health outcomes in the future.”

Dr May added that in line with the ambition of the Institute, they had also developed a comprehensive Research Strategic Plan for 2020-2025, which would guide its overall direction and activities over the next five years.

“It is an exciting season for our College as we depart in a planned way from our previous business-as-usual research activities, from which we have learned so much and through which we have achieved so much.”



Dean CMNHS, Dr William May delivers his welcome address

“It is also a significant milestone for the College, a time for innovative changes,” the senior academic highlighted.

According to the College head, this meeting was important because it would open up discussions on how best they could chart the way forward to support the work that they had planned out for the next few years in fulfilment of the Institute’s mandate.

“The mandate is to be a model of excellence in ground-breaking, impactful and ethical health research in the region, generating evidence to address health and wellness and inform the region’s present and future health outcomes.”

“This meeting is intended to provide us all an opportunity to discuss the Institute’s strategic plan, identify linkages and areas to focus on, as well as give us a sense of what kind of contribution and commitment we can expect moving forward.”

The Associate Dean Research, Associate Professor Dr Donald Wilson said, “we would like this to be an inclusive space for dialogue, so we welcome your contributions and suggestions, and identify key health areas for possible funding”.

“Together we have an opportunity in the next five years to do the work that supports a unified vision of health in the Pacific islands in light of the special geographical, social, economic, and health features, specific to island nations and territories,” Dr Wilson remarked.

“I am confident that our discussions here today will be a step forward in achieving our common objective as stated in the vision statement of Healthy Islands in the Pacific, which imposes on us the responsibility to work diligently and innovatively to fulfil the heightened expectations and aspirations of the Healthy Islands vision,” he said.



The Participants of the FIPHR Stakeholders Meeting at Tanoa Plaza.