

Leading by example – VC Healey graduates with second PhD

Fiji National University (FNU) Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey achieved yet another personal milestone in his illustrious academic career, earning his second PhD, from Nottingham Trent University in England.

Professor Healey who is well-known for his advocacy of the importance of continued learning and upgrading of skills and knowledge managed to complete his PhD while managing his personal and professional life of running the country's national university.

"It's been a long journey and many hours spent on my laptop at the kitchen table at Suva Point, but it feels very satisfying. The beauty of modern digital connectivity is that you can remain an active researcher wherever you are in the world," said Professor Healey.

The title of the PhD is "Transnational education: oversexed, oversold and over there?". The title is inspired by the phrase used by British civilians to describe US troops based there during World War II – "Oversexed, overpaid and over here".

It is a PhD by Published Work. It comprises 11 research papers (totalling 90,000 words) on the phenomenon of transnational (cross-border) higher education which were published between 2008 and 2018, plus a 20,000-word introductory chapter demonstrating that the 11 papers constitute a single body of work which makes an original contribution to knowledge.

The introductory chapter was drafted between April 2016 and December 2017 and supervised by Professor David Smith and Professor Matt Henn at Nottingham Trent University. The viva voce was held in Nottingham in May 2018 and the external examiners were Professor Johanna Waters (University of Oxford) and Professor Stephen Wilkins (British University in Dubai).

The PhD was awarded after minor corrections in November 2018 and the graduation ceremony was held at Nottingham Trent University on Wednesday, 17 July 2019.

The graduation ceremony was extra special for the Healey family, as VC Healey graduated two days after his son, Benjamin, who gained a 2:1 honours degree in Law from the University of Sheffield. His younger daughter, Nicola, also graduated from Nottingham Trent University in December 2017 with an MSc in Clinical Psychology.

"It's always the dream of parents to see their sons and daughters graduate and it's been very special to graduate in the same week as Benjamin and from the same university as Nicola 18 months ago," Professor Healey commented.



Fiji National University Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey at his graduation ceremony at Nottingham Trent University. Professor Healey graduated with a PhD in Management, his second PhD.

Professor Healey previously worked at Nottingham Trent University as the Head of the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences and Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International), prior to joining FNU in August 2016.

As the head of FNU, VC Healey said it is important that he not only lead the institution but ensure that his actions remain in tandem with the standards that are being implemented.

According to Professor Healey, it's easy for leaders to expect outcomes when directives are handed down, however, there's a greater reward when leaders become part of the solution and lead in the right direction.

"The importance of continued learning especially for us at University is critical. We have implemented good incentives for staff to undertake training and I'm encouraged to see many staff taking advantage of upskilling through this program," VC Healey said.

FNU Pro Vice-Chancellor Research, Professor Mohini Singh commended Vice-Chancellor Healey on this achievement, adding that the award speaks volumes of leading by example.

Professor Singh said VC Healey's award would certainly encourage other staff to follow in his footsteps.

"This is certainly a great achievement for VC Healey personally and for his family, as well as for the FNU family," stated Professor Singh.

"Leading an institution such as FNU is not easy, and then juggling family time with your research work is demanding. However, Professor Healey has shown us that with hard work and perseverance you can achieve your goals," added Professor Singh.

Professor Healey returned to Fiji over the weekend after a short break.