

## Students get first taste of seafarers training



*(5th from left) General Manager of Alpha Pacific Navigation Ltd, Saoloto Sosene, FMA Acting CEO, Mahesa Abeynayake, Operation Manager of Fiji Ships Cooperation, Lopeti Radrava with the newly-enrolled FMA students.*

**T**hirty newly-enrolled students of Fiji National University's (FNU) Fiji Maritime Academy (FMA) are undertaking a 10-day residential camp to boost team bonding as well as to know more about the programmes they will pursue commencing Semester 1.

FMA Acting Chief Executive Officer, Mahesa Abeynayake said the camp provides students an opportunity to learn more about the maritime industry and the high standards they have to follow to ensure they become disciplined cadets.

The senior academic said students often drop out as they find it difficult to cope with the training programme. Abeynayake said there were also cases where graduates found it difficult to secure employment due to lack of knowledge, skills or not having the right attitude.

The Acting CEO said they followed a rigid selection process whereby students were shortlisted based on the Minimum Qualification Requirements (MQR), before undertaking an aptitude test and interview process.

"The concept of this camp is mainly basic training where students stay at the Academy with the academics and they spend their days according to the designed programme for the 10 days," said Abeynayake.

"Each day the students are expected to wake up by 5am, make their beddings, and be ready for the morning parade. They have breakfast and a short briefing after the parade. After this we take the students to different shipping companies and the wharf."

"We take them to the slipway where they are actually able to see the ship out of the water which they will be able to refer to later during their classes."

Abeynayake said the new students also get to tour the ports, terminals and witness how the containers are loaded and unloaded from the ships.

"Afternoon sessions are allocated for some practical seamanship work and group work. Then students participate in sports activities such as volleyball or rugby," said the Acting CEO.

The students will travel to Nukulau Island this weekend and will spend a night there as part of a team bonding session.

Meanwhile, a participant of the residential camp, Mercy Crystal Naidu said she was looking forward to learning the different aspects of the maritime industry before commencing her Diploma in Nautical Sciences programme next month.

The Lautoka lass said it is difficult to stay away from her family but she was coping well.

"This is the first time for me to be away from my family and the camp is quite strict. It is like a totally new environment for me to adjust in," said Naidu.

"I have always wanted a career that deals with the sea and this is why I have chosen this programme. Even my family and friends are very supportive towards me choosing this programme."

"I am eager to begin the seafarer journey."

This is the fourth year the camp has been organised by the Fiji Maritime Academy.