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## UniFiji Announces Change to Leadership



*Pro-Chancellor, Ambassador Kamlesh Arya.*

Ambassador Kamlesh Arya was appointed the Pro-Chancellor and Chair of Council for a term of three years commencing in January 2020.

Ambassador Arya is well known to the University and the Fijian community. He holds a Bachelor of Arts Degree majoring in Education and Administration and has held several senior positions on boards

and committees in various sectors of the industry. His extensive experience in teaching and his past experience as The University of Fiji’s Registrar and member of Council equips him with a unique perspective on teaching and learning which aligns well with the strategic goals of the University.

He is also one of the trustees of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji and in this position he has contributed enormously towards the initiatives and growth of the Sabha.

He is a former Parliamentarian and Fiji’s Ambassador to Australia. For his service to Fiji and the wider humanity Ambassador Arya was awarded the honour of the Officer of the Order of Fiji in 2015.

The University of Fiji wishes Ambassador Arya all the best for his future endeavors as Pro-Chancellor of the University.



## Acting Vice-Chancellor



*Acting Vice-Chancellor & Dean, Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law, Professor Shaista Shameem.*

Professor Shaista Shameem was appointed the Acting Vice-Chancellor of the University in late April 2020.

Professor Shameem has been the Dean of the Justice Devendra Pathik

School of Law since 2016. She first joined the University in 2009 as Associate Professor in the School of Law and, after a brief period away, rejoined the University in 2015.

Pandit Kamlesh Arya, Chair of Council and Pro-Chancellor said that the Council had appointed Professor Shameem to act as the Vice-Chancellor and take the University through the crisis faced by all higher institutions as a result of the menace of COVID-19.

Pandit Arya said Acting Vice

## Editorial

Professor Shaista Shameem  
Acting Vice Chancellor

This edition of UNIPULSE took a while to publish due to the radical re-designing of the format from a 'bulletin' type to something more sophisticated, in recognition of the 15 year existence and, hopefully, maturity of the University of Fiji.

UNIPULSE represents the 'pulse of the University' and, as such, ought now to contain not only up to the minute news, events, achievements and other academic material but also reflective articles and opinions that showcase us to the world as a vibrant higher educational (*universitas magistrorum et scholarium*) institution with something to say for the benefit of humankind.

Hence this addition to UNIPULSE of an 'Editorial' column where colleagues and guests will be invited to write their reflections on matters that will be of interest to the University Community and to the public more widely.

The new UNIPULSE perspective is particularly apt now- upon the swift and unexpected infliction of the age of the pandemic on humanity- when uncertainty abounds and people's futures, particularly the future of our students, are suddenly no longer determined merely by the formal qualifications we are able to provide them.

The concept of humanity, in keeping with the values of our own University, needs to be emphasised now even more than before as an adjunct to the learning and teaching of the formal programmes.

This weight will provide our graduates with value-added qualifications to place them ahead of other graduates when competing for jobs in the ever-contracting employment market.

The University of Fiji is at a turning point in more ways than one. Due to the Covid-19 pandemic, we were forced to learn and teach on-line.

This was a challenge for staff and students

alike but the courage and determination of the University Community in coping with the new formats, connectivity and and research methodologies is to be admired. Everyone stepped up.

On-line teaching is now, inevitably, a strategy of all universities' business plans. Not only will on-line learning, to the extent we can, teach us new globally significant skills, it will also expand our student numbers - an issue of revenue. Our conditions of work and life, including our academic autonomy, will improve with increased revenue.

The notion of university lecturing as a vocation, and not just a 'job', has been re-configured now with the effects of the pandemic revealing how quickly 'industry', that is, the previous driving force behind education, can collapse.

It is time for us, in celebrating our 15 years, to reflect on an important question for the national interest: 'What, exactly, are we educating our students for'?

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Chancellor Professor Shameem had the requisite qualifications and experience to provide a forward looking higher educational strategy in the new Fijian context. Professor Shameem has Law, Arts and Social Science qualifications. She has a Doctorate of Philosophy (PhD in Sociology) and a Doctorate in Juridical Science (SJD in Law). She is a Master of Arts as well as a Master of Law. She has a post-graduate Leadership qualification from the JFK School of Government, Harvard University.

Professor Shameem previously taught Sociology, Social Anthropology and Women's Studies at The University of Waikato. She was the Director of the Fiji Human Rights Commission from 1999- 2007 and the Ombudsman of Fiji from 2007-2009.

She was a journalist with the Fiji Times and Herald in the early part of her career prior to moving into academia. Professor Shameem worked as a human rights expert for the United Nations Human Rights Council from 2004-2010; in

this capacity she provided advice and recommendations to the Council in the areas of mercenarism, private military and security companies, justice, and human rights institutions.

Professor Shameem is well-published in the areas of Sociology, Women Studies, Law and Human Rights. In 2006 she was the recipient of the Westpac Business Executive Award. Professor Shameem is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts, Manufactures and Commerce.

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## Meet the Deans and Professors

**Justice Devendra Pathik**  
**School of Law**



**Dean: Professor Shaista Shameem**  
Fellow of the Royal Society of Arts  
SJD Waikato, PhD Waikato, LLM  
Auckland, LLB Waikato,  
MA Canterbury, BA S.PAC

**School of Science and  
Technology**



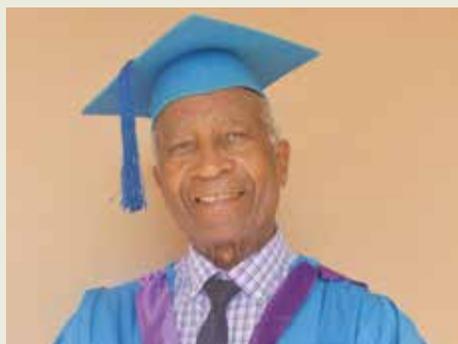
**Dean: Professor Anirudh Singh**  
PhD, Leic, MSc., Auck, BSc., S.Pac.

**School of Business and  
Economics**



**Dean: Professor Ranasinghe  
Amaradasa**  
BSc, MSc PDN, PhD W'gong

**Umanand Prasad School  
of Medicine and Health  
Sciences**



**Dean: Professor Fred Merchant**  
MD Illinois, FACS, BSc.  
(Pharm.)

**School of Humanities  
and Arts**



**Dean: Professor Tupeni Baba**  
Ph.D Macq, MEd. Syd. BA,  
DipEd. NE

**School of Business and  
Economics**



**Professor Ruvendra Nandan**  
PhD Bristol, MA., PGDip.ACC, S.  
Pac., BCom., (Hons) Delhi, FCPA  
(Australia), CA, (Fiji)

**School of Humanities and Arts**



**Professor Subramani**

PhD S.Pac, MA New Brunswick, Dip.Teaching  
Christchurch, BA Christchurch

The People's University  
Work Ready. Global Ready. Future Ready

## COVID -19: Prevention Only, No Cure Yet

By Dr Diva Singh, Senior Lecturer, UPSM



Dr. Diva Singh, Senior Lecturer, Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences

Corona virus Disease or COVID-19 is an infectious disease which is caused by the newly discovered Coronavirus. We all are aware now of its impact all over the world, thus making it a global pandemic virus and deadly to certain groups of people.

Many patients infected by the COVID-19 virus may experience mild to moderate symptoms and recover without special treatment. Yet others are seriously affected and need to be moved to ventilators to improve chances of survival.

The Fijian Ministry of Health and Medical Services (MOHMS) has placed age restrictions on doctors, nurses and health providers working in hospitals. Studies overseas reveal that the vulnerable population is mostly either the very senior citizens or patients who have secondary medical issues such as cancer, diabetes, cardiovascular problems or chronic respiratory problems. These groups are more likely to develop serious symptoms which could result in death. Patients who have a weakened immune system have the highest fatality rate.

Fever is the most common symptom of the virus. Fevers are not necessarily a foreign concept as everyone has had a fever or experienced their body temperature rise at some point or another—mainly due to infections from bacteria or viruses. The normal body temperature can range from 36.5C to 37.2C for a healthy adult. However,

because we are faced with an unusual virus that, to date, has no cure or vaccine, it would be wise to check out all fevers and colds and coughs with your doctor. University staff can also contact doctors at UPSM for any additional information that they may wish to receive on Covid-19.

The most effective and practical way to prevent or slow down the transmission is to be well informed about the virus and how it spreads. Everyone has to protect themselves and others from infection by washing hands thoroughly (20 seconds is recommended) or by using an alcohol-based sanitiser. It is very important to follow a proper hand washing technique. MOHMS gives a good demonstration of how this should be done.

While there is still much uncertainty with respect to the impact(s) of COVID-19, the safety and wellbeing of the University of Fiji's staff and students remains the top priority with COVID-19 sweeping the globe.

As a result of this unprecedented pandemic and in line with the directives provided by the Government, the University of Fiji is very supportive and has implemented a measure that is designed to keep colleagues safe. All employees and guests reporting to the two University campuses will be screened for their temperature which is taken as a precautionary measure to monitor and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

Other measures have also been taken to protect the University staff from the dreaded Coronavirus. These are: the widespread use of hand sanitizers, implementation of online teaching to limit face to face interaction, and strict social distancing while on campus.

The University of Fiji urges staff to help to prevent Covid-19 from winning the global war that has been declared against it. The University of Fiji believes that fighting COVID 19 is our joint responsibility. Staying safe and healthy at all times is the best policy.

“The single biggest threat to man's continued dominance on the planet is the virus” (Joshua Lederberg).



## Safe Distance with UniFiji



Mr. Jone Veisamasama

The University of Fiji is introducing a new programme called “Safe Distance with UniFiji” (SDU) themed Bringing the University Experience to your home.

The Registrar, Ms. Karishma Mani stated that the University is concerned about their student's well-being and through the Safe distance programme the students will be provided with the necessary support during this complex and rapidly evolving global situation.

Current COVID-19 restrictions have placed a huge window for students to be affected by various factors that could impede their studies and academic performance. Issues such as decreased motivation, limited connectivity, and psychosocial issues like depression, anxiety, trauma, as a result, harmful experiences are just some of the issues that the students maybe going through.

The Counsellor and author of the programme, Mr. Jone Veisamasama said that with the restrictions on movement, the University would be able to better assist its students through SDU programme by providing the information for necessary coping through these difficult times as well as offer alternatives and solutions to issues that the students are facing in their homes.

“Dissemination of vital information related to their emotional well-being is the major step that this programme will take given the fact that our contact with these

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students has been vastly reduced. The “Safe Distance with UniFiji” programme looks to utilize online platforms to offer creative and fun ways to disseminate this information in ways or mediums that would appeal to the younger generation e.g. Social Media, Online Free Resources and creative multimedia presentations,” he stated.

He said that the programme was aimed at providing a fun and interactive way of helping students embrace their ability as young adults to prioritize what was important for their academic growth and having them build on setting realistic and achievable goals for themselves.

“It is also aimed at providing ways to get their mindset and thinking out of the confines and stresses of “isolation mentality” and into a better, outward-looking, and self-soothing mindset. Using avenues that appeal to the younger demographic and offering solutions that the younger generation would be more inclined to would be the medium in which this programme will be carried forward via the internet e.g. Livestreams, V/logs, zoom conferences, Video Links and free streams, etc,” he concluded.

The University has assured students that there would be no drop in the quality of education offered and the Council has allowed students until the end of this year for fee payments.

ND

## Wellness at Samabula Campus

After the COVID-19 pandemic lockdown, Lent and then Ramadan, wellness activities at Samabula Campus were held off and the activities resumed on Wednesday, 27 June, 2020.

Staff went through warm ups and stretches before enjoying a game of volleyball and even without a volley net, staff had fun, keeping in mind the physical distancing restrictions. After an hour of wellness from 3:30pm to 4:30pm, staff had a cool down session followed by stretching exercises led by the Head of Campus, Mr. Joseph Camillo.

Planned fun activities for the campus were walks, yoga, gardening and aerobics.

Wellness is held on Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays for an hour.



Suva Wellness team from left: Joseph, Laveti, Nikhat, Sonam, Wati, Nitika, Mereoni and Nisha.

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## UniFiji Introduces Bachelor of Nursing Honours Programme



The University of Fiji commenced the Bachelor of Nursing with Honours programme from Semester 1, 2020.

The former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang stated that the programme was initiated after reviewing the needs of the stakeholders in the country and linking it to the national priorities.

“I have spoken to the medical superintendent of Lautoka Hospital, to the nursing fraternity and members of the Fiji Nursing Council, to the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Health and Medical Services who have said that there was a need for more nurses in Fiji. Our nursing programme is unique as we will be working very closely with the hospitals and the communities and, our nurses will be trained to provide evidence based solutions to health problems and they will have a strong research focus” she explained.

The Nursing Department coordinator, Mrs. Iloi Rabuka said that the Bachelor of Nursing with Honours programme was designed to specifically train nursing students to adopt and acquire the role of

a professional nurse with prerequisite knowledge and skills, compassion and commitment.

“A major portion of the programme includes practical work where specific nursing competencies are to be attained and mastered. Students will also have the opportunity to undertake research projects to solve health problems using evidence based science. To provide other necessary skills we will also incorporate Information Technology, English for Health Professional, and Legal frame work for Practice into the curriculum” she said.

In addition, the University also commenced the Master of Nursing programme in the 2020.

Professor Chang stated that the graduates of the Master of Nursing programme would be trained to practise advanced nursing knowledge and skills in specialised Health Care.

“They will be trained to critically assess and provide relevant and practical nursing solutions. They will apply knowledge, skills, and evidence based science research to meet the ever changing health needs of the population. Our graduates will be able to work in any global setting and will be prepared to take up roles as senior and executive nurses,” she noted.

Numerous applications were received for the Bachelor of Nursing and Master of Nursing programmes. The first cohort of students for the Bachelor of Nursing programme has commenced studies from Semester 1, 2020.

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# UniFiji Celebrates 15

## Chronological Events

### 2004

- UniFiji was established in December 2004, by Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji.

### 2005

- Pundit Vishnu Deo Memorial hall was refurbished at a cost of FJ\$500,000, providing a 500 seat lecture theatre for UniFiji students
- Pandit Bhuwan Dutt appointed the Foundation Pro-Chancellor.
- Multi Stakeholder Council constituted to govern the operations of UniFiji
- Dr. Ganesh Chand appointed the Interim Chief Executive Officer
- Professor Rajesh Chandra appointed the Foundation Vice-Chancellor
- The University officially opened doors to 177 students offering studies at Foundation, Certificate, Diploma and Degree level programmes in Commerce, Science and Arts in 2005.
- Rajendra-Sahay Trust contributes \$50,000.00 to purchase the new 12 acres of land adjacent to the College for the University's use.

### 2006

- Dedication Ceremony held in which the Prime Minister, Honourable Laisenia Qarase was the Chief Guest
- Signing of Memorandum of Understanding between Ministry of Education and UniFiji which granted recognition to the University
- Dr. Umanand Prasad made a public announcement of a \$1,000,000.00 donation towards the Medical School.
- Ms. Sarojini Pillay appointed as the Registrar
- Centre for Gender Research established

### 2007

- Centre for Indigenous Studies launched by the Interim Minister for Fijian Affairs, Culture and Heritage, Provincial Development and multi

Ethnic Affairs, Ratu Epeli Gavidi Ganilau

- Diploma in Fijian Language and Culture and degree programmes with a major in Fijian Language and Culture commenced under the Foundation Director, Mr. Filipe Bole.
- Gandhi-Tappoo Centre for Writing, Ethics and Peace Studies launched
- Centre for Energy, Environment and Sustainable Development launched.

### 2008

- His Excellency, Ratu Josefa Iloilo installed as first Chancellor of the University
- First cohort of 49 graduands.
- School of Law was established in 2008
- UniFiji Student's Association formed
- Umanand Prasad School of Medicine was established in 2008.
- Accounting programmes received accreditation from Fiji Institute of Accountants
- First government grant allocation

### 2009

- Umanand Prasad School of Medicine building officially opened by Prime Minister, Honourable Voreqe Bainimarama
- Second graduation was held on 3 April 2009, graduating 58 graduates; 3 with Diplomas, 20 with Bachelor's degrees, 32 with Postgraduate Diplomas and 3 with Masters Degrees
- The Foundation programme gained recognition from Ministry of Education.
- Construction of Library and Information centre began
- New programmes Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching (PGDT), Postgraduate Studies in Educational Leadership/ Master of Education in Educational Leadership Doctor of Philosophy in Education

### 2010

- Bachelor of Law programme approved by Board of Legal Education
- UniFiji Counselling Service established
- Postgraduate Certificate in International Relations, Postgraduate programme in Governance and Public Policy, Master of Teaching Degree launched
- Master of Business Administration programme launched

### 2011

- Ratu Epeli Nailatikau installed as the second Chancellor of the University
- All documentation for recognition by Fiji Higher Education Commission completed
- Facelift for the Administration block at Saweni Campus
- Purchase of generator as substantive power source during power failures
- Biology, Physics and Chemistry programmes added to the degree level Science programmes
- University website revamped
- Strategic Plan 2011-2014 endorsed
- MoU signed between University of Waikato and School of Law
- Fiji Institute of Accountants review conducted on Accounting programme and positive response was received from them
- UniFiji Decree
- UniFiji recognition by Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC)

### 2012

- Ambassador Kamlesh Arya appointed as the Registrar.
- Doctor of Education programme commenced
- Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice commenced
- UniFiji signed an MoU with University of Calcutta

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# years of Existence

- 2013**
- First cohort of 33 students graduated from Umanand Prasad School of Medicine in December and absorbed into the government hospitals
  - Bachelor of Environmental Science developed and was offered 2014
  - Introduction of Master of Laws programme
  - Commenced Sir Moti Tikaram Memorial Lecture
  - Student sports facilities were upgraded which included soccer field, rugby provisions, cricket pitch, volley ball and netball space. Student meal provision was extended with the expansion of cafeteria.
- 2014**
- Master of Law and Master of Nursing programme introduced
  - Ground breaking ceremony for Suva Campus development
  - UniFiji received two year provisional registration from Fiji Higher Commission
  - Basic Conversational English for Beginners launched
  - Centre of Smart Technologies (CS) Short Courses commenced
  - UniFiji invested around \$20,000 in equipping a Networking Lab for research and Postgraduate studies.
  - Master of Renewable Energy Management programme launched
  - McDonald's Eco Contest Quiz- numerous Secondary Schools took part
  - Fiji Institute of Accountants formally recognize and accredited Accounting programmes
  - Teaching Sanskrit programme launched and was offered 2015.
- 2015**
- Honourable Dr. Mahendra Reddy, Minister for Education, officiated at the 10th anniversary celebrations.
  - Pacific-American Climate Fund (PACAM) with funding from the United States Agency for International Development (USAID) commenced
  - The University of Fiji Alumni Association established
- 2016**
- First Workshop on Professional Writing for Career and Business was held.
  - Online Short Course on Food Security and Climate Change was developed and conducted
  - Official launch of Centre of Renewable Energy (CORE) and Masters programme in Renewable Energy Management (REM)
  - A two-day Regional Renewable Energy (RE) stakeholder conference was organized by Department of Science in partnership with the Pacific Islands Development Forum Secretariat (PIDF)
  - The University in 2016 expended about \$5M to purchase and upgrade IT Services, furniture and fittings, and books.
  - UniFiji Registration with FHEC
- 2017**
- UniFiji free bus initiative commenced
  - Commencement of Strategic Plan 2017-2021
  - International Conference to Commemorate the Centennial of the Abolition of Indian Indentureship (CCAI) at UniFiji
  - Westpac ATM launch
  - COP23 Awareness session in the lead up to Fiji's presidency at COP23 in Germany
  - BEMA launch at Samabula Campus
  - MoU with Post Fiji to help students with fees payment
  - Student recruitment visitation to Northern Division for the first time
  - Launch of the Student Ambassador Programme
  - Pacific Medical Students Association
- 2018**
- Hosted Commonwealth Youth Forum
  - Zika project launch in collaboration with Ministry of Health, Fiji and The University of Hamburg
  - Nursing bridging programme extended to the South Pacific
  - Chartered Practising Accountants Australia and New Zealand accredited the Bachelor of Commerce in Accounting programme
  - UniFiji's first PhD graduate
- 2019**
- High emphasis on Community
  - UniFiji Signs MoU with Pacific Islands Development Forum (PIDF) and United Nations Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR)
  - UniFiji's second PhD graduate
  - Inauguration of Institute of Hindi Language and Culture Studies
  - New Slogan for UniFiji- Work Ready. Global Ready. Future Ready
  - UniFiji moving towards branding and standardization
- 2020**
- New programmes such as Bachelor of Nursing with Honours, Bachelor of Commerce in Resource Economics and Management, Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism Studies and Bachelor of Laws with Honours commenced
  - 15 years celebration
- Launch
- Solar Power Project for Schools in Northern division
  - Participated in Europe Day Quiz
  - Offered Hindi short course
  - Green Campus Initiative Launched
  - MoU signed with Pacific Islands Development Forum

## New Programmes in Law

The University of Fiji commenced offering the Bachelor of Laws (LLB) with Honours and Certificate in Fundamentals of Law in 2020.

The former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang stated that the Honours programme was an addition to the Bachelor of Law Programme. The Honours programme is an year long programme. The students who wish to undertake LLB Honours programme have a choice of doing all specialist courses or specialist courses plus research.

She further stressed that the Bachelor of Law programme was offered at both the Saweni and Samabula Campuses in 2020.

“Saweni Campus will be a campus of growth.’ she explained.

Professor Shaista Shameem, Dean of the Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law said that the Bachelor of Laws with Honours programme furnished candidates with

knowledge and skills at a more advanced level than the normal LLB (which is a 4 year programme) to gain an advantage in future legal practice.

“Graduates will be more equipped to approach challenges in a competitive legal environment. The programme provides extensive study through 4 additional and advanced law subjects and helps candidates obtain broader viewpoints for professional applications,” she explained.

The Certificate in the Fundamentals of Law provides a pathway into the LLB programme. It is designed at the Year 13

level and will prepare students for future legal studies by focusing on law-specific subjects.

It provides a solid foundation in subjects such as introduction to law, legal research, English for legal purposes and law and technologies by using alternative teaching and learning methodologies to make learning easier, practical and more appropriate for students’ competencies.

The programme will encourage students to take up internship opportunities to have first-hand experience of a real life legal environment.



Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law students.

QO

## Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism Studies Programme

The Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism Studies commenced from Semester 1, 2020.

The former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang noted that the School of Business and Economics staff had spoken to various industries to initiate the Bachelor of Commerce in Tourism Studies programme.

“We are benchmarking other Universities overseas where tourism is in demand and looking at what they are doing experientially. One of the things we have incorporated in our tourism programme is experiential learning,” she explained.

In addition, throughout the programme, the students will be working in hotels to gain knowledge of the service industry.

Tourism Studies will be able to equip and train students to plan, lead, organize and control resources for effective and efficient tourism operations in Fiji and the South Pacific. They will be able to create,

apply, and evaluate marketing strategies for tourism destinations and organizations and apply principles of sustainability to the practice of tourism in the local and global context.

The graduates will also be able to demonstrate commitment to ethical practices of tourism and interpret and evaluate tourism as a phenomenon and as a business system. They will learn to contextualize tourism within broader cultural, environmental, political and economic dimensions of society.

QO

## UniFiji Launches PhD by Publication

The University of Fiji’s new programme, Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) by Publication, commenced in 2020.

The programme is ideally suited for academics who have successfully completed their Master’s Degree in a dedicated area of research and researchers in industry who have research publications as part of their work and have not been able to put aside time to do a traditional type PhD. This

mode of PhD provides an alternative.

The former Vice-Chancellor, Professor Sushila Chang said that the programme was unlike the traditional PhD by dissertation. In this case the candidate’s thesis was largely based on a series of peer-reviewed academic papers which have been published or accepted for publication. She noted that the aim of the programme as it is for other PhD’s is to find novel approaches of integrating professional and academic knowledge.

The ‘traditional’ PhD thesis usually forms an integrated whole with a commonly required length of some 80,000 to 100,000 words. It is very common that the traditional PhD candidate, will, upon conferment of his PhD convert the novel innovations or discoveries into publications. In many universities PhD by thesis candidates, besides the thesis, are also required to publish 3 or more papers in ranked journals.

“PhD by Publication divides an often overwhelming research project into smaller, more manageable sections, each with deadlines, which may provide a clear, outcome-driven framework for the project. Candidates also receive assistance

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from their supervisor, peer reviewers and editors in producing those publications. The unique aspect of the PhD by publication is that completing publications progressively throughout the candidature may ease some

of the pressure involved in preparing one final submission for examination,” she noted.

The programme also makes students think

strategically and prepares them well for the future because they are publishing as they research, unlike the PhD by thesis where the research is usually published later.

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## “Collaboration amidst Crisis” shows that UniFiji continues to Strive!

The University of Fiji’s School of Science and Technology signed a research collaboration agreement with Linköping University (LiU), on Thursday, May 28, 2020.

The agreement was signed by the Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem who noted the importance of the agreement to UniFiji.

Professor Anirudh Singh, Dean of the School of Science and Technology said that the collaboration had several benefits for the School and the University community at large.

“This research on policy will be of great relevance to Fiji and the region. UniFiji has been progressively strengthening its teaching and research in renewable energy and the environment through developing its Masters in Renewable Energy Management (MREM) and Postgraduate Diploma in Energy and Environment (PGDEE)

programmes. This collaboration will broaden our understanding of the policy needs and implications of these areas of sustainable development,” he said.

The collaboration agreement was a result of the project “National implementation of global goals: Coherence between Nationally Determined Contributions (NDC) and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG)”. The project will be implemented in four countries including Fiji, Sweden, Australia and Columbia.

The project responds to calls from the scientific community to focus on national

implementation plans and understand domestic factors influencing climate ambition. It also responds to calls from policy practitioners in the case countries and international organizations for best practices and tools for enhancing policy coherence.

The main objective of the project is to enhance effectiveness of policy coherence efforts by countries in their NDC and SDG work. The project will also seek to provide input to the annual UN High Level Political Forum on the implementation of 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.



*From Left: Ms. Priyatma Singh, Professor Anirudh Singh, former lecturer Dr. Ajay Singh and Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem.*

◊

## UniFiji awarded new writing contract by international publisher

An international publisher has awarded a second book publishing contract to a UniFiji-based academic within two years.

The new book will be titled Biomass and Biofuels for Power Generation and Transportation, and is expected to be produced by July 2021. Published by the London-based Institute of Physics (IOP), it will be available globally as an e-book and in print form at most major international book outlets.

“The award of such contracts to UniFiji academics is a sure sign that the university is gaining visibility internationally as a credible academic institution. It is proof that small does not necessarily mean lack of ability” said author and Dean of the School of Science and Technology, Professor

Anirudh Singh.

The Acting Vice-Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem said that the title of the book and its subject matter firmly places The University of Fiji on the intellectual map for innovative work on alternative fuel generation.

“There are very few experts in the region who are undertaking research of this nature and the University is proud that one of them, namely Professor Anirudh Singh, is a member of The University of Fiji Community,” she said. The 300-page reference and postgraduate text will provide a comprehensive coverage of the theory and practice of the use of biomass and biofuels for power generation and transportation on the global scale.

With enhanced interest in biomass as a source of energy, this book will provide an up-to-date, coherent reference text that is relevant to the needs of industry and

academia alike. The book will come in four parts, and will include a whole section on the sustainable energy needs of developing nations, including small island developing countries such as Fiji. A special feature will be a detailed analysis of the role of energy policy in the implementation of bioenergy projects.

Singh’s first book by IOP, titled Talking Renewables, a Renewable Energy Primer for Everyone, was released in March 2018, and provides a clear and factual picture of the status and capabilities of renewable energy today. It is non-technological in nature, but contains enough mention of the science and technology to enable readers to investigate further. The productive output from the UniFiji Science Department has not been limited to authored publications only. During the intervening two years, the academic team within the Department of Science led the production of an edited

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book published by Springer Nature. The collaboration between the UniFiji team and academic staff from the University of the South Pacific and Fiji National University, coupled with editorial support from the University of Southern Queensland's School of Agricultural, Computational and Environmental Sciences led to the publication of the edited book titled *Translating the Paris Agreement into Action in the Pacific* by the global publisher. This reference text provides a unique insight into how a country contributes to the GHG emissions reductions target contained in the Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC) assigned to it under the Paris Agreement.

The book was released internationally in February this year, and is available in all formats from Springer Nature outlets world-wide.

The contract between IOP Publishing Ltd and Professor Singh was signed on June 3rd.



## Patel Defies Odds to Pursue Passion



*Mr. Sagar Patel.*

Mr. Sagar Patel, UniFiji Alumni and Group Accountant at Ray Pharmaceuticals did not have it easy when it came to pursuing his dream.

Born in India, he moved to Fiji at the tender age of 12. Speaking very little English, he had a tough time adjusting to Fiji's education system and culture.

He enrolled into Central Primary School and completed his Secondary education at Central College in Lautoka.

Mr. Patel completed his first Diploma in Mechanical Engineering from Fiji Institute of Technology and entered the workforce. While working he realized that the engineering career was not moving fast enough for him and he needed a boost in his career.

## UniFiji Hosts Lecture on Declining Productivity of Soils of the Sugarcane Belt of Fiji

The University of Fiji in collaboration with the Sugar Research Institute of Fiji, the Government of Fiji and Fiji Sugar Corporation hosted a lecture on "Declining Productivity of Soils of the Sugarcane Belt of Fiji and Strategies to Overcome and Sustain Productivity in the Future", on January 21, 2020.

The lecture highlighted the environment constraints, water availability, soil fertility decline, soil health and climate change as constraints to sugarcane productivity.

Dr. Viliame Savou, one of the attendees of the lecture, noted that soil health was a crucial component for increasing cane productivity.

"More research and resources need to be outsourced to these areas to improve cane

productivity in Fiji. However, the farmers and stakeholders in the audience were well aware that the greatest threat to the sugar industry is the non-renewal of farming leases. I believe this is something that the government of the day should tackle seriously if the sugar industry is to survive," he stated.

Dr. Savou commented that the lecture was a motivation for students and staff who were interested in research.

"Soil is a finite resource, therefore, investigative measures need to be undertaken to improve soil health in Fiji, not only for the sugar industry, but for the whole agriculture sector which Fiji heavily relies on for sustenance and income," he said.

The lecture was attended by various stakeholders including Sugar Research Institute of Fiji, Fiji Sugar Corporation, Fiji Meteorological Services, Fiji National University, Ministry of Sugar, farmers and students.



With that goal in mind, he enrolled into Bachelor of Commerce programme majoring in Accounting and Information Technology at The University of Fiji.

Mr. Patel noted that his experience while studying at UniFiji was an educational and fun filled one. During his three years, he was part of the cricket team that won the inter-tertiary games for cricket.

He stated that his qualification in Accounting helped him tremendously in his career.

"My qualification in Accounting has given me the opportunity to use skills including leadership, problem-solving, team building and communication skills to work directly with people from all works of life," he stated.

Furthermore, Mr. Patel commented that a career in Accounting has fantastic growth potential.

"Having begun as an entry level Internal Auditor, I have moved up the ranks in just a few years. Today, after staying in the Internal Audit field, I am responsible to lead Accounts, Internal Audit, Information Technology and Human Resources in my current position," he explained.

Fondly looking down memory lane, he said that UniFiji shaped his life well.

"UniFiji is the place where you finally transit out of High School into a completely new setting full of challenges and opportunities. It's a place where you will strengthen your skills, meet amazing new people and pursue

your passion," he stressed.

Sagar Patel graduated from UniFiji in 2012 and his younger brother also studied Accounting and Information Technology at UniFiji.



## Professor Chang's Contract Terminated

The Chairperson of The University of Fiji Council, Ambassador Kamlesh Arya said that on behalf of the Council he had written to Professor Sushila Chang regarding the cancellation of her work permit by the Department of Immigration on 24th March, 2020 and the impact of this directive on her employment with the University.

Ambassador Arya said that Professor Chang had been informed that due to the Immigration directive which also declared her a 'prohibited immigrant for an indefinite period' she could not fulfil the terms of her employment contract with the University.

Accordingly, her contract was deemed to have been terminated. Professor Chang had breached the Lautoka confined area borders and flown to Australia during the lockdown. Pro-Chancellor had also apologized to the Prime Minister and the nation on behalf of the University for the actions of the Vice-Chancellor.



## The Coffee Industry in Fiji: The University of Fiji Connection



*Dr. Rajnesh Sant*

The University of Fiji Council member Dr. Rajnesh Sant and his business partner Mr. Aiaz Hamid are on the brink of a new agro-development that will revive an old crop which has been neglected in Fiji for decades, not to mention more than a century, namely coffee.

Coffee trees were originally grown by

colonial planters but had been left to grow wild for at least a century until Coffee Farms Fiji (CFF), whose directors are Dr. Sant and Mr. Hamid, re-discovered them on the old plantations in the far reaches of Fiji.

Coffee is more popular now than ever before and the initiative proposed by CFF is likely to rejuvenate a favourite drink as a local beverage instead of an imported one.

Unifiji's Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the CFF initiative had positive future prospects as it complied with sustainable requirements in a new agri-product. Instead of reliance on mono-cultures and single industries as in the past to the exclusion of diversity, the new coffee venture allowed farmers to grow a crop that was not only popular and healthy but also likely to become a good export for Fiji.

According to CFF's Prospectus, coffee has the potential to change the economic canvas of Fiji. The venture is unusual in that it follows the principles of cooperation. "It would empower the most marginalized farmers of Fiji- those in the highlands. The industry employees are wide ranging, including women, youth, men, baristas,

coffee shop owners, small and large scale farmers, processors, downstream and upstream businesses, exporters and policy makers," the Prospectus noted.

The Robusta and Liberica coffee beans, found in the wilderness in Fiji, are drought tolerant given their extensive penetrating roots.

The CFF Prospectus also states that there are additional advantages in growing and harvesting these two varieties. "Both species of coffee are pest and disease resistant hence limiting the use of pesticides. The farms are rain fed, avoiding demands on ground fresh water reserves. Coffee farms act as carbon sinks to mitigate the effects of global warming. Coffee grows best on hillsides which are otherwise not often amenable to agriculture use."

Professor Shameem said the special interest that the University had shown with respect to CFF's venture was because one of the directors was also a member of the Council. Since coffee was one of the most popular drinks in the world and, moreover, had the possibility of being grown and harvested sustainably, it was inevitable that CFF's progress would be followed with great interest by the University Community.

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## Standard Operating Procedures Workshops

The Office of the Registrar held Standard Operating Procedures Workshops on May 21 and June 19, 2020.

The workshop on May 21 was headed by the Registrar, Ms. Karishma Mani and the Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem.

Speaking at the event, Professor Shameem highlighted the importance of the Registrar's Office calling them the "engine room" of the University.

She said that the Office dealt with students' matters among other critical work at the University and, as such, having a Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) meant that work would be done more efficiently and effectively while reducing wastage.

The Registrar, Ms. Karishma Mani reiterated the importance of the workshop to the attendees and advised them of the techniques they would be using in the workshops that will eventuate into SOPs.

The first whole day workshop was well received by the staff.

The second workshop was held on June 19 and all sections under the Office of the Registrar presented the first draft of the Standard Operating Procedures. The staff analyzed the procedures presented to identify the gaps and proposed changes to enhance the document.

The Registrar emphasized that standard

procedures provide a way to communicate and apply consistent standards and practices.

The Office of the Registrar's staff is prioritizing standard operating procedures to enhance quality and maintain consistency in the service they provided at the University.



*From Left sitting: The Registrar, Ms. Karishma Mani, Executive Director Finance, Mr. Ravineet Sami, Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem, Assistant Registrar, Ms. Nathasha Mudaliar  
Back from left: Mr. Shane Prasad, Ms. Karishma Naidu, Ms. Shweta Kumar, Ms. Surekha Mishra, Ms. Mala Devi, Ms. Kamla Prasad, Ms. Roziya Aslam and Mr. Jone Veisamasama.*

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## प्रोफेसर चांग की तुई बा से भेट-वार्ता

कुलपति, प्रोफेसर सुशीला चांग ने, समुदायों के प्रति विश्वविद्यालय की प्रतिबद्धता को ध्यान में रखते हुए, 24 नवंबर, 2019 मंगलवार को तुई बा, रातू फिलिमोनी लागीवोला नाले से मुलाकात की।

विश्वविद्यालय के आपसी सहयोग योजना 2017-2021 के तहत, अच्छे सामुदायिक संबंधों को बनाने और बनाए

रखने पर विचार-विमर्श किया एवं जोर दिया गया।

प्रोफेसर सुशीला चांग के साथ, **ITK 302 - वनुआ लैंड एण्ड द पीपल**, पाठ्यक्रम के 35 छात्र, साथ में iTaukei अध्ययन केन्द्र के निदेशक श्री उसैया गौनावोउ और व्याख्याता सुश्री सलोमे रोकुता भी गए थे।

स्टाफ और छात्रों ने तुई बा को सेवूसेवू प्रस्तुत किया। इसके बाद प्रोफेसर चांग ने तुई बा का आदर सम्मान करते हुए अपना परिचय दिया।

उन्होंने कहा कि वे फीजी देश और देशवासियों से प्यार करती हैं। उन्होंने विश्वविद्यालय के आगामी कार्यक्रमों के बारे में बताया और यह भी बताया कि समुदाय के अभावों को दूर करने में यह कैसे मदद कर सकता है।

उन्होंने आगे जोर देते हुए कहा कि यूनिफीजी का सौभाग्य होगा यदि वह सम्भव तरीकों से समुदायों की मदद कर सकें और सुझाव दिया कि सम्भावित सहयोगों पर बा समुदाय और फीजी विश्वविद्यालय के नेताओं के बीच इस प्रकार की बात-चीत चलती रहे, तो यूनिफीजी आभारी रहेगा। प्रोफेसर चांग ने भी तुई और ग्राम नेताओं को विश्वविद्यालय का दौरा करने के लिए आमन्त्रित किया।

तुई बा, रातू फिलिमोनी लागीवोला नाले ने सेवूसेवू को स्वीकार करते हुए यूनिफीजी के स्टाफ और छात्रों को, उनसे मिलने आने के लिए धन्यवाद दिया। उन्होंने दृढ़ता से सुझाव देते हुए कहा कि वे और उनका समुदाय यूनिफीजी का पूरी तरह से समर्थन करते हैं और सहयोग देने के लिए तैयार हैं।

छात्रों को इस समारोह में भाग लेने और तुई बा को अपना परिचय देने का अवसर प्राप्त हुआ। ये छात्र ज्यादातरसूवा और अन्य मट्टीपों के थे और इनकी परम्पराएं बा में प्रचलित परम्पराओं से कई मायनों में भिन्न थीं।

सुश्री रोकुता ने कहा कि छात्रों के लिए तुई बा से मिलने और सीखने का यह एक उत्तम अवसर था।

स्टाफ और छात्रों का अपने समुदाय में इतना भव्य स्वागत करने के लिए, विश्वविद्यालय तुई बा और ग्राम प्रधानोंके प्रति आभार व्यक्त करता है।

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## E sikova na Momo na Tui Ba o Parovesa Chang

E a sikova na Momo na Tui Ba, Ratu Filimoni Lagivola Nale o Parovesa Chang ena Tusiti 24 ni Noveba, 2019. Na veisiko qo e tiki ni tuvatuva ni Yunivesiti me cakacaka vata vakavoleka kei na vanua se veitikitiko vakavolivolita.

Na peleni ni vakayaco-ka ni 2017-2021 e vakabibitaka na kena tarai cake ka maroro'i na veimaliwai vinaka kei ira na itikitiko vakavolivolita se vanua.

Era tomani Parovesa Chang ena veisiko qo e le 35 na gonevuli ni kosi na ITK302, na nodra qasenivuli o Salome Rokuta kei na ivukevuke ni Daireketa, o Usaia Gaunavou.

A vakacabori nodra sevusevu na qasenivuli kei na gonevuli vua na Momo na Tui Ba ka qai soli na gauna vei Parovesa Chang me vakaveikilaitaki koya ka vakaraitaka na nona rokova ka doka na itikitiko vakaturaga.

A vakaraitaka ni taleitaka na vanua o Viti kei ira na lewenivanua. A vosa tale ga me baleti ira na porokaramu ni Yunivesiti sa tuvani oti tu kei na gaunisala me bonati kina na laqa e tiko ena veivolekati ni Yunivesiti kei na vanua se veitikitiko vakavolivolita.

E vakuria ka vakamatatataka ni na marautaka na Yunivesiti me vukea na veitikitiko vakavolivolita ka vakatura na veitaratara tawamudu rawa ena kedrau maliwa na Yunivesiti ni Viti kei ira na iliuliu ni veitikitiko vakavolivolita. A sureta tale ga na Momo na Tui Ba kei ira na iliuliu vakavanua kei na veitikitiko vakavolivolita mera sikova na Yunivesiti.

A ciqoma na Tui Ba, o Ratu Filimoni Lagivola Nale na isevusevu ka vakavinavinakataki iratou na qasenivuli kei na gonevuli ena nodra veisiko. Era vakatura vakaukauwa na Tui Ba kei na vanua vakaturaga ni na tokona vakataucoko ni Yunivesiti ni Viti ka sa tu vakarau me cakacaka vata kaya.

Era vakaveikilaitaki ira tale ga na gonevuli vua na Momo na Tui Ba ka ra vakaitavi tale ga ena veiqaravi vakavanua. E le levu vei ira na gonevuli qo era cavutu mai Suva kei na veiyanyanu tale eso ka duidui na ivakarau ni veiqaraqaravi vakavanua mai nodra vanua kei na kena e taurivaki ena veivanua e Ba.

Vakaraitaka o Ms. Rokuta ni sa dua na gauna vinaka vei ira na gonevuli mera vuli mai vei Tui Ba.

A vakavinavinaka na Yunivesiti vei Tui Ba kei na Turaganikoro ena nodra kidavaki ena yalovinaka na dauniveituberi kei na gonevuli.

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