



# The University of Fiji

(An Entity of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji)



Issue 1 | 2022

## APS Annual Convention Considers Education

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji Professor Shaista Shameem said that the educational curriculum in Fiji needed serious revision so that young people could learn the values of compassion, integrity, advocacy for the public good and respect and consideration for others while studying subjects like English, Maths, Sciences and other traditional subjects at school.

Speaking as Chief Guest at the 2022 Arya Convention and 105th Annual General Meeting of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji (APS) at the Lautoka Arya Samaj Primary School on Sunday 22 May, 2022, Professor Shameem said it was important to remember that the Sabha was the only community organisation in Fiji that offered education from pre-school, all the way to University. Professor Shameem said the Sabha's Gurukul Primary School at Saweni Lautoka was the first substantive school for the children of girmitiyas. It was established in 1918 and coincided with the formation of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji.

The concept of Gurukul education taught in the first APS schools was the epitome of the ancient Indian philosophy of learning where students lived among their mentors and received not only formal education but also human values and life skills under their guidance, Professor Shameem said. The human values that Gurukul taught were humanity, love, consideration and empathy which were offered to students simultaneously with subjects such as language, science, mathematics, humanities and arts. In the Gurukul system of education self-learning was emphasised, along with discipline and critical thinking. This unique combination in Gurukul made students mentally and physically fit and helped in personality development by increasing confidence, mindfulness and intellect, Professor Shameem said.

She said that the type of education that was represented by Gurukul was much needed by the world today in the face of pandemics, natural disasters, climate change and conflict. For that reason The University of Fiji had decided that it would focus on Gurukul principles and methodology of learning in all its programmes and courses. Professor Shameem said that students needed to combine gurukul with conventional subjects in the 21st century in order to graduate and lead fulfilling lives with a sense of social responsibility. In its Strategic Plan 2022-2026 the University emphasised holistic education as a journey by also embracing the Drua canoe voyage. A combination of Gurukul with Drua Voyage represented the new focus in learning at the University as a journey in holistic education.

Professor Shameem said the APS Community had the responsibility to ensure that the students who entered APS primary schools would learn values that would allow them to see the APS educational system all the way to University as part of the same continuum of enlightened education which was rigorous at the same time. This unique perspective would allow young people to acquire a fully rounded education as a form of resilience despite any shortcomings and disparities in the education structure as a whole.

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- Strategic Plan 2022-2026 Approved
- May Graduation
- Launch of new Centres and Institutes
- Signing of new MOUs
- Cuban Ambassador's Visit

## Editorial

The contents of this issue of the UNIPULSE show that the University has moved very rapidly towards the first stage of fulfilling its responsibilities pursuant to the Strategic Plan 2022-2026. The next 5-year Strategic Plan was approved by the University Council only in February this year and we have already begun working on our sub-strategic plans which operationalise the goals established by the University through its Schools, Institutes, Centres and Sections. In some cases, as the different articles in UNIPULSE illustrate, implementation is also underway indicating the firm commitment of staff and students to our Journey in Holistic Education represented by the *Gurukul* and *Drua Voyage* foundational metaphors adopted by the University in its master plan.

We were really delighted to congratulate our Executive Director Finance, Planning and Development (EDFPD), Ravineet Sami, when The University of Fiji Council decided to award him an honorary doctorate in appreciation of his long-term dedication to the work of the University from its infancy. Our EDFPD's work for the University in challenging times, especially now, is well-known and appreciated by the University Community. We were all happy to see him formally receive the award at our December graduation ceremony witnessed also by his proud family.

The University of Fiji's staff and students are in the process of developing a most interesting and creative project which will beautify the campuses and facilitate sustainability in the way we organise our physical space. Each School and Section will design and create their own gardens and restful well-being spaces for enjoyment by all the members of the University Community. The project has already begun with clearing of certain areas at our three campuses and planting of trees and shrubs in accordance with a specific horticultural design. Called the "Gaia Landscaping Programme", due to its emphasis on sustainability, we hope to be able to make a positive difference to our landscape by the end of the year. The University relies a lot on donations so any offer of plants or garden sculptures will be gladly accepted.

On the academic side, the University will ensure that all students are supported in their formal study by their Academic Advisors. The University was encouraged by the improved retention and pass rates of our students despite the crises of 2020 and 2021 and would like to see that momentum continue to show an upward trend.

The University of Fiji is focused on both short and long term success with its Strategic Plan 2022-2026. This issue of UNIPULSE shows us to be more Future Ready than ever.

Professor Shaista Shameem

### Ravineet Sami Receives Honorary Doctorate from The University of Fiji



From left: Chancellor, His Excellency, Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem, Executive Director Finance Planning and Development and recipient of the Honorary Doctorate, Mr Ravineet Sami, Ms Shaleshni Prasad and Pro-Chancellor, Ambassador Kamlesh Arya.

## New Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026



The University of Fiji's Council approved the University's Strategic Plan 2022 - 2026 at its meeting on 26 February, 2022.

The University's focus for 2022-2026 is to be **'Future Ready'** and to celebrate and attract **'Diversity'** in its staff, students and programmes.

The University will pursue six strategic cultural transformations to reach its objectives, and these are:

- Learning and Teaching for the 21st century world;
- Leading the nation in acquisition of knowledge for all levels of society;
- Managing our resources well for sustainability and resilience;
- Emphasizing the *Gurukul and Drua Voyage* focus: our **'Journey in Holistic Education'**;
- Engaging in Praxis for the pursuit of human values in education; and
- Advocating for the public good in all aspects of education.

All Schools and Departments at the University have created their sub strategic plans and are working towards a unified goal. Several parts of the Strategic Plan goals have commenced including the launch of the Gaia Landscape Project, the first chess tournament in collaboration with the Fiji Chess Federation and continuing community education.

## The University of Fiji enrolls two Year 13 students in its innovative UniFijiStart Programme

Leanne Jia Yao Zhong of Yat Sen Secondary School and Salihah Nubaysha Nisha of Xavier College, both Year 13 students, have been awarded full tuition scholarships by The University of Fiji to undertake two courses in their choice of Programme alongside University first year students.

The two students, who are currently Year 13 students at their schools, were successful applicants for the UniFijiStart Programme tenable at The University of Fiji.

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the UniFijiStart Scholarship Scheme for final year high school students was the first of its kind in Fiji. It allowed students to get a taste of University life while still in high school. Professor Shameem said the students for the UniFijiStart Programme were selected very carefully on the basis of their Year 12 results as well as their other accomplishments.

In responding to the announcement by the University that she was one of two recipients for the UniFijiStart Scholarship Scheme Nisha said that UniFijiStart will help Year 13 students decide on the career path they want to pursue in future.

"This scheme can help Year 13 students have clear goals and expand their knowledge in their interest areas. It also assists students to get a feel for tertiary education while they are still in Year 13," she said.

Yat Sen student Leanne Zhong said that the UniFijiStart programme will provide her with countless benefits, not only to prepare for university life but also help her to excel academically.

"Knowledge gained from the lectures and tutorials will aid better understanding of concepts and facilitate creative and critical thinking. Other skills that may be enhanced due to this programme are time management, communication and proficiency in the use of technology and the internet. Ultimately, the UniFijiStart Scheme will build students into better individuals," she said.

Zhong says that she is delighted and excited to be awarded the UniFijiStart Scholarship.

"I am certain the road ahead of me will be paved with challenges, but I will rise to these challenges. Most importantly, I will cherish this precious opportunity, do my best and make the most out of it. I am thankful to The University of Fiji for creating such a wonderful opportunity for Year 13 students to participate in this brilliant programme while still in high school, and I look forward to experiencing the UniFijiStart programme as a UniFiji student!" she said.

Both UniFijiStart students have opted to study in the University's School of Science and Technology. Nisha is studying IT and Leanne is studying Pure Sciences. The lecture times for their selected courses are held outside normal school hours for convenience to the two awardees.

## Over Four Hundred Students Graduate

On Friday, 27 May, 2022 four hundred and four students graduated from The University of Fiji in various disciplines.

Speaking at the ceremony, Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem said that over the past two years the University had become resilient to crises due to the strong foundation the University was building through implementing the Gurukul methodology of learning which is powering its Drua Voyage. In combination Gurukul and Drua represent the University's journey in holistic education.

"The University now offers students comprehensive education by developing programmes that combine hard qualifications with the human values of empathy, integrity, compassion, due regard for others and advocacy for the common good. We expect our graduates to leave the University at the end of their study armed not only with quality education but also a solid foundation in excellent citizenship. Both attributes will allow our students to face the difficult world we all live in with confidence, courage and goodwill towards others," she said.

Professor Shameem further stated that the University was committed

not only to providing students with excellent degrees and other qualifications but also with the tools necessary to make the world a better place for future generations.

"Our new Strategic Plan provides guidance for the generations to come - to make a real difference to the world they live in. Students who are preparing to study at The University of Fiji and those who are currently with us will be the actual beneficiaries of the new philosophical direction of the University. However, those who are graduating today will nevertheless take with them the culture of our University as they find jobs or go on to further study," she said.



Graduands in front of the photo booth post the graduation ceremony.

The Chancellor, His Excellency Ratu Epeli Nailatikau, reminded the graduands of the importance of education in everyday life and reminded them not to forget the support they received while pursuing their studies. "We are all aware that success comes to those who show commitment in their chosen fields because there is no alternative to hard work, dedication and perseverance," he said.

The Chancellor strongly urged the graduates to stay connected to the University through the UniFiji alumni and constructively contribute to the continuing growth of the University by bringing in industry experiences, knowledge and skills to the forefront to enhance work-ready graduates.

"The aim of the University is to provide good education that is aimed at not only on grooming successful professionals, but also good citizens. Education equips us to make quality decisions as an individual, for our communities and for our nation," he said.

His Excellency said that education allowed people to understand the world we live in.

"Through education, we have become thoughtful and developed a good understanding of our shared world. Education provides us with a bridge to science and technology. It arms us with the tools and the know-how to

address the calamities of our time such as climate change, pandemics, poverty, pollution, corruption, violence and so forth. I believe that success is not a destination but an endless journey in self exploration. It is unlocking your true potential to make your life a work of art. Education plays an important role in determining our potential to achieve this success," he said.

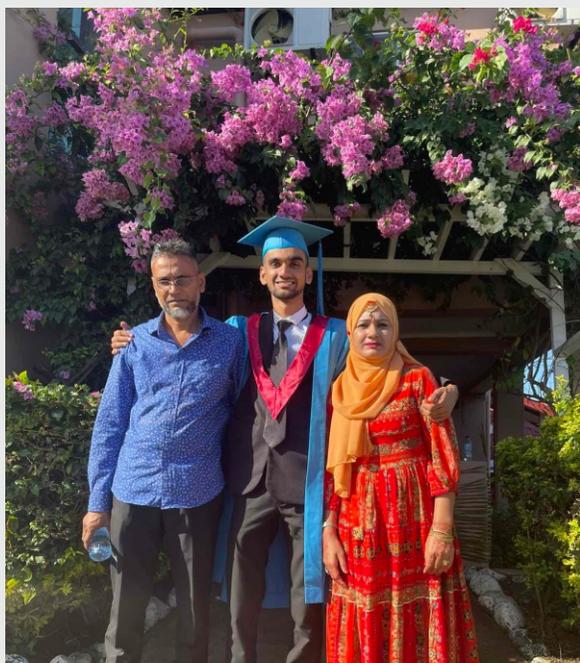
Professor Shameem said that the University had equipped the graduates with the knowledge and skills to fulfil all the University's expectations.

"We remain at the University to help you in case you need it. The University Community joins me in congratulating all of you on your achievements," she concluded.



From left: Pro-Chancellor, Ambassador Kamlesh Arya, Chancellor, H.E. Ratu Epeli Nailatikau and Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem.

## Zameel Awarded Four Gold Medals



Mohammed Zameel with his proud parents at the graduation ceremony.

Mohammed Zameel scooped four gold medals on Friday, 27 May, 2022. He was awarded the Vice Chancellor's Award, the School of Business and Economics Award, Outstanding Student in Management Award and Outstanding Student in Information Technology Award.

Speaking about his journey, Zameel said that he chose to study at the University as he viewed teaching methods employed at The University of Fiji as whimsical.

"It gives us the opportunity to learn from top academics on a one-on-one basis. Since I believe in modern technology and its impact on humans, my initial field of interest was Information Technology. Later on, I learned that the studies of Management are still very relevant in today's world. As a result, after consulting with a number of my high school instructors, I opted to pursue a degree in Information Technology and Management," he said.

Zameel comes from a middle class family and is a religious person brought up through realistic values and preaching from his parents.

He said that success that he had gained was not an achievement of his own, but holds numerous sacrifices behind it.

"The Covid-19 pandemic was really hard on us, but the support I got

from the people nearby me was excellent. A lot of late night sacrifices were made to reach here, and the reason was because studies were the main priority during those days," he said.

He said that the biggest obstacle he faced during his studies was the Covid-19 pandemic and the restrictions it brought.

"Face to face learning was restricted and communication was the biggest hindrance I would like to express my gratitude to my course coordinators for going above and beyond in this pandemic by changing the course outline to better suit our needs and provide the output required for that course. Not only that, but the lecturers also gave us their personal phone numbers so we could readily contact them and voice our concerns," he said.

Zameel hopes to play a key position in one of Fiji's most important industries and return what he had gained from his education to the community.

## Manendra Prasad Awarded Gold Medal in Renewable Energy Management

Manendra Prasad walked away as the Outstanding Student in Master of Science in Renewable Energy Management.

Hailing from the soccer crazy town Ba, Prasad said that he decided to study at The University of Fiji because they were offering MSCREM that covered all aspects of renewable energy and it was a globally recognized programme.

"UniFiji also offers flexible learning options and it is a university that is within travelling distance. Energy is the key for development in any area and for me if something can run out then it is not the solution. We all know that fossil fuel will run short in years to come and has adverse impacts on our environment, knowing all this we are still using fossil fuel as an energy source and we have to switch to renewable energy at some point in time then "Why not now". Switching to renewable energy will not only do good to the environment but also save small developing countries like ours from importing costly fossil fuels," he said.

He explained that since he was teaching at Balata High School, traveling to and from the University was difficult, however, he was thankful to his lecturers who understood his circumstances and helped him.

"To all the students out there, choosing The University of Fiji ensures that you will get quality education from the best lecturers. The university offers a lot of courses that are recognized and you can choose the one that is best suited for you," he said.

Prasad said that he firmly believes in managing activities within time rather than time management.

Prasad intends to work on bifacial projects in Fiji and undertake PhD programme in the near future.



From left: Hermann Ken Jamnadas (Outstanding Student in Master of Information Technology) and Manendra Prasad.

## Visit of the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba, His Excellency Jose Manuel Galego Montano

The University of Fiji hosted the Ambassador of the Republic of Cuba, HE Jose Manuel Galego Montano, at its Saweni Campus on Wednesday 18 May, 2022.

The University marked the occasion by inviting the Ambassador to plant the Cuban national tree, the Royal Palm, in the University gardens.

The Ambassador also launched the University's Gaia Landscape Programme. The Gaia Landscape Programme is the University's sustainable garden project which is part of Community Engagement, Environmental and Social Responsibilities in the University's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

Addressing the members of the University Senate, the Ambassador said that Cuba's emphasis on higher education was significant for The University of Fiji because Cuba had free education for all its citizens. Cuba had also made important advances in medicine, especially treatment of non-communicable diseases and cancer.

The Ambassador highlighted the importance of women's health and wellbeing as a priority for the Government of Cuba. In particular, Cuba had formulated its own vaccines for Covid-19 which was available to all people of Cuba including those very young.

The Ambassador congratulated The University of Fiji's Gaia Landscape Sustainable Garden Programme and said it was an important project in order to protect food security worldwide.

Calling it a 'historical occasion' the Vice Chancellor of the University Professor Shaista Shameem said that the visit by His Excellency was an opportunity for the University to showcase its campus and facilities to the Ambassador and, through him, to the Government and people of the Republic of Cuba. Cuba and Fiji had many similarities including climate, friendly people and beautiful landscapes, Professor Shameem said.



HE Jose Manuel Galego Montano planting the Royal Palm.

## Easter Celebrations at Saweni Campus



Professor Shaista Shameem (centered sitting) with staff and students at the Easter celebration at Saweni Campus.

The University of Fiji Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem told the University's Easter gathering that Easter was a time to reflect on two main principles - leadership and resurrection.

Speaking at the Easter celebrations at the University's Saweni Campus, Professor Shameem said Jesus Christ was honoured and remembered not only for practising the principles of love, truth, integrity, good faith and fair play in his personal life but also for setting a good example to others by his behaviour, humility and courtesy. The quality of good leadership exhibited by Jesus Christ was later followed by other leaders including Mahatma Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Nelson Mandela and Mother Theresa among others, she said.

Professor Shameem said that good leadership with human

values was not easy to follow as it required sacrifice, de-egofication and an understanding of the society in which one lived. Not everyone had these qualities and the world was littered with examples where leadership was in short supply and long overdue, she said.

Professor Shameem said that resurrection was another important message to be considered at Easter. The University of Fiji held the principle of resurrection in high esteem as it embarked on its next 5-year Strategic Plan 2022-2026 with its emphasis on quality education delivered holistically to the people of Fiji.

# The University of Fiji and the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji Sign a Memorandum of Understanding for Medical Services, Training and Research Collaboration

The University of Fiji and the Sai Prema Foundation Fiji (SPF) have signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) for provision of free medical services to staff and students of the University and their families. The medical services include doctors' consultations and medications which will be offered free of charge from SPF's Sai Sanjeevani Medical Centre, in Nasese, Suva. The staff of the University will also be able to receive full medical checkups annually at the Centre.

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem expressed the University's appreciation to the SPF for the collaborative opportunity. She said the relationship with the SPF, which included free medical services, as well as collaboration on a number of other initiatives such as medical research, was not only historic but timely as well. Professor Shameem said the University's Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences (UPSM&HS) was well-placed to jointly conduct medical research with SPF medical researchers on healthcare issues of concern to the nation such as NCDs, public health and Covid-19 as well as research for the advancement of modern medicine and medical practices internationally.

The University of Fiji's School of Medicine and Health Sciences offers the MBBS degree as well as the new and innovative Bachelor of Medical Health Sciences (BMHS). It also offers nursing and public health qualifications.

"The SPF have provided us with opportunities we could only dream about previously, and we look forward to continuing partnership in our range of medical education in the future," Professor Shameem said.

SPF Director Mr Sumeet Tappoo said that the Foundation was excited about the prospects of what this collaborative partnership will mean for the nation.

"We are very excited about what the future entails from this collaborative partnership signing – the range, breadth and depth of what we can achieve together is limitless and this will result in positive outcomes for our nation," said Mr Sumeet Tappoo.

"Over and above the free healthcare for staff and students, the opportunities lie not only in leveraging off each other's strengths to bring greater empowerment among our youth through workshops in healthcare and human values as well as through the opportunities for the students to serve the community through community service platforms offered by the Foundation; but also, with what we can achieve together in medical training and research in the times to come," he added.



Mr Sumeet Tappoo (Director of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji) and Professor Shaista Shameem (Vice Chancellor - UniFiji)



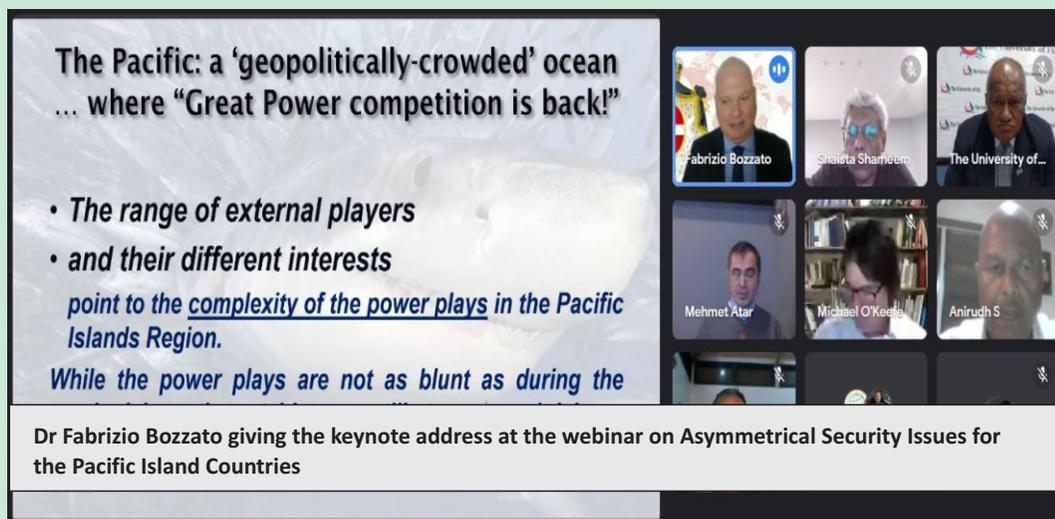
From left: Mr Pratin Lal (Treasurer of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji & Children's Heart Hospital Manager), Pt. Bhuwan Dutt (Council Member - UniFiji), Ambassador Kamlesh Arya (Pro-Chancellor - UniFiji Council), Mr Sumeet Tappoo (Director of Sai Prema Foundation Fiji), Professor Shaista Shameem (Vice Chancellor - UniFiji), Mrs Urmila Arya, Mr Ashneel Kumar Singh (Manager Human Resources - UniFiji), Mohammed Mubarak Ali (UniFiji)

The MOU enables the University and SPF to discuss medical training, clinical placements and employment for the University of Fiji students and graduates in SPF Hospitals in future.

The MOU includes collaboration in other activities and services such as Blood Collection Drives on University premises to support the nation's blood banks in the Central and Western Divisions, and advocacy through lectures and workshops for promoting good health and well-being among all staff and students.

A key part of the MOU is the joint promotion of Human Values ideals highly regarded by both the University and the SPF, namely, Truth, Love, Peace, Non-violence, Right Conduct, Compassion and Integrity. Professor Shameem said advocacy for these Human Values by the partners would fill a serious gap in the current geo-political climate everywhere. It would also help facilitate essential wellbeing targets in the University's Strategic Plan 2022-2026. The MOU intends to foster the spirit of "Volunteerism" among students for service to the underprivileged in Fiji.

## Institute of Strategic and Defence Studies Launched



The University of Fiji has launched its new postgraduate Institute of Strategic and Defence Studies (ISDS) by hosting an international webinar on Climate Change and Asymmetrical Security Issues for the Pacific Island Countries on 6 April, 2022.

The new ISDS is located in the Justice Devendra Pathik School of Law at the University's Samabula Campus.

The Vice Chancellor of the University Professor Shaista Shameem said the ISDS will be analyzing international, regional and local security issues with dialogues proposed between the University and others who have an interest in the security landscape.

Professor Shameem said the ISDS will be a think tank for strategic and defence research in the Pacific region. It will host regular seminars with security players which include governments, NGOs and international agencies such as the United Nations, the Red Cross, the Red Crescent, and partner universities. She said the security issues were dominating climate change conversations as climate change posed a serious security risk in the Pacific region including on populations and food supplies.

The ISDS also plans to offer postgraduate programmes for security personnel for example peacekeepers. The School of Law already offers a Certificate in Peacekeeping as part of its International Relations and Diplomacy Programme.

Professor Shameem said the ISDS would provide the venue for discussing all relevant and topical subjects such as the present warfare in the Ukraine, the role of the media in reporting conflict, nuclear armament and disarmament, the effectiveness or otherwise of the UN Security Council, private military and security companies and their widespread use in Iraq and Afghanistan as well as in other theatres of war, and all security issues of interest to Fiji and the region. A core aspect of the programme developed by the ISDS would be alternative dispute resolution mechanisms and their effectiveness in resolving historical human rights violations, she said.

The webinar on security and climate change and future events was moderated by Fiji's senior diplomat and former Director of Public Prosecution, Ambassador Isikeli Mataitoga, who was recently appointed an Adjunct Professor in the School of Law at the University of Fiji.

The ISDS was formally launched by the Vice Chancellor of the University Professor Shaista Shameem.

## New Board Members for Fiji Teachers Registration Board



Associate Professor  
Dr Wahab Ali

The University of Fiji congratulates Associate Professor of Education, Dr Wahab Ali from the School of Humanities & Arts on his appointment on the Board.

The Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts, Honourable Premila Kumar has appointed new members on the Fiji Teachers Registration Board. She met the new Board members on Monday 21 February, 2022 and briefed them about the Terms of Reference. The meeting produced good results and was centred around setting goals that are in alignment with the Fiji Teachers Registration Act. During their term the Board members are to review the FTR Act and make recommendations where necessary.

The Board is also required to develop the best structure for FTRB to perform its functions effectively and review and provide quarterly reports and recommendations on teacher registration to the Minister based on Service level Agreement. The Board will approve the FTRB Annual reports, FTRB policies and annual budgets in consultation with the Ministry.

The Minister of Education has the full confidence in the new board which has the ability to drive teacher efficacy and professionalism through the implementation of the required laws.

The University of Fiji has always worked in congenial partnership with the Ministry of Education, Heritage and Arts and hopes Dr Ali's expertise and experience in teacher education will be of immense value to the FTRB.

# The University of Fiji launches its Astronomy Society for Enthusiasts



Dr Nalin Samarasinha giving the keynote address at the launch of the SPASE.

The University of Fiji launched a new initiative for astronomy enthusiasts in Fiji and the South Pacific region on 22 February, 2022 at the Saweni Campus.

Called the South Pacific Astronomers Society of Enthusiasts (SPASE), the Society aims to hold regular events with astronomers and staff and students of the University, as well as astronomy enthusiasts in the South Pacific region. SPASE was launched by Dr Nalin Samarasinha of the Planetary Science Institute in the United States.

SPASE was initiated by the combined efforts of two Schools of The University of Fiji, the School of Science and Technology and the School of Business and Economics because academic staff in these Schools were enthusiasts who wanted to create an interactive platform with other like-minded astronomy enthusiasts in our region.

The launch of SPASE featured a keynote lecture by Dr Samarasinha.

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the University was honoured to have Dr Samarasinha launch SPASE as he had the wonderful distinction of having an asteroid named after him by the International Astronomical Union. Asteroid (12871) Samarasinha, found by the Lowell Observatory, was named after him, Professor Shameem said. Dr Samarasinha is the first native born Sri Lankan citizen to gain the distinction of having an asteroid named in his honour.

Professor Ranasinghe Amaradasa, interim president of the Society and Dean of the School of Business and Economics, stated that the Society aimed to help students who were afraid of Science subjects, particularly Mathematics and Physics, and to increase their interest in Science. He added that despite their keen interest in space-related issues, Fijian communities have not been exposed to deeper knowledge and understanding of space.

The society will participate in activities such as informational or social star-gazing sessions, public face-to-face/virtual seminars, forums, and discussions with key individuals and organizations from Fiji, the Pacific, and around the world. Members will also compete in competitions such as telescope design and creative writing, Professor Amaradasa said.

He adds that the Society's goal is to help astrophotographers develop skills that will allow them to take better pictures of space.

Young people and adults alike are invited to join SPASE where events and telescopic viewings of the night skies will regularly be held. Planetary scientists and astronomers will be invited to deliver lectures throughout the year at the Saweni Campus of the University.

Students at the star gazing event in the early hours pre Easter weekend. The event was attended by several students and staff.



## Novella to Motivate Young People

Ms Archana Reddy, of the School of Business and Economics and author, hopes that her new novella will inspire young people to pursue their dreams.

The book "Chasing Dreams: A Boon or Bane?" was launched during the International Women's Day at Samabula Campus.

The novella is a short work of literature that tells the story of Mia, an island girl, from her clumsy beginnings to her eventual transformation, which was only possible through confidence and motivation.

"The book's goal is to teach and motivate people that they can achieve everything they want if they change their thinking and are determined to conquer all obstacles in their way. Mia's life adventures and whether her aspirations and decisions were a major boon or a bane could only be discovered by reading the book," she said.

Ms Reddy stated that the book is dedicated to all individuals who have left home for a reason, whether it is for education or work, and how they struggle alone with their families.

## Cutting Edge New TSLS-supported Programmes Offered



Students at the front of the pergola

The University of Fiji started offering four cutting edge new programmes from Semester 1, 2022. They are: Bachelor of Agricultural Engineering, Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies, Diploma in Counselling and PhD in Business Administration (DBA).

The Bachelor of Agricultural Engineering and Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies are fully offered under Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Service's National Topper's Scholarship as well as the Loans Scheme.

### **Bachelor of Agricultural Engineering Programme (BAE)**

The new Bachelor of Agricultural Engineering Programme (BAE) is offered through the School of Science and Technology. Designed specifically for students with special interests in the technological advancements in agriculture, particularly in modern agricultural production, management and agricultural enterprises, the qualification will allow students to become competent in all areas of agricultural production which are improved by engineering and technology. The programme will cover sustainable systems involving food, the environment, energy and health.

#### Mode of Study

Through the virtual classroom with practical components as relevant.

#### Entry requirements

This is a full Bachelor's programme. Students with an aggregate of at least 200 marks out of 400 in the Year 13 Examination with a minimum of 50% in English and two Science subjects can enroll. Admissions can also be granted under the mature age criteria and those with Diploma or another relevant undergraduate qualification.

### **Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies (BJMS)**

The Bachelor of Journalism and Media Studies (BJMS) is a 3-year full time programme which specifically emphasises the practical side of journalism and media studies. Students will hold internships in media organisations from the first year as part of the practical component of the programme. The BJMS was established in association with the leading media organisations of Fiji and thus responds to the requirements of the media industry. Students will receive practical training in all aspects of media production including newsroom, editing and sub-editing, broadcast, camera and video work, documentary filmmaking, ethics, security of communication and business models for media organisations.

#### Mode of Study

Through the virtual classroom with practical internships from Year 1.

#### Entry Requirements

Students who have passed Year 13 with at least a 65% in English or who have passed any examination deemed by the University to be equivalent to the University Foundation Education Certificate are eligible to apply for the programme.

### **Diploma in Counselling**

This innovative programme is meant for both teachers and working professionals in education. Students will gain knowledge of and competence in working with young people aged 6–18 years for their mental health needs in school. The programme was developed to support young people facing the health, economic and social effects of Covid-19 and to respond to the shortage of qualified counsellors in schools to assist students in need.

#### Mode of Study

Through the virtual classroom with practical components as the programme requires.

#### Entry Requirements

Applicants with a teaching qualification from a recognized Teacher Training institution may apply. Students with a suitable Year 13 pass may also be accepted into the programme.

## UniFiji Students Receive TSLs MBBS Grant Award

The Fijian government provided a \$10,000 one-time grant to nine medical students from The University of Fiji's Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences. The nine students were part of forty two students who were awarded the grant in February.

The Acting Prime Minister (at that time) and Attorney General, Honourable Aiyaz Sayed-Khaiyum, emphasized the importance of education, stating that \$1.2 billion has been spent since the establishment of the Tertiary Scholarship & Loans Board (TSLB) in 2014.

According to the A-G, traditionally, the number of students pursuing

technical courses was low, but now approximately 80 to 85 percent of Toppers are pursuing technical courses such as engineering, nursing, marine science, land surveying, among others.

Prior to Covid-19, he stated, the government provided scholarships for people to study abroad, particularly in fields where Fiji did not offer courses.

"There are certain areas in Science among undergraduate studies, including architecture, which isn't offered in Fiji, so the Government has a limited number of scholarships available for that area as well."

Shifana Dean and Avi Kush Kumar, Year 2 MBBS students from the University of Fiji's Umanand Prasad School of Medicine & Health Sciences shared their feelings when they were awarded the TSLs MBBS Grant Award.

Dean began her student life at UniFiji in 2021 and was extremely worried when the MBBS programme was eliminated from the national priority list due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

She further said that enrolling for the MBBS programme at that time was quite challenging as it imposed many uncertainties in terms of financial support.

She expressed her appreciation towards the Fijian Government for such initiatives.

"I chose UniFiji because of its diversity, it has a comfortable teaching and learning environment with amazing lecturers from around the world, it is closer to my home and also the lecture times are flexible with our prayer time." said Dean.

Avi Kush Raj also thanked the Fijian Government and the TSLs Board for this award despite the pandemic and says that it is truly a relief financially as one of his siblings is also studying medicine privately.



## Living & Working with Lady Corona: A Higher Education Perspective

On International Women's Day, March 8, 2022, the University of Fiji hosted a Panel Discussion titled "Living and Working with Lady Corona: A Higher Education Perspective" at the Samabula Campus.

Mr Kiniviliame Keteca, Senior Lecturer at the JDP School of Law, moderated the session, which began with remarks from Professor Aziz Mohammed of the JDP School of Law. The panelists were Ms Varsha Bano of JDP School of Law, Ms Archana Reddy of School of Business and Economics, Ms Nanise Caginimua Raloga of School of Humanities and Arts and Ms Kesaia Ledua Tuikoro, Law Researcher and Library Assistant.

The transit to virtual teaching environments was one of the experiences that came to the fore, as was managing various duties as a teacher, counsellor, wife, mother, and friend. An important feature was how the panelists incorporated their family and social support networks into their teaching roles, with a collaborative approach used inside the house to ensure that lectures and evaluations were conducted with little interruption or disruption.

One of the panelists expressed an exploratory spirit, seeing the chance to upskill herself, learning the programmes and gadgets for example zoom and google meet, in order to provide appropriate assistance and resources. What is fundamental and commonplace to many members of Generation Z was foreign and distant, and the need to self-teach was inevitable.

Lady Corona's major gift was flexibility, which was repeated by all panelists, who were able to respond positively to shifting events. Expectations from their managers, changes in regulatory norms, economic obligations, and empathy for their pupils and peers all asked that they adjust to change. This reaction was delightfully present in the panel, as they identified with the versatility and evolving nature of their roles as education service providers and home providers.

## Professor Shameem appointed on the Committee of Legal Experts to the newly established Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem has been appointed to the Committee of Legal Experts to assist a new initiative, the Commission of Small Island States on Climate Change and International Law.

The new Commission, formed during COP 26, was registered with the United Nations by the Pacific nation of Tuvalu and the Caribbean nation of Antigua and Barbuda. The Commission creates the possibility of claiming damages from major polluting countries through judicial means, such as the UN's International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea. It is expected that other small island states affected by climate change will sign up to the Commission as it gathers momentum after COP 26.

The Commission intends to seek recourse for climate change damages initially through the International Tribunal for the Law of the Sea (ITLOS) which has a mandate to settle disputes linked to a 1982 UN convention that established an international framework of law over the marine environment. The Commission will ask the tribunal judges whether they can claim damages from countries that warm the oceans through greenhouse gas emissions. If they can, the small island states affected could then pursue lawsuits in the tribunal or other international or even domestic courts.

The International Court of Justice in the Hague could also hear such cases on climate change. Over the past few years courts in Europe, Pakistan and Colombia have issued decisions demanding governmental action on climate change.

Professor Shameem joins 13 other members on the Committee of Legal Experts assisting the Commission. The Committee members who are all international legal experts will have responsibility for different areas of work through sub-committees. Professor Shameem has been appointed the Chair of the Human Rights sub-committee. Other sub-committees are Loss and Damages, Marine Environment and Sea-Level Rise. Each Sub-Committee will explore substantive and strategic aspects of pursuing either litigation or other forms of intervention in order to enable the Commission to tackle different areas of climate change and international law.

Professor Shameem said she was honoured to be requested to serve on the Committee of Legal Experts assisting the Commission. Her appointment allows the University of Fiji to participate internationally in resolving the most significant issue of the century, namely climate change. The Committee will begin its work by initially seeking an Advisory Opinion from ITLOS and also supporting Vanuatu which is seeking an Advisory Opinion on climate change from the International Court of Justice (ICJ).

## UniFiji signs a Memorandum of Understanding with the iTaukei Trust Fund Board



Professor Shameem and Mr Aisake Taito post the MOU signing ceremony.

The University of Fiji signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the iTaukei Trust Fund Board (TTFB) on Friday, December 17, 2021.

The MOU is designed to develop collaboration between the Board and the University for academic research and teaching to help preserve and revitalize iTaukei language, culture, heritage, and arts.

The basis of the collaboration is the reality of Covid-19's impact which has compelled indigenous communities to continue to maintain their interconnectedness and cultural identity. Living heritage has become an important source of resilience, assisting in the face of social and psychological challenges while also strengthening kinship and economic ties during the crisis.

Intangible cultural heritage, or the wealth of indigenous knowledge and skills, will be prominently featured in the collaboration and is based on sustainable development initiatives and preservation efforts by Government and civil society organizations.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the MOU would enable the TTFB and Centre for iTaukei Studies (CIS) of The University of Fiji to explore avenues for a practical partnership to enhance culture and art programmes corresponding to the sustainable development goals.

"The TTFB's Culture & Arts Centre project and partnership with the CIS bode well for Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4 on Quality Education and SDG 16 on Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions. The enhancement of iTaukei study programmes contributes to the preservation of culture and identity while also mitigating the effects of globalization on the lives and development of the iTaukei community," she said.

TTFB CEO Mr Aisake Taito said "we are exploring avenues for collaborations and partnership to enhance culture and art programmes in relation to sustainable development goals. An integrated approach which is both forward thinking and strategically linked to national goals and objectives, we anticipate, will be achieved under this partnership".

## Grant for HR Software Development from the Gadfly Project

The University of Fiji is elated to secure an in-kind award from the Gadfly Project providing an innovative HR software development. The award will be utilized to develop a paperless customized human resource platform. The Gadfly Project is committed towards a sustainable environment and a better future. It understands that the right utilisation of technological advancement will be an imperative instrument to save us from the effects of climate change. The University of Fiji stood strong through the phenomenal effects of the Covid-19 pandemic and the adverse weather conditions to demonstrate its versatility in working together with the Gadfly Project team for this software development. The project was developed by the Human Resources Manager of the University.

## Chess in Medical Education

A research paper on playing chess and its impact on medical education has been completed by Lecturers and students of the Umanand Prasad School of Medicine and Health Sciences (UPSM&HS), of The University of Fiji. Dr Ricardo Corpuz, one of the researchers, said that the study's goal was to identify the link between chess and cognitive development in medical students, as well as the relationship between various game kinds and the multiple advantages the students received, and to correlate the level of chess players with their academic achievement.

“With the lockdown and quarantine in effect, we would like to know how the players play chess. This research shows if UPSM & HS students know the benefits of playing chess in their medical education,” he said.

The research was conducted in November 2021 and submitted to the FIDE Chess in Education Commission and the Armenian State Pedagogical University (ASPU) Chess Scientific Research Institute for their international online conference.

The paper was recently published in the International Online Conference Magazine.

The researchers are Dr Ricardo Corpuz (Senior Lecturer in Pathology, Head of Department Basic Science, The University of Fiji Chess Club Coordinator), Dr Judith Oremo (Senior Lecturer Microbiology, The University of Fiji Chess Club Member), Aayush Narayan (MBBS Year 2 Student, The University of Fiji Chess Club Member), Pavitra Chand (MBBS Year 3 Student, The University of Fiji Chess Club Member), Aniketh Chand (MBBS Year 3 Student, The University of Fiji Chess Club Member), Nikil Chand (MBBS Year 4 Student, The University of Fiji Chess Club Member).

## Debate Team Runners Up for Competition



Debate team members after winning the first round of the debate competition.

The University of Fiji Debate Team won the first round of the Dialogue Fiji organised “Inter-University Debate on Elections” in April. The contest took place at the Fiji National University’s Nasinu Campus.

The Debate was held under the “Strengthening Public Confidence in Elections in Fiji” project which is funded by UKAID.

Four teams participated in the competition - two teams from The University of Fiji and two teams from the Fiji National University (FNU). There were three contests in total between FNU (BASS) and UniFiji Students. The topics for the first two contests were “An electoral gender quota is describable in Fiji” and “A single National Constituency is good for Fiji” The topic for the final contest was “Social Media is good for election and Democracy” and the team were awarded the Runners up prize.

The 6 students in teams of three that represented UniFiji were Ezra Alfred Pickering, Aadarsh Kumar, Joape Namawa, Priscilla Raniga, Josefa Tuiova and Savenaca Cinanidaveta.

## The University of Fiji Launches Centre for Women's Leadership



From left: Dean, School of Business and Economics, Professor Ranasinghe Amaradasa, Executive Director Finance Planning and Development, Mr Ravineet Sami, Human Resources Manager, Mr Ashneel Singh, Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem, Ms Sarojini Pillay, Acting Head Librarian, Mrs Masiran Kutty, Centre for iTaukei Studies Director, Mr Usaia Gaunavou, Dean School of Humanities and Arts, Professor Baba and Assistant Registrar, Mrs Nathasha Mudaliar

To commemorate this year's Mother's Day, The University of Fiji has launched its Centre for Women's Leadership. The UniFiji Centre for Women's Leadership (UniFiji CWL) was launched at The University's Saweni Campus on Friday 6 May by the former Registrar of the University and Fiji's first female University (of the South Pacific) Registrar, Ms Sarojini Pillay, at a function hosted by the Senior Management Team of the University.

The UniFiji Centre for Women's Leadership aims to provide training and mentorship to women for national leadership. The Centre will be housed in the Office of the Vice Chancellor.

In introducing the background to the new Centre, the Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji Professor Shaista Shameem said that there was no better time to launch the University's Centre for Women's Leadership than Mother's Day as mothers were the first and most influential leaders in the community. A mother's guidance, encouragement and support molded all men and women for good citizenship and out of that significant influence national leaders emerged.

Unfortunately, Professor Shameem said, these leaders, somehow, ended up being more men than women in number.

The University had noticed the glaring absence of women in top leadership positions in the Fijian political, economic and development landscape. Fiji was not unusual in failing to recognize the qualities of leadership exhibited by women as, apart from a few special exceptions, the trend in favour of male leadership in top positions in government and in the political space was the same internationally.

However, widespread conflict, for example the war in Ukraine, as well as the aggressive profiteering foundations of climate change disasters, and the urgent need to keep our children safe from harm, showed how a different type of national, organizational, and community leadership was immediately required to secure peace and respect for human values much needed in the world today, Professor Shameem said.

Mother's Day 2022 was the appropriate occasion to launch the UniFiji Centre for Women's Leadership for the University to facilitate a paradigm shift in national leadership philosophy, practice and attitude, Professor Shameem said.

UniFiji CWL will run its first National Leadership for Women Programme from July – December 2022 over 2 hours per week for selected applicants.

Professor Shameem is the Coordinator and Facilitator of the Programme.

The Programme includes topics such as National Leadership, Advocacy for the Public Good, Understanding Fijian Society, Conflict and Dispute Resolution, The Gaia Perspective on Climate Change, Navigating Strategically within Culture and Community, Dealing with the Law, Dealing with Aggression, Facilitating Media Relationships, Managing a Budget Creatively, Strategic Thinking and Planning, Innovation, Ethics, Integrity and Human Values, Regeneration of Society (how to become a good Ancestor), Breaking Glass Ceilings and Barriers, Praxis, Revolutionary Thinking, Change Management, Starting Up and Starting Over, and Feminization of Future National Development.

The Programme has been advertised in the media and on The University of Fiji's website. An application process will be employed to select suitable candidates for the programme.

# The University of Fiji Hosts BSP Finance Rapid Chess Tournament

As a combined effort to return to all its normal activities, The University of Fiji hosted its first chess tournament of the year on Saturday, 21 May, 2022 at the Saweni Campus Hall.

The tournament was held in collaboration with its partner, the Fiji Chess Federation, with support from Bank of the South Pacific (BSP).

The tournament saw the highest number of participants in Lautoka featuring 56 players competing in 4 categories: Open, Women, Secondary and Primary categories. Candidate Master Manoj Kumar won the much-contested Open Category, Cydel Terubea bagged the first prize in the Women's Category. Rudr Prasad won the Secondary category while Paul Anthony Corpuz won the Primary Category. Yash Maharaj won the Best Upset prize and Aisea Wasalasila walked away with the Best Beginner prize.



Winner of the main chess prize, Mr Manoj Kumar Candidate Master (centre), BSP sponsors on either side, and other winners of different categories of chess players with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem



7 year old Yash Prasad competing with Ms Mercy Gogoi.

Top players in Fiji, including as Candidate Master (CM) Manoj Kumar, CM Ronald Terubea and Cydel Terubea, and the Under-18 chess prodigy duo of Rudr Prasad and Tanvi Prasad from Jai Narayan College participated in the tournament. Swami Vivekananda College also had eighteen students compete in the competition.

Dr Ravikesh Prasad of the Fiji Chess Federation and Tournament Director (of the tournament) said that he was delighted with the partnership and support from the University in the promotion of chess. He said that the organising team was impressed with the turnout at the tournament. He said that chess should be introduced as part of the formal curriculum in schools. Professor Shameem said that she fully supports that proposal.

Providing support for chess tournaments at national and international levels is included in The University of Fiji's Strategic Plan 2022-2026.

The Plan also emphasizes holistic education for students of the University.

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the University focused on extra-curricular activities and events at the same time as emphasizing formal quality-driven qualifications. Students who participated in chess tournaments developed strategic and tactical skills much needed in the world today.

Having these skills would allow the University's graduates to become much more employable in future, she said.

The University of Fiji will be hosting all national, and even international, tournaments in future as requested by the Fiji Chess Federation.

Dr Ricardo Corpuz, Co-Chair of The University of Fiji Chess Committee said that the tournament on Saturday, with large numbers of young people participating, was a success.

"With the turnout of most students from primary and secondary school this will make chess one of the sports in Fiji for all ages to compete in," he said.

Yash Prasad, 7, said he was thrilled to be a part of the event since it allowed him to win and lose some matches while also gaining experience.

Ronald Terubea, Rudr Prasad, Cydel Terubea, Prashil Prakash, and Tanvi Prasad, tournament participants, are also members of the Olympiad team, which will compete in the FIDE 44th Chess Olympiad in Chennai beginning in late July.



Professor Shameem with the Fiji Olympiad Chess Team which will travel to Chennai in July to represent Fiji.



Participants during the final round of the tournament in the University's Main Hall.

## Dr Naiker's Book Launched on International Women's Day



From left: Ms Jane Ricketts, Dr Kamala Naiker, Professor Shaista Shameem and Maca Ratabua

UniFiji's very own Dr Kamala Naiker's book was launched on International Women's Day, 8 March, 2022. The title of the book is *A Fijian Reading of Bharati Mukherjee*.

Ms Jane Ricketts, a Council Member and an avid reader, launched the book. Ms Ricketts stated that the book was appropriate to be released on International Women's Day. The stories in the book centred around women who are placed in difficult situations and how they overcome them.

Ms Ricketts emphasised the significance of reading and strongly recommended people of all ages to read—not simply to pass tests, but to read for pleasure.

Dr Naiker said that Bharati Mukherjee's writing had a marked similarity to

what the Fijian women of Indian descent migrants experienced.

“Her work has resonance to Fiji’s situation and the plea she makes to the Indian migrants from India is also applicable to Fijians of Indian descent in search of a more fulfilling life; independent and economically better. In Mukherjee's later fiction, the prevalent theme is that of women who modify their lives, usually through an encounter with an “other.” By looking at the way her novels end, it is apparent that Mukherjee's women protagonists make progress to achieve self-realization,” she said.

Dr Naiker's book is available for sale at the Enlightenment bookstore at UniFiji Saweni Campus.

## Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice Students Admitted to the Bar

The University of Fiji JDP School of Law’s Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice (GDLP) students were admitted to the Bar, presided by the Chief Justice, Honourable Kamal Kumar at the Grand Pacific Hotel, on 18 March, 2022.

Professor Aziz Mohammed and Justice Jiten Singh represented the JDP School of Law at the ceremony.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem, said that admission to the Bar was always a proud time not just for the School of Law and the University, but also for the graduates' families. Many families had made significant sacrifices in order for their children to attend law school and become lawyers.

Professor Shameem said the JDP School of Law prioritised both hard and soft skills in its law school because it intended to prepare students to be both effective lawyers and decent citizens. Employers were searching for graduates who were at the pinnacle of their profession.



GDLP students taking the oath during their admission to the bar



GDLP students taking the oath during their admission to the bar

“Covid-19 has made us realise the importance of excellent legal education which is a necessity now and not a luxury,” she said.

One of the students, Edwin Wainiqolo, said that he walked into the University in 2018, a failure, condemned and an empty armoury without weapons or ammunition.

“The University developed that emptiness, equipped and trained me with knowledge and intellect - and I parted the gates of this boutique university with academic credentials and gold medals, equipped to conquer the world. It really is a gateway to the future that is secured and promising. The University of Fiji is my home away from home. I succumbed to many failures - but the University

continued to press on and reminded me that life is a journey. In that journey, we will face failures and at the end of those failures - growth, learning, development and maturity commences,” he said.

## The University of Fiji Commences Training Under USAID Pacific American Fund Project

The University of Fiji's "Development of Entrepreneurial Skills Post Covid-19 Through Rural Aquaculture" project team conducted its first of a series of trainings for members of the Sai Mother's Club in Mallau, Rakiraki on Wednesday 11th May, 2022.

The project, funded by the USAID Pacific American Fund (PAF) and implemented by The University of Fiji, aims to upgrade existing aquaculture facilities to revive aquaculture farming of Tilapia. Through the University's community engagement initiatives, the Sai Mother's Club is one of the two communities identified as beneficiaries under the project. The second community identified is Vitawa village, situated in the Ra province.

The training module, delivered by Project Manager Ms Rosabelle Hennings, focused on key aspects of pond preparation for the farming of Tilapia. Participants as well as project stakeholders from the Pacific Islands Development Forum Secretariat (PIDF) and Ministry of Fisheries (MoF) engaged in discussions about common barriers encountered during this initial phase as well as common best practices of proper pond preparation as a first step towards ensuring and sustaining high productivity.

The President of the Sai Mother's Club, Ms Aleshmin Dharshan said that the members were extremely keen on Tilapia farming and other aquaculture ventures such as prawn culturing but lacked the technical knowledge required to independently prepare their pond. The unavailability of funds to revive the ponds after tropical cyclone Winston was another challenge, said Ms Aleshmin Dharshan.

The training consists of 5 modules which will be conducted upon the completion of each stage of the culturing process.

The University of Fiji' Strategic Plan 2022-2026 supports such initiatives under the strategic goal 5.4 – which focuses on Community Engagement and where Environmental and Social Responsibilities draws attention to our commitment to social and environmental responsibilities in teaching, research, operations, community outreach and sub-strategic plans.

## The University of Fiji stands in solidarity with the King and People of Tonga after the volcano eruption

The University of Fiji pledged its solidarity with the King and People of Tonga in their proud efforts to recover from the cataclysmic event that nearly destroyed so much of the Tongan landscape.

Staff and Students of the University came together to discuss how to best assist their Tongan neighbours and, at the same time, respecting their need for sovereign autonomy and health safety.

The University decided that the best way to assist was to respond to the needs about which the Tongan people had themselves informed the Fijian Government and to facilitate their requests in a spirit of understanding and sensitivity.



Students and staff donating the relief supplies to the Tongan Community in Suva.

The Student Association of the University of Fiji (UFSA) took the initiative to facilitate a 2-day donation drive.

Staff and students of the University not only made generous donations but UFSA filled the gaps in the list and used its own funds to purchase the much-needed items on the Fiji Government list that had been issued publicly.

"It was heartening to see the students coming forward to support this initiative with whatever they could, knowing that our brothers and sisters in our neighboring nation were suffering," said the UFSA Acting President, Ms Maca Ratabua, a

MBBS student.

The Vice Chancellor of The University of Fiji, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the effort was as much the University could do given the strong sense of Tongan independence and resilience. "We are there to support whatever they would like and they only have to ask", she said. Professor Shameem said all nations dealt with their natural disasters their own way and The University of Fiji respected their wishes and requests.

The Tongan community received The University of Fiji delegation in Suva on 17 February, 2022.

## The University of Fiji Staff part of the Space for Planet Earth Challenge winning team



Mr Lency Muna

We are proud to announce that The University of Fiji's Mr Lency Muna has the honour of being a member of the Yadrava Na Vanua Team that scooped \$NZ30,000 (\$F42,593) in the Space for Planet Earth Challenge. The Challenge was sponsored by the US Embassy in Suva and organised by the Space Base organisation of New Zealand.

Yadrava Na Vanua (Environment Watch) is a cross-institutional team consisting of students and researchers from The University of Fiji, Fiji National University (FNU), University of the South Pacific (USP), University of Western Australia, University of Canterbury and Australian National University (ANU).

Mr Muna is an Assistant Lecturer at the School of Science and Technology. Mr Muna said that as a team member, he will contribute to the research and development of carbon stocks in Fiji's mangrove forests.

"This project is aimed at contributing to the national blue carbon inventory that can be documented as Fiji's contribution to climate change mitigation efforts. I will also contribute to the GIS and remote sensing related tasks within the sub teams of the project and assist in community engagement activities throughout the project cycle," he said.

Mr Muna said that the announcement of winning the Space for Planet Earth Challenge came as a surprise to the team because of the tough competition they faced from the Australian and New Zealand teams.

"In fact, it was an overwhelming experience for the team as we didn't have many resources compared to the international teams, so we used whatever we had to build our project. But we have proved that a local team can create a winning project despite lacking resources and support. We just have to be innovative, collaborative and focus on projects that are relevant to local, regional and global issues," he said.

Mr Muna stated that The University of Fiji's programmes were especially important because they prepared students to participate in collaborative projects such as Yadrava Na Vanua.

"The different schools offer programmes relevant to the local, regional and global markets thus preparing students for easy integration into multidisciplinary research teams or multicultural work environments," he said.

The University also provided students with exciting extracurricular activities such as workshops and symposiums.

"These are opportunities that students can utilise to create connections with peers and experts in different fields of their interests. This in turn fosters a collaborative nature within the students and prepares them for working with different institutions or multidisciplinary teams," he said.

"I strongly believe that participating in teams such as Yadrava Na Vanua can expose students and researchers to new and innovative ideas to address important issues affecting our communities today. Such teams allow individuals to express and practice their expertise while contributing to solving issues that matter to us," he concluded.

The University of Fiji' Strategic Plan 2022-2026 supports such initiatives of staff and students under the strategic goal 5.3 – Research to deepen interdisciplinary research collaborations with other universities and national, regional and international institutes.

### About the Yadrava Na Vanua Team

Yadrava Na Vanua is divided into three sub-teams: mangrove and coastal carbon, forests and trees outside of forests, and remote sensing, GIS, and MRV.

A diverse and interdisciplinary team with expertise in remote sensing, GIS, climate science, forestry, mangrove, marine science, carbon sequestration, carbon sequestration verification, and ecology is part of this effort.

The Yadrava Na Vanua project focuses on integrating satellite data on land cover types across Fiji with ground truth measurements, as well as refining carbon sequestration data through machine learning analysis of high-resolution satellite images from Planet to generate international standard levels of measurement, reporting, and carbon stock verification.

The team encourages greater focus on environmental monitoring while building the next generation of environmental scientists, conservators and practitioners and, in doing so, to also conserve the environment and the Vanua for future generations.

## “अपनी संस्कृति और पहचान को बचाने के लिए मातृभाषा हिन्दी का संरक्षण करें”

शिक्षा का उद्देश्य केवल मात्र धन कमाना ही नहीं है बल्कि बच्चों को देश का, श्रेष्ठ नागरिक बनाना भी है, और इसके लिए उसे शारीरिक, मानसिक, बौद्धिक, नैतिक, आध्यात्मिक और सांस्कृतिक तौर से शिक्षित करना परम आवश्यक है। मातृभाषा हिन्दी के पठन-पाठन से शिक्षा के इस उद्देश्य की पूर्ति सहज की जा सकती है। भारतीय एवं समस्त मानव समुदाय के लिए यह सुखद समाचार है कि यूनिवर्सिटी ऑफ फीजी में हिन्दी पठन-पाठन की सुविधाएँ सभी स्तर पर उपलब्ध है। विश्वविद्यालय में डिप्लोमा, डबल मेज़र डिग्री, पोस्टग्रेड डिप्लोमा, मास्टर ऑफ आर्ट्स-हिन्दी पठन-पाठन की मान्यता प्राप्त सुविधाएँ उपलब्ध हैं। यह बतलाते हुए खुशी हो रही है कि वर्ष 2021 एवं 2022 में कुछ बच्चे मास्टर ऑफ आर्ट्स-हिन्दी डिग्री प्राप्त कर चुके हैं।

हिन्दी के महत्व को समझते हुए विश्वविद्यालय द्वारा ‘हिन्दी शोर्ट कोर्स’ शिक्षण शुरू किया गया है। यह पाठ्यक्रम खासकर उन युवाओं, स्कूली शिक्षकों, सरकारी और गैर सरकारी संस्थाओं के कर्मचारियों के लिए तैयार किया गया है जो हिन्दी में अपनी योग्यता बढ़ाना चाहते हैं। इसके अन्तर्गत हिन्दी पढ़ने-लिखने और पूर्ण रूप से समझने के लिए बेसिक एवं इन्टरमीडिएट व्याकरण के नियम सिखाए जाएंगे ताकि वे हिन्दी की पूर्ण योग्यता प्राप्त कर सकें। इस ‘हिन्दी शोर्ट कोर्स’ का मुख्य उद्देश्य है कि सभी हिन्दी भाषा के महत्व को जाने, हिन्दी लिपि एवं हिन्दी शब्दों का ज्ञान प्राप्त करें तथा शुद्ध लेखन के लिए हिन्दी वाक्य संरचना को पूर्णतः समझ सकें।

वर्ष 2021 में लॉकडाउन के उपरान्त हिन्दी दिवस बड़ी धूमधाम से मनाया गया। सभी बच्चों के लिए कविता लेखन एवं गायन प्रतियोगिता और प्रश्नोत्तर-प्रतियोगिता (Quiz Competition) का आयोजन किया गया। भाग लेने वाले सभी बच्चों को नकद धन और सर्टिफिकेट दिए गए। इस हिन्दी दिवस को सफल बनाने में महा सचिव ‘विश्व हिन्दी सचिवालय’ मॉरीशस का विशेष सहयोग नकद धनराशि के रूप में प्राप्त हुआ। हिन्दी के प्रचार-प्रसार में ‘विश्व हिन्दी सचिवालय’, मॉरीशस के सहयोग की सराहना करते हुए हिन्दी विभाग एवं यूनिवर्सिटी की ओर से हार्दिक धन्यवाद देती हैं।

एल.एल.सी. डिपार्टमेंट के हिन्दी विभाग द्वारा 16 मार्च, 2022 को रंगों और प्रेम का पर्व, होली बड़ी धूमधाम से मनाया गया। स्कूल ऑफ ह्यूमनिटीज एण्ड आर्ट्स के डीन प्रोफेसर तुपेनी बावा ने शानदार भाषण द्वारा मुख्य अतिथि, आमन्त्रित मेहमान, यूनिवर्सिटी परिवार एवं ऑन-लाइन जुड़े हुए सभी आमन्त्रित मेहमानों का स्वागत किया। हमारी यूनिवर्सिटी के प्रो चांसलर, एमबेसडर कमलेश आर्य, ओ.एफ. आर्य रत्न ने होली के महत्व पर प्रकाश डालते हुए विशेष रूप से यह संदेश दिया कि होली मानव मात्र को प्यार और आनन्द का संदेश देने वाला त्योहार है। यूनिफीजी के फाग गायन सदस्यों द्वारा साज-वाज के साथ मधुर स्वर में होली गीत प्रस्तुत किए गए। इस अवसर पर स्वरचित कविताएँ भी प्रस्तुत की गईं। डिपार्टमेंट के सभी सदस्यों के सहयोग से होली उत्सव अति सराहनीय रहा। लाल, हरे, पीले रंगों से होली का आनन्द लिया गया। मिठाई वितरण तथा धन्यवाद देते हुए होली उत्सव का समापन किया गया। हिन्दी विभाग मई महीने में ‘गिरमिट दिवस’ मनाने की तैयारी कर रहा है।

इन्हीं चन्द्र शब्दों के साथ मैं पुनः हिन्दी प्रेमियों का हृदय से स्वागत करती हूँ और आशा करती कि इस वर्ष गिर मिट दिवस एवं हिन्दी दिवस के आयोजन में आप सबका सहयोग प्राप्त होता रहेगा। यह वर्ष सबके लिए शुभ एवं आनन्द पूर्ण रहे।

**‘मेरी शान मेरी हिन्दी महान’**

**चलो चलें हम हिन्दी सीखें, हिन्दी हमारी भाषा है।**

**भाषा से भी बढ़कर पहले, हिन्दी हमारी माता है।**

**माता ने जन्मा है हमको, दिखलाया सुन्दर संसार।**

**भाषा ने सिखलाया हमको, व्यवहारिक जीवन का ज्ञान।**

**धन्यवाद**

# **Nodrau Cakacaka Vata na Centre for iTaukei Studies kei na iTaukei Trust Fund Board Bose ni Navunavuci ni Porokaramu kei na Kosi ika14 ki na ika 17 ni Maji 2022**

## **Ikau**

A vakayacori e dua na sota siga va ena otela na Tanoa Waterfront ka vakarautaka na Centre of iTaukei Studies ka tiko kina na ivakalesilesi ni iTaukei Trust Fund Board kei ira tale era sureti oka kina o Simione Sevudredre na Prinsipal Cultural Officer ena iTaukei Institute of Language & Culture kei Ratu Meli Tora , lewe ni matabose ni Univesiti ka matataka tale ga mai na Ba Holdings Ltd kei na 'vanua' o Vuda. A vakadeitaki o ira e baleti ira na vuli ena veikosi kece ka vakakina na veika e gadrevi me vulici me qarauni me veiganiti na ulutaga se lewe ni vuli. A buli tale ga na takete, na iwalewale ni kena vakatavulici kei na so tale na veika e dodonu me vakasamataki me baleta na kosi.

A rau sureti mai e rua na vulagi ka rau mai vakaitavi :

## **Keynote Speaker 1 : “Rise Beyond the Reef” – Mrs Janet Lotawa**

A mai vosa o Ms Janet Lotawa mai na “Rise Beyond the Reef” ka mai vakamacala ena yavu ni nona kabani ka vakakina na nodratou veicurumakitaka na cakacaka ni liga vaka Viti kei na kena ena gauna edaidai ka vaka kina na kena veisemati na nona kabani kei na vanua raraba, vakauasivi na nodra tokoni na lewenivanua mera cicivaki bisinisi me ivurevure ni iyau vei ira kei na nodra matavuvale. E vakavure vakasama vakalevu ki na kena buli na kosi leleka na veika a mai cauraka.

## **Keynote Speaker 2 : Ms Sachiko Soro mai na “VOU FIJI” group**

A mai vosa tale ga o Ms Sachiko ka tekivu ena yavu ni kabani kei na gaunisala e vukea kina na vanua ena kedrau veicurumakitaki na meke vakavanua vakaitaukei kei na meke ni gauna vou edaidai. A vakaraitaka ni ra vakaogai na itabagone mai na duidui drake ni bula ka biuta vata na veika e tiki ni nodra itovo kei na ivalavala vakavanua se na veika e nodra kei na veika vovou ni gauna qo.

A yalataka tale ga o Ms Sachiko me veivuke ena kena navuci na kosi leleka kei na porokaramu ni vuli. A qai solia vua o Ratu Meli Tora e dua na iloloma ni oti nona vakaitavi, oya e dua na ivola vakatokai na: “Healing Hands” A yaco na veivosaki ena loma ni tolu na siga ka ratou vakamacala na dauniveituberi main a Centre for iTaukei Studies ena veigacagaca kece ni kosi ka ra voci kina vakavudi na veikosi era vakatututaki tiko qo.

1. Kesa masi kei na Buki kei na Toni isulu - Usaia Gaunavou
2. Tei Vanilla - Usaia Gaunavou
3. Tali Ibe kei na basikete - Amelia Tuilevuka
5. Cori se tui salusalu (Lei) - Avisake Moceica
6. Sivisivi kei na tocitoci - Mosese Baseisei
7. Meke vakavanua kei na lagasere (Performing Arts) - Simione Sevudredre

E a vulagi dokai na Vais Janisela ni Yunivesiti ni Viti o Parovesa Shaista Shameem ena imatai ni siga, ka vakaraitaka ni oya e dua na gaunisala ni kena maketaki na kosi kei na porokaramu kece ni vuli ena Yunivesiti ni Viti. A qai dolava na vuli ka qai tekivu na porokaramu ni oti na guni ti ni tini na kaloko.

A qai mai tini na porokaramu ni imatai ni siga ena dua na veisiko ki na Yunivesiti ni Viti ena nona veisureti na marama na Vaisi Janisela o Parovesa Shaista Shameem me lai raici na iteitei ni CIS se na “Bilabila” ena yacana vaka Vuda.

**Usaia Gaunavou**  
**Acting Director**  
**Centre for iTaukei Studies**