



Press Statement

Workshop for Careers and Principals: 19th September 2020.

An innovative workshop held for Career Teachers and Principals of Fiji by the University of Fiji at the weekend was hailed by the participants as very informative.

The workshop was designed to brief career teachers and principals about the programmes offered by the University in 2021 within the limitations imposed by the advent of Covid-19 which was affecting the delivery of education in all countries of the world, Fiji being no exception.

Providing the keynote address from the University's Suva Campus which was *simulcast* to its Saweni Campus and to participants in Labasa, the Acting Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem said that the main purpose of the Workshop was to brief secondary school students through their career teachers and principals on the ways in which the University could assist students despite the inevitable effects of Covid-19 on their future prospects in higher education and jobs.

Professor Shameem said it was no secret that the pandemic had placed huge restrictions on the ability of high school teachers to properly advise their students about what the future may hold for them. 'Industry' the world over was facing serious repercussions from a contracting global economy the likes of which had not been seen before.

Professor Shameem said the pandemic's impact on the global economy was felt even in a small nation like Fiji, as was evidenced by fewer jobs being available to graduates. Thus the University of Fiji was obliged, and indeed had a duty, to inform high school students who would normally have contemplated a university education and made their own career choices to consider the range of options that it was now able to provide in the current uncertain climate.

Professor Shameem said the University was able to offer a range of alternatives to its normal offerings and to seriously consider how it could make its programmes more affordable for those who might miss out on sponsorships in the form of TELS or NTS. She said the University was proud that its programmes were given full recognition on the Fiji Higher Education's Quality Framework. This made it easier for students and their parents to appreciate that the University's programmes were of quality and transferable internationally.

The workshop participants' asked questions about their students' access to affordable quality education, access to and delivery of virtual learning and virtual classrooms, IT competence, students' concerns about their future and the teachers' own concerns about how best to advise their students and guide them towards their goals despite limited career options.

The University's Deans provided an outline of the individual programmes in their Schools. Senior administrators explained the entry requirements for each programme.

TSLB representatives also attended the workshop and outlined how applications for sponsorships for TELS and NTS could be made.

The Registrar of the University, Ms Karishma Mani said that teachers played a critical role in carving career pathways for students; hence the workshop was a medium to provide relevant information to teachers to guide students into making properly informed choices.