



The University of Fiji

United States Ambassador launches the University of Fiji's Lawn Chess and donates Medical Textbooks.

His Excellency, Joseph J. Cella, the American Ambassador to Fiji yesterday launched the University of Fiji's Lawn Chess. The Ambassador's mission was to donate medical textbooks to the Umanand Prasad School of Medicine but during his visit he was invited to also launch the University's Lawn Chess. Ambassador Cella made the first move in the inaugural game which was completed by two academic staff of the University.

The Acting Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem said that the University of Fiji's Lawn Chess set, made with outside pieces, is possibly the first in Fiji to be available for Fijian national chess tournaments. The University has established a Chess Club for staff and students who will be competing in national championships as time goes on.

She said the University was grateful to the US Ambassador for launching the Lawn Chess as well as donating much needed medical text books to the UPSM which will be housed in the University Library. The books were a gift from the Embassy in partnership with the Asia Foundation.

Speaking at the event, Professor Shameem said that the University of Fiji was small and mostly privately funded and had to really stretch to make ends meet. "But we are big on two things equally –we have the ambition to be the best, and we are committed to providing service to the people. We consider ourselves to be the People's University because we see education as a service to the people. Our programmes have been established with that focus in mind," she said.

Professor Shameem said that the University was founded on values and it was these values that made the University resilient.

"As we move deeper into the new century at a time of great difficulty due to the coronavirus situation the world over, we find that the values that our University's founders instilled in us- what others might call the "soft skills" of integrity, ethical conduct and authenticity- to be taught alongside the hard skills of formal qualifications- allow us to become more resilient to the recent challenges that we could not have anticipated even this time last year," she said.

Ambassador Cella, said that for the United States Government 'people to people diplomacy' was important.

"It is an extension of our country to yours, the Embassy to you as individuals and as an institution. I am an alumnus of a privately funded liberal Arts college so I know the sacrifice but the great work that goes under their roof and I know those are here. It augments the great work of your teachers and your leadership," he said.

Prior to visiting the Saweni Campus, the US Ambassador had presented medical books to the Library at the Samabula Campus. Subsequently, he invited Law students to watch a series of legal films at the United States Embassy in Suva. Professor Shameem said the University heartily approved of the 'movie diplomacy' that the US Ambassador had initiated.