

Higher Education Roundtable

The University held a Roundtable Discussion last month (January 15), focusing on human resource needs in Fiji in the next decade.

Representatives from the public and private sectors, the media, non-governmental organisations, trade unions, religious organisations, and other opinion-shapers attended the meeting.

Different approaches to agricultural studies were discussed in light of Fiji's vulnerability to natural disasters and pandemics. The current pandemic also required the need for the Tertiary Scholarships and Loans Board (TSLB) to re-evaluate funding for MBBS studies, given the need for more doctors.

Acting Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem said many students and parents had lost their jobs as a result of the pandemic.

"That is why we wanted to give the opportunity to community groups to tell us and therefore we tell the TSLB to examine exactly where the economic growth will be in the future and where Government should be putting money so that we can educate students for them to get a good livelihood in the future," she said.

A major topic of discussion also was the need for tertiary institutions to offer inter-disciplinary studies.

The Roundtable meeting was initiated by the University after a request from the TSLB that higher education institutions assist in a review of human resource needs for the private and public sector in the next 10 years. The Roundtable meeting also identified skills shortages in various sectors of the economy; emerging areas in the labor market, and the review of budgetary allocations to ensure that an adequate level of funding was available and invested where skills were needed.

The discussions were compiled and a report was later submitted to the TSLB.