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 from this week.

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.

Nisha said she had always been torn between her two favourite subject, however the award helped her to think deeper about her interest area and make a decision about the subjects she wanted to pursue at tertiary level.

"As I will be undertaking just the introductory courses, it will help me clear my thoughts and decide if the discipline I am planning to pursue is really what I am looking forward to studying. I can always change my discipline if I come to realise this course is not what interests me," she explained.

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 will be studying ITand Leanne will study Pure Sciences. They have already attended their first

lectures this week. The lecture times for their selected courses are held outside normal school hours for convenience to the two awardees.
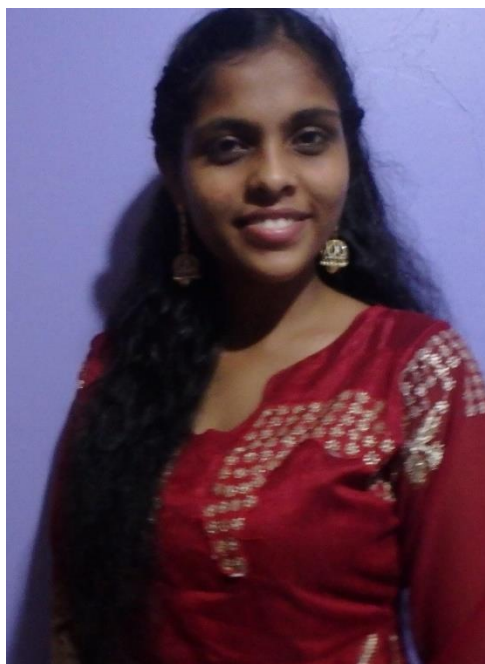
The students thanked their teachers, friends and family for their never-ending support.

Background

The UniFijiStart Scholarship allows students who will begin Year 13 in April to study up to two University 100 level courses per semester while still in Year 13. The tuition fees for the students will be fully funded by the University as the UniFijiStart Scholarship Scheme.

Leanne Jia Yao Zhong, Yat Sen

Salihah Nubaysha Nisha

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