

UniFiji Wins First Round of Debate Contest

The University of Fiji Debate team has won the first round of the Dialogue Fiji organised “Inter-University Debate on Elections” last weekend. The contest took place at the Fiji National University 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 (UniFiji) and two teams from the Fiji National University (FNU). There will be 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 to be held on 9th April is "Social Media is good for election and Democracy".

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.

Ezra Pickering said the team worked comprehensively and ensured that they understood the debate topic.

“This was done so with adequate research and readings related to the topic and other related themes that we could brain-storm. The governing theme on the debate was on the Elections and therefore, our knowledge of the elections and the electoral process came into play especially after attending recent workshop on elections. We ensured that we collected relevant information in order to solidify our stance in the debate and also essential facts that would aid us in the rebuttal of the other teams raised points. All in all, we relied on teamwork and good communication in the lead up to the debate,” he explained.

Speaking about his experience at the contest, Aadarsh Kumar said that the knowledge and experience gained from this debate will last them a lifetime.

“It has honed our public speaking skills and also boosted confidence in terms of the electoral system in Fiji and has made us capable of disseminating the information we have gathered so far to our families and community members. Overall this has given us so much exposure and has enhanced our contact building. We appreciate the difference in opinion and how it can be a great tool to address issues in our nation not just in the present but also in the future,” he said.

The winning Team (UniFiji Team 1) received \$600 and the runners up (FNU team 2) received \$300. The unsuccessful teams received a consolation prize of \$150.

The Competition was judged by a panel of qualified lawyers, Ms Miriam Naco of Parshotam & Company, Ms Mele Rakai from Sherani & Company and Mr Jovilisi Liganivalu from Munro Leys.