

UniFiji Watch



The University of Fiji
(An Entity of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji)

Issue No. 2

A publication of the University of Fiji's first journalism students

November 2022

The Drua Launch



The Drua in dry-dock before heading off

By Shaniyah Khan

A LONG wait was over on the 18th of October for the University of Fiji as it finally launched the "Drua Voyage: Climate Change Resilience and Renaissance Project".

The Drua Project is part of a climate change research that aims to lead to societal transformation. It is a collaborative project which involves two other universities from Fiji which are the University of the South Pacific (USP) and Fiji National University (FNU) respectively.

UniFiji's Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem said how important this research project is for the present and future generations.

The summary of Our Drua Project is that all Schools and the Centre for iTaukei Studies of the University will jointly embark on a voyage on the Drua which, from March 2023, will sail for a month along the coastal villages near us to research both resilience and renaissance with respect to climate change effects and mitigation", said Professor Shameem.

Taking into consideration the past and recent events of the world, on top of all that, the ongoing impact of climate change, we are very aware that Universities have a duty to contribute to social change for the public good. That means not just thinking about sustaining all life on our planet but also ensuring we leave a good legacy for the generations to come"

The keynote speaker at the event Ratu Iliesa Cebaivalu, the Taukei Sawaieke, highlighted that The University of Fiji stands on the edge of reclaiming and reconnecting how holistic sustainability was safeguarded for the betterment of all.

For the University of Fiji to journey towards a holistic education that will impact positively in Fiji in the midst of climate change, it needs to go back before it can journey forward," said Ratu Iliesa

Unifiji's JMS program to go a long way said Lecturer

By Shaniyah Khan

THE journalism and media studies program had been introduced into the university of Fiji this year and has shown tremendous progress.

The pioneer students have now had nearly two semesters of work in the university's new journalism and media studies department.

The Fiji Times and the Fiji Sun have enthusiastically welcomed the journalism students into their offices, and there are plans for training in TV and radio studios also.

The students have met deadlines, and have worked according to briefs provided by news editors and chief reporters, earning by-lines and the praise of professionals along the way. Another example of the very practical nature of the University of Fiji course is the newspaper that the students have started producing.

The man behind the terrific idea of the student newspaper the UniFiji Watch, Mr Vimal Madhavan based in the UK who visited the Saweni campus on the 5th of October.

Mr Madhavan was welcomed by all staff and of course the Journalism and Media Studies students with whom he had a very good discussion of what the new semester brought to the students.

"The newspaper, UniFiji Watch, was launched as the first cohort of journalism students approached the end of their first semester. The students worked together on choosing stories and assigning them, planned what pictures they would have and how to get them, and set deadlines for stories and publication", said Mr Madhavan.

"It is a testament to the commitment of the students that they did not miss any deadlines even though they were tying up loose ends and making adjustments as they went along a bit like life in a real newsroom"

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UniFiji Drua to help in combating climate change impacts-Taukei Sawaieke

By Shaniyah Khan

“LIKE our forefathers who went before us, Pacific people of today need fine vessels to connect us to face this even greater adversity- that of Climate Change which is largely affecting our Pacific Islands,” said Iliesa Cebaivalu.

He said that despite the Pacific Islands contributing only 0.03 per cent of total greenhouse gas emissions the impacts are still a threat to our homeland, culture, livelihoods and even our Pacific identity.

The Drua is a well-established vessel that the Pacific Island people need to connect to so that the adversity of climate change can be mitigated.

Here in Vuda, we have experienced first-hand the effect of Climate change with changing weather patterns and conditions, more severe tropical cyclones, hotter temperatures and longer droughts,” said Ratu Iliesa.

For the people in Vuda to tackle climate change impacts man-grove planting program and a recent coral planting program with the Vuda Marina has been introduced.



The Drua

“We realise that we cannot do this alone. More is needed but the solutions are already embedded in the language, values, kinship and traditions of the vanua”

“The trick is in knowing how to tap into this ancient ideology and contextualize it to suit today’s situation”

“In so doing, the University of Fiji will not only be educating for mere qualification, through the Drua Project it will re-equip and re-empower its students and tomorrow’s leaders to be lifelong custodians of the people and the environment via its heightened ways of learning, unlearning, and re-learning”

“And in keeping with the wisdom of navigation, may I counsel the University that “One can never change the winds, but one can adjust one’s sails”

Taukei Sauwaieke welcomed traditionally



Men performing the sevusevu

By Virisila Enikosuna

TAUKEI Sawaieke, Ratu Iliesa Cebaivalu was honored by a traditional welcoming ceremony during the Drua Voyage Concept launch at the University of Fiji, Saweni Campus, on the 18th of October.

University of Fiji’s staff, members of Viseisei and students of the Centre of iTaukei Studies (CIS) participated in the traditional welcome of ‘sevusevu’.

The traditional title of ‘Taukei Sawaieke’ holds a significant position in the Vanua of Vuda.

Ratu Iliesa was invited to be the keynote speaker at the launch of the unique project that will facilitate understanding of climate change issues that are facing the University of Fiji’s neighbours as part of the university’s contribution to community wellbeing.

The welcoming ceremony began with the iVolasiga Vou – Drua ushered in with women singing, a ‘cere’ was then performed whereby the sailors ran after the women who were holding mats, tapa, and a ‘tabua’.

The ‘cere’ was followed with a ‘sevusevu’ presentation by the men of the Centre of iTaukei Studies and Viseisei villagers.

The ceremony ended with the singing of the national anthem and the initiation of the official Drua Voyage Concept launch.

Ratu Iliesa acknowledged the University for performing the traditional ceremony during his address.



“Magical moment of my life that reminds me of my ambitions” Dr. Siodmok

By Seran Devi

THE launch of the University of Fiji’s Drua Project Concept brought back fond memories for one of the Chief Guests at this event.

The Drua Project Concept is the brainchild of Unifiji’s Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem where a traditional Fijian drua (canoe) was used to depict the launch, encompassing holistic learning and education for all.

In her address at the Vuda Marina where the drua was put to sea, Dr. Andrea Siodmok, the Chief Impact Officer of the Royal Society of Arts London, expressed her desire to create a future where people, places, and the planet all flourish together and this she said is also the RSA’s objective.

“I took a student loan and went sailing for two weeks, visiting eleven islands in Santorini, Greece. Lying on the deck of the boat, I felt as if I could reach the stars, and I remembered Oscar Wilde’s quote that “we are all in the gutter, but some of us are looking at the stars,” stated Dr. Siodmok. This became one of the most magical moments of my life.”

Dr. Siodmok also shared the three things that are needed to build a better future, and they are knowledge, action, and agency.

“Now is the time to use the knowledge left to us by our ancestors to deal with the current challenges of the world and forge a better future”.

Dr. Siodmok’s address urges the youth of today to go back to the knowledge left to us by our ancestors.

The skills and actions that helped them create today for us will help us create a better future for the next generations.

Professor Shameem, explained that the Drua represents more than only the people’s traditional sailing abilities; it also represents the difficult voyage we must take in order to accomplish our objectives.

“In UniFiji’s case it’s the voyage to a holistic learning system and the RSA’s vision of creating a regenerative future,” said the VC.

VOX POP; The Drua Launch

‘how do you think the Drua concept will impact the university?’



Leone Zion Vurakania. (Student Recruitment Coordinator)

The Drua concept does not only help raise awareness against climate change but for our university it has become a key to a more open and traditional way to do research



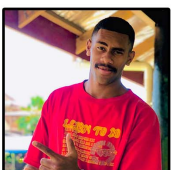
Arjun Pillay. (System Administrator)

The Drua Project opens up dialogue between the community and the University, hence strengthening inter-personal and intra-personal relationship. It gives opportunities and platform for researchers and academics to find solutions to the pressing environmental, social and cultural issues affecting Fiji and the South Pacific.



Azekah Yashna Swamy. (Lecturer in chemistry)

It enhances the notion of holistic development, as per the University of Fiji’s Strategic Plan 2022- 2026. It also connects the traditional practices and beliefs to contemporary Fiji, providing scope for improvements to a myriad of environmental problems Fiji is currently facing.



Ratu Imanueli Vosailagi. (Bachelor in Information Technology)

I believe that the Drua Project will help our university to go back to the traditional ways of our ancestors in the past in order to gain knowledge in combating climate change.



Adi Tokasa Uluilakeba. (Foundation in Social Science)

The launching of the Drua at the University strengthens the contribution of the University in addressing the causes and impacts of Climate change.

Social Media platforms aid Ba farmers in marketing



Ba farmers and Alvin Prasad and colleagues

By Seran Devi

“TODAY’S world is one where e-commerce is rapidly developing and has become essential for business organizations,” said Alvin Prasad, of the University of Fiji at the successful completion of a joint programme to help farmers in Ba use social media platforms to promote their business.

Prasad and his colleagues from UniFiji successfully completed the task of educating farmers from the Ba region about the involvement of technology in today’s world.

The team began working on the project in May and finished the training sessions in August thanks to the substantial financial assistance provided by the Australian High Commission as part of its Directed Aid Programme.

Farmers from all over Ba participated in the training sessions organized by the University team.

Participants were from the villages of Qerelevu, Nabatolu, Toge, Corika Settlement, Namau, Babriban, Balevuto, Naruku, and Benai.

A total of eighty participants were chosen, and 70 percent of them were female.

Prasad and his team were successful in creating a Facebook page for the farmers to post about their produce.

The page has been a success as many farmers have made posts and received comments from consumers.

It is called ‘Ba Farmfresh Online Market’.

“Their posts have garnered the attention of many customers as they have commented on the page.” Prasad commented.



Ba farmers and Alvin Prasad and colleagues





Fear of failure and judgment hold women back, says top businesswoman

By Shaniyah Khan



Ms. Antonia Watson delivering speech at Unifiji Samabula Campus

LACK of confidence, a fear of failure and judgment hold back a lot of young women in sports.

These were the sentiments shared by Ms Antonia Watson, Group Chief Executive Officer of ANZ Bank New Zealand, keynote speaker at The University of Fiji's Centre for Women in Leadership's first public event on Wednesday 21 September 2022 at its Samabula Campus.

The theme of Ms Watson's presentation was "Watch Women Win", that was released in New Zealand by ANZ late last year.

Which she spoke on winning as a female leader, her professional journey especially the lessons learnt along the way, and what it meant for all women.

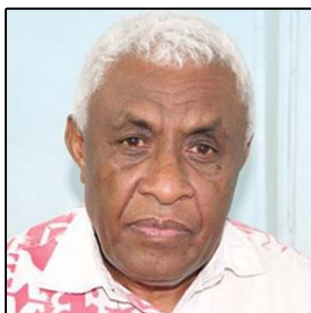
"We launched the Watch Women Win report because we were concerned that there was a lack of confidence, a fear of failure and judgement holding back a lot of young women in sports," said Ms Watson.

"It always seems harder to achieve your dreams if you're a girl, woman, or minority. While the barriers seem the same, so too are the solutions - encouragement, having visible role models, supporting others, and celebrating the steps of success and those already achieving."

Ms Watson concluded her lecture by discussing values that are essential for leaders. She stated that values are acquired over time and are at the heart of who a person is.

Fiji Women Lawyers Association Vice-President Ms Mele Rakai provided commentary and observations from a Fijian perspective.

Photos and graphics provide visual impact –



Managing Editor Fiji Sun,
Mr Nemani Delaibatiki

"A PAGE without photos looks flat, dull and boring", commented Fiji Sun's Managing Editor, Nemani Delaibatiki on the first edition of the University of Fiji student newspaper, UniFiji Watch, which he complicated.

"The main photo and caption were classic, the photo of a happy family brightened the page and the teaser caption made me want to read the rest of the story", Delaibatiki said.

He says the publication was great for a first edition as it had a good spread of human-interest stories and was very informative, especially for the university community and those wanting a peek into the activities of the university and its achievements.

The managing editor also commented on the improvements that could be made, as there could have been more information about the subjects of the stories.

"I wanted to be a doctor but I found out it was not my vocation in life. That was when I took up journalism. I was intrigued by the events that shaped the world and the important role that journalists played" he said.

Delaibatiki also recalls that writing had been one of his hobbies, at Queen Victoria School he was part of a school magazine, the Victorian.

"My advice to you as aspiring journalists is, like they say in rugby or other sports, to do the basics right. Have thick skin. You will have the unique opportunity to meet and talk to a wide range of people from the grassroots to Government, civic and business leaders."

"Access is a wonderful privilege that many people do not have. So, take pride in your profession. You are not only part of the writing of history you also help shape people's opinions and decisions", he concluded.

VC advises students to be courageous



University of Fiji Vice-Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem

By Virisila Enikosuna

UNIVERSITY of Fiji Vice-Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem was impressed with the new student publication 'UniFiji Watch.'

"The first edition of UniFiji Watch was beautifully presented and a very professional publication, it was informative because everyone had knowledge of what the University is doing," said Professor Shaista Shameem.

The VC recalls her previous life as a journalist, learning many things like writing in a simple way, writing to the point and figuring out what people like to know.

"My take on the front-page story is it was exactly what the first paper needed", Professor Shaista said about UniFiji Watch's first edition.

She advised the pioneer batch of the Journalism and Media programme students and any aspiring journalist to be courageous and never be frightened by anyone, but be respectful.

"Learn the craft well and read books written by experienced journalists. I would only suggest that in future publications a cartoon section could be very entertaining or a voice of the people section" says Professor Shameem.

By Virisila Enikosuna



Expansion of the Gaia landscape project

By Simran Dass

THE UNIVERSITY of Fiji Gaia Landscape Project Horticultural Coordinator, Tifare Paulo, says his team have managed to raise seedlings of crops, fruit trees and flowers for landscaping since the launch of the project.

Paulo adds the project is also aimed to identify and invest in alternative energy sources so the university can cut back on what it spends on power supply, and set an example to the community on sustainable design and waste management.

“There are three beehives at the site, for honey.

“Goals were set to raise pawpaw, oranges, lime and other traditional plants, at the site,” Paulo said.

In the meantime, Paulo says the collection of grass and compostable organic wastes for the whole school and ongoing consultation are needed for the location of the compost site, which should be accessible, near a water source and at least 100m from the school.

Vice Chancellor, Professor Shaista Shameem says the project will establish gardens and harvest vegetables that can make UniFiji more sustainable.

Professor Shameem hopes the venture will spread to other campuses, but Samabula Campus also had a vegetable garden



STUDENT POLLS:

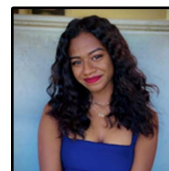
“Why did you choose The University of Fiji to complete your tertiary education”.



Josua Bolawaqatabu.
(Bachelors of Commerce in Accounting and Management)

Personally, choosing the University of Fiji has been the best decision I've taken in my life

.The university provides quality and holistic education where it does not only equip us with the necessary knowledge you need to attain your degree of choice it equips us with other qualities, skills and knowledge for becoming better citizens of this country.



Adeline Sami.
(Bachelor of Laws (LLB))

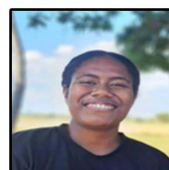
The reason I chose to study at the University of Fiji to pursue my tertiary education is because it offers so much more than just a career path at the end. As a student at this institution I am able to develop independence and self-confidence



Lawrence Singh.
(Bachelor of Laws (LLB))

I chose UniFiji for three main reasons:

The location suited me best as it was in the Western Division with its own School of Law; The mode of teaching appealed to me being a 40/60 assessment ratio and the substantive reason is the Dean of SOL, Professor Shameem as she knows best about the law.



Jane Tuidraki.
(Bachelor of Science in Bio & Chem)

UNIFIJI offers high quality, affordable higher education to students and with the inclusion of online learning has allowed students living from afar and working students to join classes.



Shania Kant.
(Bachelor of Nursing)

I chose University of Fiji because it provides academic support and career services, also to learn valuable skills that will help me succeed in my career.

The Appreciative and Accepting Monarch – Queen Elizabeth II

By Virisila Enikosuna



Figure 1; The late Queen Elizabeth II and Dr R.P.S. Gounder greet at the Lautoka Hospital in 1982

THE passing of the Queen of the United Kingdom and Head of the Commonwealth- Queen Elizabeth II brought back fond memories in so many ways to so many people.

Head of the Department of Language, Literature and Communication at the University of Fiji Dr Kamala Naiker, describes the late monarch as “beautiful, charming and lovely.”

“She must have had good human values, and was appreciative of the different states and cultures in which she led,” says Dr Naiker. Although Dr Naiker never had the chance to meet the late Queen Elizabeth II, her brother Dr R.P.S. Gounder, who was Superintendent at the Lautoka Hospital was fortunate to meet the Queen during her last visit to Fiji, on the 31st of October 1982.

Also, fortunate to have met a member of the monarchy was her mother who met Prince Charles, now the new King of Britain, during one of his visits to Fiji.

Dr Kamala hopes the newly crowned King Charles III would lead the United Kingdom and the Commonwealth with the same devotion as his late mother.

Digital news platforms will continue to exist

By Virisila Enikosuna

A TOP news editor believes that newspapers face a bleak future.

“I don’t believe newspapers we have today will exist in the future,” said Ms Samantha Magic, Editor of Islands Business.

“I think digital news platforms will continue to exist, but they will become more focused on more specific audiences,” she says.

Ms Magick is excited that potential parts of the Fijian community will have access to news and information that will specifically be for them.

“It’s an impressive start, well written and laid out with a good variety of articles,” she said about the UniFiji Watch virtual launch.

The Managing Editor says the first edition was very informative, as she learnt a lot about what was happening at the university.

“I’ve always wanted to be a journalist since I was a child. I have always loved writing and I was always very curious about the lives of other people- I still am”, she says.

She advises aspiring journalists of the Journalism and Media Studies Programme to stay curious, read widely, think critically, always question, and keep learning as there is always room for improvement.



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Drua Pictorial



Shanil Chetty



Passionate Acting MIT – Emosi Fong.



Staff, students and invited guests at the Drua launch.



Executive Director Finance Planning and Development – Ravineet Sami



The hardworking IT team.



The Drua makes its way to the Vuda Marina.



Traditional ceremony At the Drua launch.



Students pose for a photo session at the Drua launch.



Jace Ashish Nath and Leone Zion smile for the camera.



Captain Seta of the I Vola Sigavou.



The Drua all set to be launched.



I Vola Sigavou at the Vuda Marina.



Dr Andrea smiles for the camera while Ratu Iliesa looks on.



A lively moment at the launch.



The Vice Chancellor delivers her speech at the Drua launch.



Ratu Iliesa and Dr Andrea Sidmok sail on the Drua.



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Pictorial

Fiji Day/ Diwali/ Pinktober celebration



Beautiful ladies at the multicultural day celebrations.



Cake cutting at the Multicultural celebrations.



From left Professor Tupeni Baba, the Vice Chancellor and Mrs Ramrakha light the Diya at the Multicultural Day Celebrations.



Staff and students enjoy the entertainment of the celebrations.



UniFiji staff and students at the multicultural day celebrations.



The Aquarius Band perform on stage during celebrations.



CIS performance for the multicultural day celebrations.

UFSA Social Night





UniFiji Sports

Inter-tertiary Games Story

“One week of preparation pays off”

By Virisila Enikosuna

ONE week of training was enough for the University of Fiji (UniFiji) men’s netball team to win the Inter-tertiary Games final last month in Suva.

The team of seven competed in a tough match defeating the University of South Pacific, 18-12 at the USP Gymnasium. The Games were being held after a lapse of three years due to the Covid 19 pandemic restrictions.

Goal shooter Vetaia Matanatabua (third from left in picture) shot the last goal in the last few seconds of the match.

“It might be a small trophy, but it has won big hearts”, says Jona Toga, Treasurer of the University of Fiji’s Students Association.

“Where there is unity, God commands his blessings”, was the motto the athletes of UniFiji played by during the three-day inter-tertiary competition.

Supporters and Competitors were impressed with the win.

The only other award won by UniFiji was the mixed netball in 2019.



Figure: UniFiji Mens Netball Team

Wellbeing is key to holistic education says VC

By Seran Devi



Staff of UniFiji participate in a friendly match at the University ground

UNIVERSITY of Fiji Vice Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem says ‘wellbeing’ is part of the university’s five-year strategic focus.

“From my point of view the notion of a holistic education which includes ‘wellbeing’ comes from the University of Fiji Council’s foresight in promoting the main themes of our Strategic Plan 2022-2026”, said Professor Shameem.

She believes that holistic education needs to be balanced not only theoretically but with various outdoor activities that complement holistic education.

“Sports actually teach important life qualities like self-control, responsibility, confidence, accountability, and teamwork. Simply said, engaging in physical activity stimulates the brain and improves cognitive function.”

Due to Covid-19 the University of Fiji staff and students were not able to enjoy the sporting activities that the university provides.

According to the VC, the University is back in action and has been taking major initiatives to provide its staff and students with the best facilities to help with their growth, whether physically or socially.

“Sports have always brought people closer and the same goes for the students and staff of this University. Making students and staff interact with one another, allowing them to form a bond, is one of our goals,” concluded Professor Shameem.

The Editorial Team

THE Second semester like the first has been a busy one. Courses studied this semester dove deeper into digital journalism and perfecting the art of writing and identifying what makes news.

Like the previous semester, students of the programme were attached to newsrooms - thanks to Fiji Times – they have experienced gathering polls for the Fiji Times and managed to publish two stories.

The team of five – Editor Virisila Enikosuna, Shaniyah Khan (VOX Newsroom), Seran Devi, Simran Dass and Publication Designer, Nihaal Pillay, and the guidance of Lecturer Mr Matai Akauola, in this publication managed to put together an eight-page publication.



From Left, Virisila Enikosuna, The Editor, Simran Dass, Seran Devi, Shaniyah Khan & Designer, Nihaal Pillay

