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Diwali Celebrations

The UniFiji staff and students jointly organized a Diwali programme at the Saweni Campus on Tuesday October 25.

The programme was well attended by staff, students and friends of the University. The programme had numerous performances such as the Dandhiya Raas, Bhakti dance, fun competitions, diwali songs and a Diwali fashion show.

Speaking at the Diwali function, Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar said that people in Fiji were quite fortunate in that they had the freedom to celebrate all major religious festivals.

"Festivals are an important and inseparable part of our lives, if there were no festivals, our lives would be meaningless and dry," said Professor Muralidhar. He added that in order to add happiness, vigour and vitality to one's life, it was essential to engage in festivities.

"In many countries, there is an intimate connection between festivals, natural seasons and the crops. To some extent we also see this in Fiji—the orange and the daruka appearing together during early part of the year, and the mango ripening towards the end of the year. Just as seasons change, the nature changes its colours, and the crops also change. So the year is full of colourful changes in nature accompanied by colourful festivals," explained Professor Muralidhar.

Professor Muralidhar added that Dipavali was the festival of lights, the festival of brightness and colour. "The dark night of the new moon is transformed by the shining lights of the diya," said Professor Muralidhar.

"A burning lamp provides light, provides enlightenment to others. It gives the message of sacrifice. It is as if the burning lamp is telling us, "do not live for yourself—live also for others, remove the darkness and ignorance from your heart and mind," said Professor Muralidhar.

Professor Muralidhar also said that in addition to cleaning one's home and yards before Diwali, but it was equally important to clean one's mind of evil thoughts and intentions.

"Diwali has a special meaning for us all in Fiji where we are trying to create a national consciousness to build one nation, one people and one country, and a secure future of peace and prosperity for all our citizens," concluded Professor Muralidhar.

The programme ended with scrumptious Diwali sweets and it was an excellent opportunity for staff and students to socialize.



UniFiji Masters Student wins ANU's Pacific Scholarship Award

Ms Joshila Lal, who won the *Raman Nair Award* at this year's Graduation for being the best student graduating in the Postgraduate International Relations Programme, has secured **The Australian National University's (ANU) Pacific Scholarship Award for 2011**. She is now a Masters Student in the International Relations Programme offered by the Centre for International and Regional Affairs (CIRA). This is a great recognition from a prestigious Australian university of CIRA's Programme.

The Honorary Director of CIRA, Mr. Robin Nair said that real recognition of a University comes only when its courses are recognized and accredited by top overseas universities.

"CIRA's International Relations Programme is only two years old and we have not only secured recognition of our Programme by the Australian National University but one of our students has been able to secure a prestigious scholarship in recognition of the coursework and research done by Ms Lal at CIRA".

The Pacific Scholarship Award is offered by The State Society and Governance in Melanesia Program (SSGM), situated in ANU College of Asia and the Pacific, to graduate students and scholars from Universities, research institutions and professional bodies in the Pacific Islands to attend its *Developing Pacific Scholarship Program* for two weeks from 30 January to 10 February 2012. Full travel costs to and from Canberra, plus accommodation, will be paid. This Programme is envisaged as a training opportunity for younger Pacific Island researchers.

During the first week of the Programme, a selection of ANU Pacific Studies staff will offer brief summaries of their current research, there will be opportunities for comments and feedback on the visiting participants' writing and research, and guided introduction to research resources.

The second week will feature 15-20 minute presentations from each of the visitors on any aspect of their research. Trips around Canberra and social events will also be offered.



Joshila Lal

Ms Joshila Lal's research topic under CIRA's Masters Programme is: "Economic Partnership Agreements between the Pacific Island States and the European Union (EU): *What's in it for the people of the Pacific?*" Her abstract for this research has now been accepted by SSGM Program at the ANU.

Mr. Nair also added that they were recently advised by LaTrobe University in Melbourne that CIRA's Postgraduate Certificates and Postgraduate Diplomas in International Relations were recognized qualifications for entry into their Masters in International Relations Programme.

Launch of the Accounting Students Association

The Department of Accounting and Finance met on Wednesday October 19 to discuss the establishment of the University of Fiji Accounting Students' Association (UFASA).

Newly elected President Ms. Sandhiya Roy said that the main aim of establishing the UFASA was to help students network amongst each other and with other professionals in the accounting field. This would most certainly guide students and shape their careers.

She added that other objectives of this student society was to organize events throughout the academic year which would help members in many ways.

She said that the UFASA would also help initiate and maintain a strong professional relationship among the UniFiji students who have a keen interest in the field of accounting.

"Establishing a link between the University and the Alumni through the UFASA is also an important area we are looking at," said Ms. Roy.

"UFASA seeks to provide other benefits to members such as job search and career direction in the industry, academia or opportunities in public accounting firms," she added.

Ms Roy said that members will be strongly encouraged to attend competitions, conferences or workshops which will really boost their knowledge in the profession as well as build their confidence.

Ms Roy said that the UFASA also aims to give back to the University and the community by producing able, responsible and ethical citizens.

Making an immediate impact, the UFASA has organized a seminar on November 2 at the Saweni Campus.



Ms. Sandhiya Roy, President, UFASA

Mr. Ajesh Chandra, Manager-Business Advisory and Tax at KPMG has been invited by UFASA to present the topic '*Expectations from Today's Accounting Graduates*'.

The UFASA plans to organize similar seminars in future to help students get a taste of 'real-world' accounting practices.

Membership to UFASA is open to Accounting students of all year levels.

UniFiji Cricket Team wins ITG title

The University of Fiji's Cricket team won the recent Inter-Tertiary Games meet in Suva. They began the tournament on a high note defeating FNU by 35 runs in the first match at Albert Park. National team member Maciu Gauna was the best performer with the bat, top-scoring for UniFiji with 36 runs in the opening match.

After winning the cricket competition, UniFiji managed to get a sponsorship deal from FMF and Ramesh Investment Ltd.

"We are delighted to win this tournament," UniFiji captain Rukesh Patel said.

He said that the team's hard work, commitment and weeks of training finally paid off. "We are also grateful for the support given to us by the sponsors and our lecturers and other supporters whose contribution have made this success possible," he said.

FMF spokesperson Mr. Selvin Sharma said the company was committed to promoting and developing sports such as cricket in Fiji.

"The University of Fiji cricket team has the potential to excel in cricket and we are committed to the development of the sport in the country," Mr Sharma said.

University of Fiji manager Shivneel Gounder also showed gratitude to FMF and Ramesh Investments Ltd for the kind gesture.



Students training for the inter-tertiary games

World Human Rights Moot Court Competition

Every university in the world has been invited to enter a team of two students to the World Human Rights Moot Court Competition to be held at the University of Pretoria, South Africa, from the 8th to 9th December 2011. The School of Law at the University of Fiji has also been invited to participate in this competition. The first round will be in written form.

A hypothetical problem focusing on a human rights issue will be set, as if it will be adjudicated by a hypothetical International Human Rights Court, on the basis of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and other applicable (such as regional) human rights instruments. The students have to submit heads of argument in the prescribed format .

These heads of argument will then be evaluated by a panel of experts, and the best three submissions in each one of the five UN regions are identified giving a total of fifteen teams .

The fifteen teams involved (a total of 30 students) will then be invited to participate in person in the semi final rounds in Pretoria on 8th and 9th December, when the teams from the different regions will be paired against one another to determine the regional winners.

The two regional winning teams with the highest scores will compete against each other to determine an overall winner .

There will be semi finals and a final round. The official languages of the Competition will be English and French. Simultaneous translation will be provided where necessary.

The University of Fiji Law School has submitted its submissions on the 25th September. It is awaiting the decision of the Panel of Experts as to whether or not the Law School student representatives will appear for oral presentation on the 8th-9th December, 2011.

The two law students representing the Law School are: Pita Niubalavu and Watson Nata (Jr).

By Wilfred Golman — Senior Lecturer

School of Law

Suva Campus



UniFiji Mooting competition 2010.



Group discussion at the Suva Campus



Suva Campus Law students

Fiji Day Celebrations

On 7 October, the University of Fiji celebrated Fiji Day at the Saweni Campus. Staff, students and friends of the University turned out in good numbers to witness the excellent programme organized by the Centre for Itaukei Studies.

The Chief Guest at the celebration was Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar. He spoke about the significance of Fiji Day, what it means to the citizens and briefly discussed the people's charter for change, Peace and Progress.

The programme also had a good mix of performances and competitions such as oratory, meke/drama, basket weaving, quiz and singing etc.

Fiji Day programmes were held throughout the country at various organisations as this year marked Fiji's 41st day of independence.



'Thinking Globally'

The inaugural classes for the Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy programme began in Semester 2 at Suva Campus in Samabula.

Among the students who were part of the Masters programme were the Indonesian Ambassador, His Excellency, A. Chandra Salim, Indonesian First Secretary, Mr Pinardi Priambodo and the First Secretary of the Nauru High Commission, Peter Jacob.

The Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy comprises of eight courses if a student chooses to complete it through coursework, alternatively a student may complete six courses and a thesis (equivalent to two courses). The first two INR courses is a requirement for the Postgraduate Certificate in International Relations and the completion of the first four is required to complete the Postgraduate Diploma in International Relations.

INR 407 Global Business Management and INR 408 International Trade are the fifth and sixth courses required to complete the Masters in International Relations and Diplomacy.

The two courses were conducted at the Suva Campus recently.

INR 407 Global Business Management covers the role and issues of management in the global management. The aim of this course is to provide students with contemporary knowledge and to give them management skills that will enable them to operate effectively in complex global business environments. The course also gives students an indepth appreciation of global economic, political, legal and cultural environmental factors within which multinational businesses operate.

INR 408 International Trade examines 'international trade' from a 'law and development' perspective. Focusing on WTO law, it covers both the institutional and core rules of the multilateral trading system.

The course explores the role played by contemporary international trade law in influencing and shaping economic regionalism and 'free trade' in the Pacific.

It also examines aspects of 'realpolitik' in international and regional trade negotiations to enable students develop a foundation for understanding the dynamics at play in this contemporary process of a 'rules-based' system of economic globalization.



Masters in IR & Diplomacy group photo



Masters class in progress

UniFiji battles in the finals for the 2nd Annual Europa Shield Debate Competition

The delegation of the European Union for the Pacific extended a warm invitation to The University of Fiji to take part in the second Europa Shield Fiji Inter-University Debate 2011. The debate was held for two days 31st August – 1st September from 4.30 – 9.30pm in the Pasifika Auditorium at the FNU Pasifika Campus. UniFiji did not take part in the inaugural inter-university debate competition last year.

Each of the three universities in Fiji was represented by two teams. The University of Fiji Team 1 was led by Ms. Elesi Nailati, and included Mr. Isoa Tikoca and Ms. Rinika Prakash, while The University of Fiji Team 2 comprised of Mr. Usaia Draunimasi as team captain, Mr. Wilikinisoni Tuisawau, Ms. Ana Mataitini and the wonder boy Mr. Eroni Nawalu.

Ms Hettal Ben, Administrative Assistant in the Registrar's Office, accompanied the debating teams to Suva for the competition and earlier for the training workshop for all university teams. Hettal was also responsible for ensuring that there were no hitches in the administrative arrangements for the University's participation in the debating competition.

The topics for each team were picked from a hat the day before the competition. The team captains were informed ten minutes before the debate whether their team would speak for or against the topic. There were six matches on the first night; each team had two matches. Some of the themes for this year were: *Gender, Climate Change, Trade, Regional Integration, Domestic Violence, and Individual rights, HIV/AIDS, Disabilities, Child Labour and Biodiversity.*

The two University of Fiji teams worked together and were united in their desire to bring credit to the University; they shared information and supported each other. They faced many challenges. Preparation time was short.

Two members of the teams initially selected had to be dropped because of eligibility rules of the competition, something we were informed of after our teams had been selected. Their replacements had to be found within a couple of days of the competition. One other member of the team also withdrew a few days before the tournament. A replacement for her had also to be found. Some of the students who were approached to take her place refused. None of our student debaters had taken part in competitive debating before.

Hettal summed up the optimism of our student debaters: "Despite so many problems, we believed in ourselves. We were motivated by the knowledge that we could do it. And we did it. We got to the finals."

In the finals, The University of Fiji team lost to Fiji National University. The University of Fiji had beaten The University of the South Pacific in the semi-final.

Credit must go to Hettal who did a wonderful job organising the teams at Saweni and then looking after and helping the students in Suva, and to our great debaters Elesi, Isoa, Rinika, Usaia, Wilikinisoni, Ana, and Eroni for their dedication, hard work, enthusiasm, comradeship. They had sleepless nights in the lead up to the debates.

Their hard work paid off handsomely in the end, for themselves individually and the University.

Our debating teams did very well on another front. They were exemplary ambassadors for the University. They gave the University plenty of free publicity. They were on the news daily for the four days they were in Suva – in the newspapers and on television. They won much praise for their behaviour from the organisers of debates. Two of our students, Elesi and Usaia were sought out by Mr Netaini Rika, former editor of The Fiji Times, to help him with a project on youths he is working on.

On their last day in Suva our students visited to thank the people who helped them in their preparation for the debate: staff of the Fiji Women's Crisis Centre, UNICEF, FIJI TV, and the European Union.

**By: Mr Tito Isala
The Registrar
The University of Fiji.**



Mrs. Arishma Goundar attends Law and Culture Conference in Vanuatu

Mrs. Arishma Goundar-Prasad of the School of Law-University of Fiji attended the Law and Culture Conference held in Port Vila, Vanuatu from 29 – 31 August 2011. The conference was organized and hosted by the University of the South Pacific in collaboration with Universities from New Zealand.

The theme of the conference was “Law and Culture: The Present is the Living Past”. In consideration, the participant speakers were encouraged to express their findings and views on how law operates in the current post-colonial environment and the current paths of development in order to understand where Pacific islands’ laws and systems have come from.

Mrs Prasad qualified to attend the conference upon selection of her paper for delivery by the organizers of the conference. Her paper entitled “**Ban on “Burqa”: Is It Possible in Pacific Countries**” proposed a focus on the position of Pacific islands on the issues arising out of dependency on aids and donor influence on law and rights of their inhabitants in a global context. The abstract of the paper which was submitted is below:

“Following the tragic event of 9/11 there have been substantial changes to requirements to be fulfilled in respect of travel, migration and in matters such as grant of monetary assistance and other aids by one country to another. Consequently there are now strict conditions in place requiring the recipient country of monetary assistance and other aids to formulate

and adopt policies aligned with that of the donor country.

Approximately 8% of Fiji’s population practice and follow the religion of Islam. They have enjoyed uninhibited practice of their religion under the protection of the fundamental principles of human rights the pacific countries have adopted and followed. Burqa has been banned or restrictions have been placed on the situations in which it can be worn in some of the most progressive countries in the world such as France.

Debate on this issue is very prominent in the neighboring pacific island countries of Australia and New Zealand. Based on the fact that pacific island countries are heavily reliant on aids the paper examines how the peace enforcement conditionality concept which attaches to the aid is likely to cause a recipient pacific country to agree with arguments advanced for the ban of burqa by a donor country, if acceptance and implementation of such bans would in turn secure them continued aids.

The paper recognizes that there are no documented bans on wearing of burqa in the pacific countries. There is however no certainty that the pacific countries or its neighboring countries will not face such a situation in the near future. Hence it examines the issues in respect of ban of burqa in France and the arguments it has brought up in respect of cultural and religious rights of people in such a progressive developed country in order to generate discussions on how policy makers in the pacific countries will deal with such an issue should they come to its shores.”



Mrs. Arishma Goundar Prasad

Mrs. Prasad’s paper on delivery at the conference attracted much attention and stimulating discussions from the participants on the issues raised by the paper. The conference provided Mrs Prasad an elevated platform to exchange her thoughts and ideas with other participants from regional countries and New Zealand.

She showed her gratitude to the Dean of the Law School Pundit Devendra Pathik and Associate Professor Dr Shaista Shameem for their tremendous support and encouragement throughout the process.

She also likes to convey a heartfelt thanks to the Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar and the Registrar Mr Tito Isala of the University of Fiji for their sponsorship and overwhelming support.

*By Mrs. Arishma Goundar Prasad
Lecturer
School of Law*

KPMG interviews Final year students

Chartered Accountant (CA) firm, KPMG recently interviewed final year Accounting students at the University’s Saweni Campus.

The interviews were organized at the request of the CA firm as the University is known to produce excellent Accounting students every year. These interviews were made possible because the University’s Accounting programme is fully accredited by the Fiji Institute of Accountants.

Senior staff members of KPMG visited the campus to conduct separate sessions of interviews with students who were shortlisted after applying for the position of Graduate Accountant. The position was advertised within the University and allowed students to indicate whether they would like to work in the Audit, Tax or Business Advisory sections of the two firms.



File Photo

UniFiji signs MoU with the University of Waikato

The University of Fiji's School of Law and the University of Waikato's Faculty of Law signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on 28 September 2011.

The Dean of the University of Waikato's Faculty of Law Prof. Bradford Morse, Vice Chancellor of the University of Fiji Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar and the Dean of the University of Fiji's School of Law Pundit Devendra Pathik signed the MoU in the presence of UniFiji staff at the Saweni Campus.

The MoU aims to establish an academic relationship with the university of Waikato Law School which is run along similar lines as the University of Fiji Law School and emphasizes 'Law in Context' with close attention paid to individualized legal training and learning; debates and moot competitions; placements in law firms and organizations from an early stage; and support by law students of the community they live in. We also emphasize public interest litigation, which the University of Fiji's School of Law is currently developing as a specialist area of practice.

Associate Professor Dr. Shaista Shameem said that the idea was initiated when they were visited 2 years ago by the staff of the University of Waikato's Faculty of Law.

"The MoU is expected to benefit the University of Fiji in a number of ways, first we are proposing a joint teaching and research programme; along with staff/student exchanges; joint publications on mutual areas of interest; on-going relationships at the senior levels; and hopefully this will also mean that other faculties may be able to take advantage of the opportunities opening up," said Dr. Shameem.

"Students of our law school will become internationalized. They will be able to take advantage of lectures on important topics given at the University of Waikato's Faculty of Law and become part of a bigger and vibrant movement of students; at the same time students of Waikato law school will also have the opportunity to attend a semester course with us; so there will be fruitful exchanges all the time," she said.

Dr. Shameem added that with modern technology, lecturing through video-link or Skype would be accommodated easily. She said that friendships across the two countries will also be forged as well as opportunities for employment overseas for UniFiji graduates.

"I believe the Waikato law lecturers are also excited about this MoU since they will be able to spend part of their sabbatical at a new law school in Fiji and be able to stamp their influence also on the teaching and research," she added.

Professor Bradford also conducted lectures at the Saweni and Suva Campuses for the legal professionals including magistrates, lawyers, government officials and member of the diplomatic corps.



Pundit Devendra Pathik, Dean of the School of Law signs the MoU in the presence of the Vice Chancellor, Prof. Muralidhar and Prof. Brad Morse, Dean of the Faculty of Law, University of Waikato

Dr. Shameem officially opens the Human Rights and Climate Change course at USP

Associate Professor Dr. Shaista Shameem of the University of School Law was invited by USP's Pacific Centre for Environment and Sustainable Development (PACE-SD) to be the Chief Guest at the opening of the ten day regional training course which was held in Suva from 12 - 23 September 2011.

The course titled, '*Human Rights and Climate Change: the added value for the South Pacific*', attracted participants from nine Pacific Island countries. The course titled, '*Human Rights and Climate Change: the added value for the South Pacific*', attracted participants from nine Pacific Island countries.

Speaking at the opening day of the course, Dr. Shameem said that the responsibility for placing climate change in the Pacific as a human rights issue rested with the Pacific Islanders

because they were directly affected by it. "It affects not just us, but our children and grandchildren, as well as all the generations that come after them in future," said Dr. Shameem.

She said that the idea of the 'human right to environment' was first mooted at an Asia Pacific human rights regional conference in 2006. "Climate change directly threatens fundamental human rights, the most important of which are the right to life, the right to food, the right to shelter, the right to health, and the right to work," said Dr. Shameem.

She further explained that violations of those rights in turn triggered contraventions of other rights, for example, the right to education, the right to housing, the right to leisure, and the right to a good standard of living- all the other rights that one takes for granted. .



Dr. Shameem addresses the participants

Educational Innovation and Change

The Department of Education recently hosted a one week extensive course as part of Postgraduate Diploma and Masters in Educational Leadership Program at the University of Fiji. The Course titled **Educational Innovation and Change** was very timely for Fiji as the Ministry of Education has brought about a number of reforms in the education sector. The course was taken by Adjunct Professor Michael Bezzina. Professor Michael Bezzina is Head of the School of Educational Leadership, and Director of the Centre for Creative and Authentic Leadership at ACU National where he has worked since the start of 2007. For the previous 16 years he was in system leadership roles in Catholic education in the Diocese of Parramatta, significantly as Director of Religious Education and Educational Services, with responsibility for areas as disparate as curriculum, student welfare, professional and leadership development, special education, and religious education.

He has over 50 publications in the areas of curriculum, leadership, religious education. Michael is a Fellow of the Australian Council of Educational

Leaders, Member of the Australian College of Educators, Australian Curriculum Studies and the Australian Association for Research in Education.

The students comprised of teachers, head teachers, principals and Education Officers. According to the Head of Department, Dr Wahab Ali there were altogether 70 students enrolled in the course. He stated that "this course provided students with opportunities to engage with current thinking on educational change, to apply it to their own particular contexts and to the realities of Fiji education in general." He further believed that change is an increasingly demanding part of the landscape of education all over the world.

As such, leaders are challenged to respond to external change, manage internal change pressures and create an environment which promotes change which is life-giving to the community and enhances student learning.

The course enabled the teachers to be better equipped to actively engage with issues of change in their roles in education.



The teachers who attended the course at the University of Fiji from 22nd to 27th August 2011

Dr Ali commented on the importance of this course as it was presented using a number of andragogies that could be well modified and implemented in the school system. The course enabled teachers to be optimistic as reforms are inevitable and teachers need to take more proactive role in implementing them in our schools. This course presented a holistic view to innovation and change in education.

By Dr. Wahab Ali – Head, Department of Education

Community Engagement- A Way Forward

An important theme of the University of Fiji in its strategic planning process is promoting academic excellence as well as community outreach. For a small and humble group of students of the University, the Christian Fellowship Group has taken the initiative in giving back to the community, as a gesture of appreciation as well as good-will. The group's underlying vision and mission is 'student reaching students' through the love, work and will of God. Today, we have well over 30 students who are committed in serving God, their community as well as their campus.

For most students, Saturday is a day of relaxation from the week's lectures, tutorials and submission of due or overdue assignments. For the University of Fiji's Christian fellowship students, Saturday the 3rd of September was a day of community engagement.

The day was spent cleaning up the campus; from sweeping classrooms to wiping windows, cleaning lockers to hosing corridors, cleaning fans to mopping the cafeteria, all done with good cheer and a sense of strengthening young people's senses of civic engagement as well as Christian values of goodwill, love and charity.

I wish to thank the University of Fiji for its inclusive theme of community engagement. I also convey my sincere appreciation to members of the University's CF group for their support of the community engagement initiatives as well as those who participated in cleaning up the campus. Hearty congratulations as well to those members of the CF group who participated in the Debate Team. May the love and grace of God keep us and may we be a shining light to those around us.

**By: Kasanita Nayasi.
[Assistant Student Worker-ASW]**



Students participating in the 'Clean up Campaign'

Hindi Diwas 2011

The University of Fiji celebrated this year's Hindi Diwas on 10th September at its campus in Saweni, Lautoka.

The Hindi Day celebration has become an annual event at the university. Together with the help from the Western Hindi Teachers Association, this year's celebration featured Hindi songs, dance and poetry recitals.

Coordinated by lecturer in Hindi Studies Mrs Suklesh Bali, the celebrations saw high school students from nine institutions in the Western Division gather at the university.

Students and lecturers recited Hindi poems from prominent local writers like Amarjeet Kaur and also some by famous composers from India.

Apart from poetry, close to 250 students, parents and staff members

were entertained by folk dances and live traditional music designed to incite an appreciation for traditional Hindi art and forms of expression.

Chief Guest at the function was former High Court Judge Devendra Pathik, who is now the Dean of the University's School of Law.



UniFiji students perform a cultural item



L-R: Mrs Bali, Prof Muralidhar & Pt. Pathik



Performance at the Hindi day Celebrations

UniFiji Night

The University of Fiji held its annual Cultural night on Saturday 3rd September at the University hall in Saweni. The three hour programme saw the performance of twenty eight items in total, which included Fijian and Indo-Fijian dancing, songs and a parade of different cultural group's dress styles. The event was witnessed by over three hundred guests.

Organiser, Associate Professor Cliff Benson said that the aim was for students' performing arts talents to be nurtured and to showcase these to the public. He added that it also broadened the whole university experience for staff and students and to build the UniFiji spirit.



Cultural Performance at this year's UniFiji night

University Concert

Students of the University of Fiji organized a concert on Saturday 8 October at the Saweni Campus in Lautoka.

Staff, students and friends of the University were invited to witness the concert, which was filled with excellent music and other great performances.

The event also featured singers from around the country including the likes of Ecelina from the *Gospel Group Eagles Wing*, Marylin from the band *Fam Band*, Kolora Nawalu of the *Manakilagi Choir* of the Sheraton Fiji to name a few.

Member of the organizing committee Usaia Draunimasi said that the concert

was a great success and participants as well as the guests really enjoyed the show.

He thanked the staff, students and other helpers for a job well done and said that the committee was looking forward to similar support in the future.

First Literary Festival

The first Literary Festival was held from 2 - 7 October at the Fiji National University's Nadi Campus in Namaka. The Literary Festival was organized by the Fijian Writers' Association which was established just over seven months ago.

A number of writers and scholars from Fiji and abroad attended the Festival, presented papers, readings and talks on Fiji and Fijian creativity in literature. Academics who represented UniFiji included the Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar, Professor Satendra Nandan, Dean of the School of Humanities & Arts and Chair of the Fijian Writers Association, Registrar Mr. Tito Isala and several other staff members. There was also good participation from students who presented some interesting topics.

The theme of the festival was 'Creativity across communities: Imagining and imaging the Pacific'. The Gandhi-Tagore Symposium, which was scheduled on day one of the festival, saw many speakers discuss the lives of Mahatma Gandhi and Rabindranath Tagore.

The two Indian leaders Rabindranath Tagore and Mahatma Gandhi are renowned figures and were well known for their marvelous work in alleviating violence in all areas of life.

Opening the festival, the Indian High Commissioner to Fiji Mr. Vinod Kumar said the simplicity of Mr. Gandhi's life was a major factor in attracting people to his thoughts and his peaceful protests.

"Mahatma Gandhi made profound impact on politics and political philosophy of his time", said Mr. Kumar.

"His innovative implements of non violence and Satyagrah or devotion to the truth, in the struggle against a dominant colonial power provided inspiration to countries around the world in their quest for independence," added Mr. Kumar.

Mr. Kumar said that while the world was besieged with violence, it became obvious that the principles implemented by Mr. Gandhi were forever relevant to

Speaking at the festival, Professor Satendra Nandan said that the festival was a rare occasion and the public should participate because it could open doors for aspiring book writers.

"But books are still books and we as teachers know their value and we want to share it with the public," said Prof Nandan.

He said there was a great response from the public concerning book writing and he said he found it very inspiring.

Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar presented a topic on *Fostering and celebrating creativity in education: A formidable challenge*.

He spoke about the link between education and creativity and said that creativity was as important in education as literacy and numeracy and that it should be treated with the same status.

"I am on the one hand fascinated by human creativity and on the other, saddened by how our upbringing and schooling causes us to gradually lose touch with our innate creative abilities," said Professor Muralidhar.

"It seems many of the old rules and ways of thinking that were taught in school, no longer apply, so many children have natural talents and gifts that don't fit into the fixed model that the school system caters to," he added.

Professor Muralidhar proclaimed that creativity and innovation in education are not just an opportunity, but a necessity.



Indian High Commissioner Mr. Vinod Kumar and Professor Satendra Nandan, Dean, School of Humanities & Arts



Roziya Aslam with one of the guest speakers, Qaisra Shahnaz



Ms. Nazhat Shameem at the Fiji Literary Festival



Professor Satendra Nandan with Dr. Mahendra Reddy of FNU.



Ms Nazhat Shameem with Dr. Jyoti Nandan

Uni Celebrates Eid-ul-Fitr

Some three hundred members of the UniFiji community celebrated Eid-ul-Fitr on 7 September at the University's main Campus in Saweni. The Eid function was organized by a committee comprising of Muslim staff and students and had a good mix of Nazams (Islamic Songs), Speeches about Eid and other highlights such as Islamic Quiz.

The aim of this function was to celebrate Eid-ul-Fitr with members of the University and to provide a background on the significance of the month of Ramadhan, which is the mandatory fasting month for Muslims throughout the world.

Eid-ul-Fitr is one of two festivals in the Islamic calendar, the other being Eid-ul-Adha.

Shireen Nisha, staff of the University and member of the organizing committee said that this was the third successive Eid celebrations held at UniFiji.

"It took us about a month to prepare for the Eid-ul-Fitr function and we had to meet at least once a week to get updates from other members of the committee," said Ms Nisha.

Guest speaker and new Head of the Education Department, Dr. Wahab Ali spoke on the significance and history of Eid-ul-Fitr. He also talked about the holy month of Ramadhan and said that it was a time to attain 'god-consciousness'. "Ramadan is a time to awaken compassion and solidarity with others and in particular with the poor," said Dr. Ali.

While explaining about Eid-ul-Fitr, Dr. Ali said that Eid was celebrated on the first day of 'Shawwaal' which was the 10th month of the Islamic calendar. He said that Eid was a day of happiness which begins with an Eid prayer followed by lots of festivities.

"Muslims convey their greetings to each other, give reasonable gifts to the youngsters and visit each other at their homes," added Dr. Ali.

He said that it was a day when friends, neighbours, co-workers, classmates and colleagues are invited to join in the Eid festivities and appreciate Islamic values.

The programme ended with presentation of awards to winners of the quiz competition, followed by refreshments, which included 'Sawai' or Vermicelli – a popular Eid-ul-Fitr delicacy.



Hardworking members of the organizing committee.



Winner of the quiz competition receives his award from the Vice Chancellor

Medical Conference

The University of Fiji in conjunction with the Australian Sai Medical Unit, Sathya Sai Service Organisation and the Fiji College of General Practitioners organized a one day Medical Conference at the University of Fiji Saweni Campus in Lautoka a couple of months ago.

Medical professionals from all over the country converged to discuss important health issues affecting the people of Fiji.

The Chief Guest at the conference was Professor Ian Rouse, Dean of Fiji National University's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences.

Sessions included a symposium on backache, which was presented by renowned doctors. Topics included the *functional anatomy, geriatric view 'backache in the elderly', holistic approach to management, occupational issues, red flags and Imaging & backache.*

Other interesting topics included diabetes in the western pacific and diabetic eye disease. Workshops on eyes, joint injections & women's health, dental care & examination of the back were also conducted towards the end of the conference.



File Photo:

The staff of the University of Fiji would like to wish all students the very best in their Final exams