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The University of Fiji Appoints new Vice-Chancellor

Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar has been appointed as the substantive Vice-Chancellor of the University of Fiji. He has been the acting Vice-Chancellor for the last nine months.

He was appointed by the University Council on Saturday June 6, and the Chair of the Council, Pandit Bhuwan Dutt, formally made the announcement on Monday 8 June.

“It is an honour for the University to welcome Professor Muralidhar, a distinguished academic and university administrator, as its second Vice-Chancellor”, Pandit Bhuwan Dutt said. “It is our hope that Professor Muralidhar will lead the University of Fiji to greater heights”, he added.

Professor Muralidhar, who has close to four decades of tertiary academic experience, says he is humbled by the appointment. “It is a measure of the confidence the University Council has placed in me, and in turn I would like to assure them that I will do my best to take the University forward,” he added. “There are many challenges to be faced in the next couple of years, we have a medical school here, we have a law school in Suva,

and we have to see that these schools develop into high-quality institutions.

We are in the fifth year now, and the next 3 to 4 years will be a real challenge but I am very confident that with the help of staff & students, and the support of the Council, we will get there”.

Professor Muralidhar obtained a BSc degree from Mysore University and an MSc in Mathematics from Karnatak University. He later read for a Masters degree in Physics Education at the University of Keele in England and completed a PhD in science education from Monash University in Melbourne. Professor Muralidhar is an elected member of the Australian Institute of Physics.

Joining USP as a Lecturer in Physics in 1973, Professor Muralidhar moved to the School of Education in 1979 as Lecturer in Science Education. He was promoted to the position of Reader in Education in 1993. Professor Muralidhar served as Head of School of Humanities from 1990-1996, and as Head of the Department of Education & Psychology from 1999-2005. Professor Muralidhar has published widely on many areas of education, and has contributed extensively to educational consultancies and curriculum reform in many countries in the South Pacific.

His doctoral work on the status of science teaching and learning in Fiji has been hailed as a significant piece of research, and is cited by many scholars in science education.

In recognition of his scholarship, and extensive contributions to Education in the Pacific region, Dr Muralidhar was appointed Adjunct Professor in Education at the University of Fiji in November 2005 to help develop innovative programs in Education at the new University. Dr Muralidhar resigned from the USP in November 2006 after 34 years of service to take up the position of Foundation Professor of Education at the University of Fiji.

Professor Muralidhar has designed a cutting edge Masters degree in Educational Leadership which, within a year, has attracted more than 60 senior teachers and educators from the Western, Central and Northern divisions of Fiji. He has also developed an innovative Postgraduate Diploma in Teaching for graduates who want to become secondary teachers.

Apart from his academic interests, Professor Muralidhar was President of the Fiji Hindu Society for a number of years, and is deeply involved in religious and cultural activities in the community.

Campus visit by Pandit Kamlesh Arya

Fiji's Acting High Commissioner to Australia, Pt Kamlesh Arya visited the campus on 16 June. Pt Arya is also a council member and the immediate past National President of the Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji. He was one of the key figures in the establishment of the University during his tenure as the National President. Pt Kamlesh Arya continues to have a strong interest in the University as well as its developments. During his visit, Pt Kamlesh Arya met with staff members as well as members of the University council. He departs the country on Sunday 21 June.



Pandit Kamlesh Arya with members of the staff and University Council.

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Foundation Graduation Ceremony - Friday 5th June

The University of Fiji had its first ever Graduation ceremony for the Foundation Studies Programme on Friday 5 June.

The Chief Guest on the occasion was the University's Pro Chancellor and Chair of Council Pandit Bhuwan Dutt.

The Uni Fiji Foundation programme forms the basis for the degree level structure and is available in four strands: Commerce, Social Science, Science and Mathematics/ Information Technology.

"It is particularly encouraging that included in the 12 subjects now offered are both Fijian and Hindi. The addition of these languages to the Social Science strand shows the University 's strong commitment to offering quality course in the three main languages of Fiji" said Mr. Dutt.

He added that enhancing students' abilities in their mother-tongues as well as the language of instruction, English, is vital to produce graduates who value their home cultures and languages, as well as the language needed for their future needs.

There was a noticeable increase in the number of students enrolled in the foundation programme this year compared

to previous years, with the Science strand recording the highest enrolment .

And in a major boost for the University, The programme was given full recognition by the Ministry of Education on 4th March this year. This means that our Foundation Programme is equivalent to Ministry of Education's Fiji Seventh Form Examination.



Pt Bhuwan Dutt presents the Certificate to Salanieta Savutini



Graduands with Chief Guest Pt Bhuwan Dutt, Mr. Cliff Benson, Ms Sarojini Pillay and Professor Muralidhar.



Graduands with the Director of Foundation Studies, Mr. Cliff Benson.

PSC Scholarship Orientation

The Public Service Commission (PSC) Scholarship orientation for MBBS students took place on June 10 in the University Hall. The orientation was conducted by representatives from the PSC scholarships Unit. This year 20 students were awarded scholarships to pursue the Bachelor of Medicine and Bachelor of Surgery.

The Vice Chancellor, Professor Muralidhar welcomed the visitors from PSC in the presence of the Faculty members of Umanand Prasad School of Medicine.

In a special address to the guests, Dr. Umanand Prasad, the Dean of UPSM expressed his heartfelt appreciation to PSC for their kind gesture. Dr. Prasad also added that after successfully completing their MBBS, our new doctors will have a lot to offer to their respective communities and to the country.

In a recent news release the Interim Prime Minister, Mr. Voreqe Bainimarama said that the granting of scholarships to the UPSM MBBS students is necessary to address the continued scarce skills in the medical profession.

Parents and guardians of all scholarship recipients were also invited to the orientation. It was an excellent opportunity

for them to see our campus and meet the staff members as well as other parents.



Vice Chancellor, Professor Muralidhar officially welcomes the guests



Staff and students pay attention to the speech delivered by a PSC Representative.



Dr. Umanand Prasad addressing the students and guests at the orientation



Orientation in progress