



# The University of Fiji Uni MATTERS

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Private Mail Bag, Lautoka, Ph: 6640600, Fax: 6640700, email: info@unifiji.ac.fj, web: www.unifiji.ac.fj

## Vice Chancellor's Welcome Ceremony

The University Council organized an official welcome ceremony for the new Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar on Wednesday 29<sup>th</sup> July in the University's main hall. Professor Muralidhar is the second Vice Chancellor of the University since its inception 5 years ago. He was officially appointed as the Vice Chancellor of the University on June 6 2009.

The welcome ceremony was well attended by staff, students and members of the University council. Pt Bhuwan Dutt officially welcomed all staff, students and council members to the ceremony. In his speech, Pt. Bhuwan Dutt emphasized the importance of having a good administrative setup to run an organization.

"When the foundation Vice Chancellor Professor Rajesh Chandra left to join

the University of the South Pacific we had to look for a successor Vice-Chancellor and I am pleased to let you know that we now have our substantive Vice Chancellor Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar whom you all know" said Pt Dutt. He added that Professor Muralidhar needed no introduction as he had been with the University contributing to its academic and professional development.

"I have come to learn that running a university is no easy task. However if we all work as a team with a common vision and mission the task becomes relatively easy." he added.

Responding to the welcome, Professor Muralidhar began by thanking all those who were present in the welcoming ceremony as well as expressed gratitude to those who had played an important role in his decision to accept the position.

(for a full text of the Vice Chancellor's speech, visit: [www.unifiji.ac.fj/welcomeceremony.htm](http://www.unifiji.ac.fj/welcomeceremony.htm))



Ms Mere Vadei garlands the newly appointed Vice Chancellor—Professor Srinivasiah Muralidhar

## Book Donation by Latter Day Saints

On Monday August 10<sup>th</sup>, officials from the Latter Day Saints Church kindly donated some books to the University of Fiji library. Mr Nemani V. Buresova, the Director of Fiji Public Affairs Council along with two full time missionaries from Salt Lake City in the United States, made the donation to the Registrar of the University and the books will be made available to anyone interested in reading or doing research on Mormonism.

The two full time missionaries are Elder Lin Bothwell and Sister Susan Bothwell who are based in Lautoka. For further information on the books, students and staff are urged to enquire at the University library.



Representatives from LDS with the Registrar Ms Pillay and the University Librarian Mr. Jose Poulouse

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## Evaluation of the MBBS Programme at UPSM

A three-member panel of physicians, trained as professional medical educators, visited UPSM from the third till the eleventh of August, 2009 to review the MBBS Programme at UPSM.

The review focused on the basic standards set by the World Federation of Medical Education (WFME) for the evaluation of medical school programs.

The panel consisted of Doctor and Professor Toshimasa Yoshioka from Tokyo, Japan, and a two member team, Doctor and Professor Daniel and Therese Wolpaw from the Case Western Reserve University Medical School, Cleveland, The United States of America.

The team worked very closely with the staff of UPSM, establishing daily meetings to discuss each area of the curriculum and organizational structure.

The review summary provided by the team after completion of their evaluation was as follows:

“...The school has surpassed our expectations by already fulfilling the Global Standards in many sub-areas. Thus, the team has determined that the current status of UPSM is in general accordance with the Global Standards and the School is well on its way to complete fulfillment in all areas...”

All members of the UPSM thoroughly enjoyed and benefited from this evaluation, saying that it had provided a standard for a more systematic and efficient pathway to progress.

Copies of the report have been sent to the Ministry of Health, the Fiji Medical Council and the Public Service Commission.

*By Dr Fred Merchant and Mrs. Lynette Bali.*



**Team of Assessors with the Vice Chancellor and the Dean of UPSM**



**Staff of UPSM with the assessors, the Vice Chancellor and the Registrar**

## Workshops organized by the School of Humanities and Arts

The School of Humanities and Arts conducted a two-day seminar that saw two academics from Australia to conduct seminars in their respective fields. The academics were Associate Professor Greg Battye as well as Georgia Tayler who is a psychologist from ACT in Australia.

On Thursday, July 30<sup>th</sup> 2009, Associate Professor Battye spoke on the topic, “Imaginative Collaboration: Creativity across Disciplines in a Tertiary Education Environment.” Stating the obvious changes that the global economy was going through, he spoke about the need for tertiary students to exercise their imagination and creativity skills in a structured and collaborative fashion. He stated various reasons for the need for change, the processes of developing such changes, nature of contributions, some of the obstacles and suggested possible solutions and ways to maintain imagination-driven change in tertiary education worldwide.

Because of his own creative interests, he maintains a strong interest in teaching and

encouraging creativity. In addition, Associate Professor Battye suggested ‘learning’ to stimulate imagination in ways that move students beyond the constraints of disciplinary boundaries.

Ms Georgia Tayler, on the 31<sup>st</sup> of July 2009, spoke about her work as a psychologist and the psychological approach to Literature. She runs her own practice in the Australian Capital Territory (ACT) Australia and works as a clinical psychologist.

Georgia has special expertise in family counselling and treating mental health problems among children and young people. She has previously worked as a clinical psychologist in a number of different mental health agencies.

The University is really grateful to Associate Professor Battye and Ms Georgia Tayler for conducting these workshops.



Associate Professor Greg Battye conducts a special workshop on Imaginative Collaboration.



Workshop facilitator Ms Georgia Tayler delivering the topic: A psychological approach to literature.

## The Knife – By Dr. Fred Merchant, Professor of Surgery, UPSM

I hold the knife as one holds the bow of a violin or the stem of a hibiscus. Not palmed nor gripped nor grasped, but lightly, with the pulps and tips of the fingers, close to countless nerve endings trained to know what they hold and where they are in the void space.

The knife is not for pressing but for drawing across a field of skin. Like a slender fish, it waits in my hand then darts and is followed by a crimson wake of millions of red blood cells tumbling, sliding, skimming away from the gleaming steel. Even now after so many times, I still marvel at its power cold, gleaming, silent. Together we work as a team, conspiring for a most unnatural purpose, the laying open of the flesh to cure and allow healing.

The scalpel is all grace and line and fierceness. It is like a cat to be respected, deferred to, but which returns no friendliness only the blind stare of its razor thin edge.

What is this thing, THE KNIFE, whose shape is virtually the same as it was three thousand years ago, but now with its head grown detachable. Before steel, it was bronze, and before that it was a sharpened piece of stone or the razor thin edge of a leaf. Did man invent it or did the knife precede him here, hidden under ages of vegetation and hoof prints, lying in wait to be discovered, picked up and used?

The modern surgical knife is called a scalpel. It is in two parts, the handle and

the blade. They join to make an instrument six inches from tip to tip. At one end of the handle is a narrow notched prong upon which the blade is slid, then snapped into place. Without the blade, the handle has a blind decapitated look. It is as helpless as a handcuffed prisoner or straight jacketed resident of an asylum. But slide on the blade, click it home and the knife springs instantly to life, ready to do its work. And afterwards, cleaned of bloody stains, it rests in the dark chambered autoclave awaiting the killing pulse of steam.

## Special Lecture on Underserved Medicine

On the 15<sup>th</sup> of July, the University had the privilege to be visited by Doctor Animesh K. Sinha who was accompanied by his mother Mrs. Arunima Sinha (Attorney at law) and the Founder and Director of the Foundation for Rural Integrated Enterprises N Development (FRIEND) Sashi Kiran.

Dr. Animesh K. Sinha gave a presentation on some of the statistics, causes and preventive measures of both communicable and non-communicable diseases in Fiji. Armed with a vast knowledge based on his impressive qualifications as well as global experiences, his “organic” approach to helping out the underserved, brought him to present a summation of his experience in Fiji, aptly titled ‘Front Porch Medicine.’

Dr, Sinha also gave students an overview of the activities of Fiji Aid International (FAI). A nonprofit public benefit corporation responsible for providing free medical care to the people of Fiji for the past nine years. FAI is structured around providing preventive healthcare through education, screening/monitoring, and affordable chronic therapy.

Dr. Sinha talked about his experience during the January floods for which he made a special trip to Fiji to assist the victims. He was accompanied by the Founder of FAI, Mrs Damyenti Chandra.



Dr. Sinha delivering his topic: 'Underserved Medicine'



Dr. Sinha with UPSM Students



Dr. Sinha and Mrs. Arunima Sinha with staff members of the University.

## University hosts visitors from the United States of America

The University hosted two visitors, Mr. Richard O'Rourke and Mr. Doug Carey from the State Department of the United States of America on Monday August 10.

Mr. Richard O'Rourke is from the U.S. International Institutes of Education, and is the Regional Educational Advising Coordinator for South East Asia and the Pacific region is on his first visit to Fiji, and is an expert of U.S. higher educational system.

Mr. Doug Carey, is the Country Desk Officer for South Pacific Islands at State Department in Washington D.C, and is the contact point at the Department for Fiji and seven other Pacific Island nations' affairs.

Also in Fiji for the first time, Mr. Carey looks after U.S. interests and policy for Fiji as well as the wider Pacific. Mr. O'Rourke and Mr. Carey were accompanied by Mr. Jone Vukikomoala who is the Regional Cultural Specialist of the US Embassy based in Suva.

The visitors were given a campus tour by the University's Marketing and Public Relations Officer, Zaheer Hassan and the Dean of the Umanand Prasad School of Medicine Dr. Umanand Prasad. They also had a fruitful discussion with the Vice Chancellor.

The visit was organized in conjunction with the Embassy of the United States of America and the University wishes to thank the Public Affairs department of the US Embassy for facilitating this visit.



*From left: Mr. Jone Vukikomoala (US Embassy, Suva) Mr. Zaheer Hassan (Marketing Officer, Uni Fiji), Mr. Doug Carey (US State Department) and Mr. Richard O'Rourke (US International Institutes of Education)*

## Fun Run 2009

Around thirty Unifiji students and a staff member participated in the Annual Fun Run for the western division which was held on Saturday June 20<sup>th</sup>.

The 8 km Fun Run began at 7am at McDonalds. The students were registered in the 'group of 6' category while Associate Professor Cliff Benson, our lone staff representative was part of the Open Masters category.

He took out top honours in that category winning 1<sup>st</sup> place with a superb timing of 40 minutes and 19 seconds.

This was his second title in as many years. The university congratulates Mr. Benson for his fine performance and wishes him all the very best in future competitions.

The fun run turned out to be quite an exciting event which was enjoyed by all participants young and old.

The students' team was lead by the President of the Students' Association Mr. Nafeez Mohammed.

The entry fee and travel allowances for students who participated was paid for

by the *University of Fiji Students' Association (UFSA)*.

Some of our students also managed to win consolation prizes such as caps, umbrellas and special meal passes.

The Fun Run ended at around 11am.

## Marketing Update

Greetings to one and all from the Department of Marketing and Public Relations. The department has been a hive of activities for the past couple of months. We are very intensively preparing for the upcoming Open Day which will be held in the Saweni and Suva Campus during the mid-semester break from September 17<sup>th</sup> to 18<sup>th</sup>.

The department has recently secured the services of Mr. Vereniki

Momoedonu who has been assisting the Marketing and PR Officer with school visits and other marketing related activities. A total of 21 schools have already been visited with a few more to go in the third term.

The department is launching a brand new website soon. Hearty appreciation goes to Sandhiya Gounder for assisting the department with this major project. The new website aims to provide easy

navigation for users and provide up to date information about the University's programmes of study, campus news and events, rules/regulations, vacancies etc.

**By Zaheer M Hassan**

**Marketing and PR Officer**