



Take time in your busy lives to revive and rejuvenate



The editors of our JMS student newspaper UniFiji Watch kindly requested that I once more write a short commentary for their first 2024 edition. I am really honoured to do so.

UniFiji Watch has remained the leading student newspaper in Fiji, largely due to the professionalism of its writers and producers and I am truly grateful to the editorial team at the newspaper for show-casing the JMS Programme's writing talent in such an informative way.

As I reflect on the University's achievements in 2023, I realise that perhaps we had not paid as much attention to mental wellbeing as we could have. I myself have looked forward to a short break between Christmas and New Year when I can take a rest both physically and mentally and recharge my batteries. I am sure the entire University Community feels the same way.

Mental health is an underrated aspect of wellness and whether we are able to take a complete break from work or merely take a bit of time out for ourselves, a mental retreat is highly recommended by wellness experts. We are fortunate that at University we are able to support mental wellness through our counselling service and wonderful counsellors, Ms Mercy Gogoi and Ms Vijayanti Karan on duty all the time.

However, to revive and rejuvenate we can also read the huge amount of literature and techniques available online for resting the brain. In our busy lives we can take time out even for 10 minutes a day to lie back, listen to favourite music, meditate (close eyes and let it all go!), take really deep breaths to oxygenate the brain, or assume a yoga pose, whatever technique we prefer.

You'd be surprised at how even a 10-minute mental breather makes a big difference to re-energising. I do it all the time and find I can cope with challenging tasks (and people!) much better and with more kindness as a result! It's highly recommended especially for students with a hundred million things to do all at the same time!

I take this opportunity to wish the UniFiji Watch editorial team a very happy (and restful) new year break and 2024 and look forward to seeing everyone soon!



Student Counsellor Vijayanti Karan at work, in a picture posed for this article

A welcome from the student counsellor

By Vijayanti Karan

A WIDE range of students from different cultures and backgrounds have used the counselling service since it started at the University of Fiji in 2010.

Counselling goals differ for students depending on the issues or concerns they bring with them. Currently, UniFiji employs one counsellor which is myself and it has been extremely fulfilling to work with the students in an effort to provide them with the best necessary support.

For my counselling education, I studied through the Australian Institute of Professional Counsellors and

attained a Diploma in Professional Counselling. Later on, I completed an Advanced Study Major in Child Development and Effective Parenting through the same institute.

My work experience includes working with a Lautoka-based NGO as a counsellor.

I believe counselling is slowly but steadily growing in Fiji and it's being increasingly recognised. However, a few people still view counselling with some negativity. There is a certain stigma associated with counselling such as the

mindset that if someone goes through counselling than there must be something wrong with them. But the fact is if someone seeks out the support they know they need, it is a sign of strength.

To access counselling, you don't need to seek approval or permission. You can simply contact the counsellor and plan for a session.

Students can contact me by Email on: vijayantik@unifiji.ac.fj Phone: 664 0600 Ext: 277

Or you could come to Room Number: B002, Saweni Campus (ground floor of main building)

Help when you need it

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you notice yourself feeling overwhelmed, or burdened, or you tend to overthink a lot, have irrational fears, or feelings of loneliness, thoughts of self-harm, family or relationship issues, going through grief, or need to get something off your chest but not able to talk to anyone about it.

If a student has a past trauma or a secret that is causing distress or weighing them down, that is another reason they should discuss it with a counsellor.

"Know your limitations, there are times when you can deal with your issues quite well, but sometimes you need to get support to work through your issues. This is when you might want to reach out to counselling."



Media department gets a capital base

The Journalism and Media department has expanded its scope and reach by opening facilities at the Samabula campus.

At the launch ceremony the Vice-Chancellor Dr Shaista Shameem said the department would benefit from being closer to the seat of government, the parliament and the courts.

With the department expected to celebrate its first three graduates this year, Dr Shameem highlighted how it had grown from its small beginnings in 2022 on the Sawani campus.

In the first year there were just five students, she told the audience of guests from the media industry and university and other institutions.

Now there were nearly 20 students and facilities at both campuses providing a 24-unit programme that is totally different from that of other institutions.

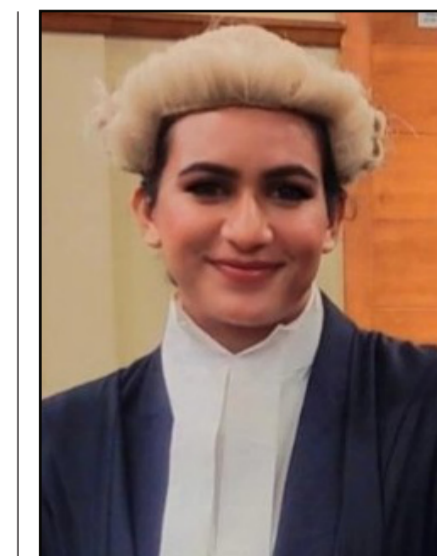
The programme had been developed in close co-operation with the industry in Fiji, she said. Some initial ideas had been rejected by the industry and new ones had been suggested and accepted.

As part of their training students spend time with news organisations around Fiji so that they can get hands-on training – and those placements start in the first year of study.

Students are trained for newspaper, television and radio work during their three-year course.



Media launch: Clockwise from above, Dr Shameem speaks at the launch ceremony; student Shaniyah Khan being interviewed for FijiVillage; the head of the Department of Language, Literature and Communication, Dr Kamala Naiker (second from right) with other university staff



Hard work pays off for new graduate

By: Avitesh Vikash Ram

IT was a precious moment for the Naicker family as they saw one of their own, Christine Naicker, above, admitted to the bar.

Christine Naicker is a student from Unifiji, originally from Labasa, but now living in Lautoka. Her father, Narendra Naicker, said he was proud of her education and happiness.

Her mother, Nazmul Nisha, put a lot of effort into making sure she did well at law school, especially as she achieved her Graduate Diploma in Legal Prac-

tice. The 28-year-old lawyer said her parents taught her to stand for what is right, which inspired her to practise law.

"My dad has been my pillar of strength, and God has also been so faithful to me; He kept me whole," said Christine Naicker.

She describes her journey of moving from a small town to a big city, adapting to different lifestyles, making decisions to protect herself, and ensuring she remained true to her purpose.

Christine said she made many mistakes and learned from them. She also said she had had difficult times, but everything worked out well in the end.

"Nothing is impossible if you want it. Consistency, discipline, and hard work are the foremost aspects. If you want to achieve something, go get it. Seize what is yours. Work for it. There is never a shortcut to success," she said.

Christine said that she interned at a private law firm and at the Legal Aid Commission, and currently she is on a break and looking forward to joining the legal system soon.

Vox scores international win

The University of Fiji's online campus radio station, Vox Populi, was named among the top 10 of a major international radio awards competition.

Vox Populi was placed fifth in the 2023 Spirit of College Radio Awards in which more than 100 stations from around the world compete for top honours.

This proud moment for the University of Fiji shows how achievement comes in many different forms, in this case the broad dimension of culture and communication.

Vox showed its excellence against stations from well-equipped universities in much more well-endowed regions.

The producer of Vox, Vice-Chancellor Professor Shaista Shameem, along with the Vox committee chair and members and senior management heartily congratulated Vox on its achievement.

Station manager Lawrence Singh, above, said the award was



a symbol of the station's excellence and quality when it comes to radio broadcasts. "We ensure that our standard is second to none. The award has put the University of Fiji firmly in the international college radio space. Mr Singh said that Vox has been participating in the annual World College Radio Day celebrations for the past three years, and

is looking forward to the 2024 WCRD which is scheduled for the first Friday of October.

Planning for that has already started in terms of content, music, and branding, he said.

"Being selected in the top 10 stations from the 120 stations participating is in itself a huge achievement as we are the only radio station from the South Pacific region to win this award."

"It takes months of preparation for the annual event and I convey my deepest gratitude and thanks to the Vice-Chancellor and the senior management for their support and faith in me."

He said that while currently Vox is only accessible via internet links there are plans to get a

designated frequency so it can be heard on the radio as well.

He said he hopes the station will get an FM frequency by late 2025.

Vox will continue broadcasting during the holidays so staff and students can all tune in for their favorite music.

The top 10 stations:

1. Aggie Radio 92.3 KBLU-LP – Utah State University (USA)
2. Radyo Katipunan 87.9 FM – Ateneo de Manila University (Philippines)
3. 90.5 KCSU FM Fort Collins – Colorado State University (USA)
4. 90.5 WUMC Milligan Radio – Milligan University (USA)
5. The Vox Populi – The University of Fiji (FIJI)
6. WESS 90.3FM – East Stroudsburg University (USA)
7. WMCO 90.7 FM – Muskingum University (USA)
8. WOLF Radio and WOLF Sports Network – University of West Georgia, (USA)
9. WPTS-FM – University of Pittsburgh (USA)
10. Unica Radio – Università degli Studi di Cagliari (ITALY)



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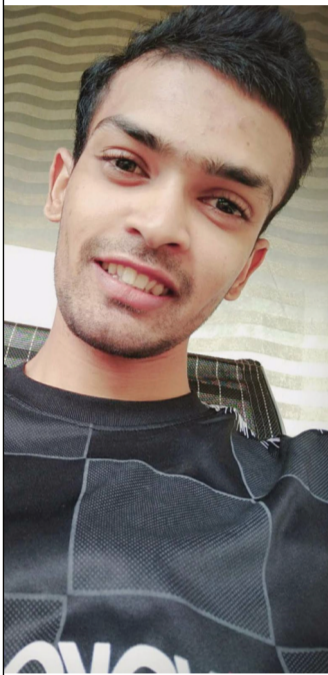


The University of Fiji
(An Entity of Arya Pratinidhi Sabha of Fiji)

Leisure Watch

January 2024, Issue 4

YOUR SAY – What do you think about Japan releasing nuclear waste water into the Pacific?



Avitesh Ram, First year student in Bachelor of journalism and media studies
The Fukushima tragedy is seriously harming the marine environment and the fishing sector, but given Japan's predominant exports to China, the drop in seafood exports is unlikely to have a large effect on Japan's economy.



Zeinab Karim, 1st-year, Bachelor of Science student majoring in biology and chemistry.
From the perspective of a science pupil the radioactive element, tritium, one of the constituents of this nuclear waste, has adverse impacts on the marine ecosystem. Humans will also be affected due to seafood consumption. The effects of this waste release may not be apparent short-term however, as time passes it will surely affect us in more ways than one. We uphold a united front to argue against the malpractice, due to the fact that we, the Pacific Island nations will suffer the consequences of this waste release.



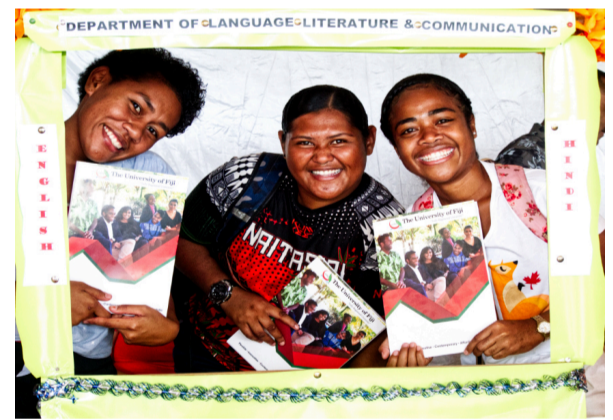
Krishal Lal, Bachelor of Arts in English and ITC:
Nuclear waste is a toxic radioactive substance which is harmful for the marine life and the ecosystem. It is Japan's responsibility to ensure there is no harm to the marine ecosystem. The Fiji government should be stricter with this dumping and take immediate action as it's a major concern for people's safety.

Secondary school students get a taste of university life



HUNDREDS of high-school pupils visited the University one day in September to see what they could be studying in the next year or so. The students, from schools as far away as Ba and Vatukoula, also met the lecturers they could be working with, and tried out some of the

facilities that they could be using in the next stage of their educational life. Pictured here are students talking to some of the staff from the Department of Language, Literature and Communication, including, below, meeting the head of department, Dr Kamala Naiker.



Editorial team

This edition of UniFiji Watch was prepared and produced by a team of journalism students led by Virisila Enikosuna.

• Earlier editions of UniFiji Watch can be found at <https://www.unifiji.ac.fj/unifiji-watch-student-online-paper/>