



SOCIAL AFFAIRS STANDING COMMITTEE

**Review Report of the Committee on the Fiji Higher Education
Commission's 2015 Annual Report**



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI
Parliamentary Paper No. 82 of 2018

Tuesday, 15th May, 2018

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Chair's Foreword

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I am privileged to present the Report on the review that was undertaken on Fiji Higher Education Commission's (FHEC) 2015 Annual Report. In the last Parliament Sitting, the FHEC 2015 Annual Report was tabled in Parliament and referred to the Committee to scrutinize.

The Parliamentary Standing Committee under the 2013 Constitution and Parliament Standing Orders aims to enhance transparency and accountability by public agencies and officials. The Standing Committee on Social Affairs is a committee of the Fijian Parliament and was established under Section 109(2) (b) of the Standing Orders (SO) of the Parliament of the Republic of Fiji. The Social Affairs Standing Committee is mandated to examine matters related to health, education, social services, labour, culture, media and their administration.

The Committee had consulted the Fiji Higher Education Commission and identified a few areas of concern which is reflected in our recommendations. The review focused on the areas of budgetary allocations, functions and administration, policies, organization structure, projects/programs, achievements and challenges encountered.

The Committee commends the overall performance of the Fiji Higher Education Commission in 2015, however the consultation with FHEC confirmed that there is still room for improvement towards enhancing their level of performance which would result in efficient and effective service delivery. All the issues identified have been captured in our Committee findings and further highlighted in the recommendations.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the sterling effort of the Honourable Members and the Secretariat team who were all involved in the review of this Annual Report and the formulation of this bipartisan report. Once again I thank the Committee Members Hon. Veena Bhatnagar (Deputy Chairperson), Hon. Salote Radrodoro, Hon. Ruveni Nadalo, Hon. Anare Vadei and Hon. Samuela Vunivalu as an alternate member.

On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I commend this Committee review report to the Parliament.



Hon. Viam Pillay
Chairperson

List of Recommendations

After reviewing the Fiji Higher Education Commission's 2015 Annual Report, the Committee recommends the following:

Recommendation One:

That FHEC's budgetary allocation be increased to support the Commission's functions and other commitments.

FHEC Response

In the new budget round 2018-2019, the FHEC has requested for a two (2) million dollars increase which FHEC sees as a required investment in a sector to deliver a quality system. For the past four years the budget for the Fiji Higher Education Commission has not increased. This has set back the capability of the organization to sustain a growing sector that is increasingly demanding. Monitoring the sector has been difficult with limited resources to ensure that quality provision is maintained.

Recommendation Two:

That FHEC's Staff Remuneration be reviewed to resolve the high turnover rate of staff which was experienced by the Commission. This issue had affected the investment made by the Commission in developing its human resources.

FHEC Response

The largest expenditure is towards staff salaries. FHEC needs highly qualified people that have knowledge of academia as well as management and leadership skills to help drive the sector. It is hoped that with the support of the budget increase the Commission will be able to attract the caliber required and be competitive in the education sector. Staff retention has been compounded by the increase in teacher and principal salaries under the Ministry of Education Heritage and Arts as well as University staff salary increases.

Recommendation Three:

That FHEC be the central agency to establish and administer a Central Database coordinating overall statistics of all higher education institutions.

FHEC Response

Coordinating and collecting institutional data and statistics is currently work in progress. The Fiji Education Management Information System [FEMIS], the national database under the custodian of the Ministry of Education is the main vehicle for this task. The FHEC, MoE, USP and the FNU recently signed an agreement for data sharing and other technical requirements. The two major universities are piloting the projects.

Using FEMIS as the reporting source has additional benefits that include the ability to correlate Higher Education data with Early Childhood Education (ECE), Primary and Secondary, Technical College, and other education data such as attendance, teacher qualifications and literacy/numeracy assessments. This approach also facilitates longitudinal student tracking to provide consistent data on students through their entire academic career, from ECE to Primary to Secondary to Technical Colleges and other Higher Education Institutions and ultimately into the workforce.

Recommendation Four:

FHEC to establish the workforce framework in partnership with other key stakeholders to monitor and evaluate the supply from the tertiary institutions to meet the market demands.

FHEC Response

The FHEC sees that the Workforce Development Strategy that is required to strategically plan to ensure the skills gap is met for the nation, will require a collaborative agreement across the Ministries, the sharing of data and knowledge.

The Commission have yet to determine how it can produce such document.

Introduction

The Fiji Higher Education Commission's 2015 Annual Report was tabled in Parliament early this year and was committed to the Social Affairs Standing Committee for the purpose of deliberating and scrutinizing the report.

Standing Orders 110 (1)(c) authorizes the Standing Committee to scrutinize the government departments with responsibility within the Committee's subject area, including investigating, inquiring into, and making recommendations relating to any aspect of such a department's administration, legislation or proposed legislative program, budget, rationalization, restructuring, functioning, organization, structure and policy formulation.

The review process involved a thorough scrutiny of the annual report by the Committee and a presentation from the Executive management of the Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) highlighting the overall operations and performance in 2015. Major focus given on the Commission's budget, administration, functions, policies, programs/projects and achievements including the challenges encountered.

The review report would include the Committee's recommendation, review findings and the conclusion.

In summary, the information of this report was obtained through:

1. Assessment by the Committee on the Commission's 2013 Annual Report;
2. Questionnaires being sent FHEC;
3. Powerpoint Presentation by the Management of FHEC; and
4. Supplementary questions raised during the presentation.

Further to the above, the Committee noted the **Vision** of the Commission which is for Fiji being a premier, world class higher education destination, and the **Mission** is to ensure that higher education institutions pursue an indispensable level of quality, excellence and relevance in higher education that is globally competitive and internationally recognized.

Most importantly, the review finding outlines FHEC's overall performance and issues that were identified within that financial year.

Findings

The findings of the review on the **Fiji Higher Education Commission 2015 Annual Report** are as follows:

1. Budgetary Allocation

The Committee noted that the budgetary allocation of the Commission does not fully meet the project/programs implementation cost which affected the productivity level of the Commission in fulfilling its obligation;

2. Central Database

The Committee raised the need for FHEC to have a central database that records graduates from all the Fiji Higher Education Institutions and be used by Government in consultations with all other relevant stakeholders in making policies as well as in addressing the issue of unemployment in Fiji.

3. High Turnover rate of staff

The Committee noted that the high turnover rate of staff was caused by the lack of Human Resources remunerations, such as competitive salary packages, incentives and rewards which is competitive to the market rate.

Gender Analysis

Under SO 110 (2), where a committee conducts an activity listed in clause (1), the committee ensures full consideration will be given to the principle of gender equality so as to ensure matters considered with regard to the impact and benefit on both men and women equally.

The Committee considered range of issues including programmes and policies that were coordinated by the FHEC and how it affects both male and female in Fiji. In particular, the FHEC ensures that policies and qualification standards that were set and implemented are aligned with its mandated responsibilities and ensuring that its impacts are equally distributed amongst the target groups including both men and women who study at any tertiary institutions in Fiji.

Most importantly, the Committee in its consultation with FHEC raised on whether the institution has taken into consideration gender equality in its recruitment process. The response received that FHEC has its recruitment process which is merit based and this does not discriminate on whether the applicant is a female or male.

Conclusion

The Standing Committee on Social Affairs has fulfilled its mandate approved by Parliament which was to examine the Fiji Higher Education Commission's 2015 Annual Report. The Committee had conducted its consultation and gathered all relevant information in relation to the FHEC's performance in 2015.

The Committee in its findings noted a few areas of concern and has made recommendations which would help improve FHEC's performance.

Overall, the Committee acknowledges FHEC's performance in 2015 with the hope that the recommendations will be given due consideration.

**SIGNATURES OF MEMBERS OF THE SOCIAL AFFAIRS STANDING
COMMITTEE**



Hon. Viam Pillay
(Chairperson)



Hon. Veena Bhatnagar
(Deputy Chairperson)



Hon. Salote Radrodoro
(Member)



Hon. Anare T. Vadei
(Member)



Hon. Ruveni Nadalo
(Member)



Hon. Alifereti Nabulivou
(Alternative Member)

APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1: VERBATIM

APPENDIX 1: VERBATIM REPORT

VERBATIM NOTES OF THE STANDING COMMITTEE ON SOCIAL AFFAIRS HELD IN THE COMMITTEE ROOM (EAST WING), PARLIAMENT PRECINCTS, GOVERNMENT BUILDINGS, MONDAY, 7TH MAY, 2018 AT 2 P.M.

Submittee: Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC)

In Attendance

- | | | |
|---------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 1. Ms. Linda Aumua | - | Director |
| 2. Mr. Robert Misau | - | Team Leader, Funding and Research |
| 3. Mr. Akuila Savu | - | Team Leader, Quality Assurance |
| 4. Mr. Epi Rawalai | - | Communications Officer |
| 5. Mr. Milan Raniga | - | Senior Accountant |
-

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Honourable Members. *Bula* and a very good afternoon to you all. On behalf of the Standing Committee on Social Affairs, I welcome the team from Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC).

So thank you for availing yourselves and thank you for your time. As you can see today we have two Members; Honourable Salote Radrodro on my left and on my right is Honourable Ruveni Nadalo. On my left is our Secretariat team, Mr. Savenaca Koro. So once again, *vinaka vakalevu* and without wasting much of your time, we will straightaway go into the presentation and after the presentation, we will take questions. The floor is yours.

MS. L. AUMUA.- Firstly, thank you very much Honourable Members for the invite to present to you today from FHEC. As was introduced, our team leaders from each of the functions that we have at FHEC of which we have five teams. We have our quality assurance team with us, our finance and research, who is not here is our professional services and our executive office part of who, Epi Rawalai actually represents.

First of all we want to go over our presentation which will just outline the following achievements of 2015, our financials and some of the questions which you posed which were the challenges around the questions. Just to acknowledge that 2015 has been a time that has since passed of which we had an executive chairman, Dr. Richard Wah, who left at the beginning of 2016 and Ms. Salote Rabuka, who left at the end of 2016. At that time we had 35 staff. I am going to now move to the next slide and our team leaders will speak to each of the slides. Thank you.

MR. A. SAVU- Thank you, Linda. Good afternoon, Honourable Members. The first slide is on our achievements in 2015 through our normal business as usual operations. In 2015, we proceeded through our institutional accreditation system, a total of 11 institutions, three were recognised, two were registered and six were granted provisional registration.

With regards to those institutions, the two that were granted full registration were the Ministry of Youth and Sport and the *Marist Champagnat Institute*. Provisional registration was *Chevalier Training Centre, Corpus Christi Teachers College, and Fiji Corrections Service Academy, Methodist Deaconess Training Centre, St. John the Baptist Theological College and Work Bridge Fiji Institute*. With the three gaining recognition, *Black Meridian Watchers Academy, Cannon Institute of Technology and Pacific Eye Institute*.

With regards to the accreditation of programmes, the first round of accreditation of higher education programmes was completed, a total of 14 applications at levels one to six were evaluated while a total of five applications were evaluated at level seven to 10, bringing the total evaluated to 19.

With regards to the external evaluation and review, as stated on the slide as EER, 11 higher education institutions piloted the process which was benchmarked against the process that is done by our sister agency, the New Zealand Qualifications Authority out of New Zealand. Further achievement was our help in the establishment of the Technical College of Fiji (TCF). This initiative of Government warranted the support of FHEC in 2015 focusing on the recognition of the institution as well as the delivery of the national qualifications which the institution currently does. Also in 2015, we looked at the establishment of the review committee.

Looking at other achievements at a more strategic level, firstly was the industry academia collaboration. This was the first ever collaboration and was hosted by FHEC. The collaboration was sought to create synergies between industries and academia to help ensure that high quality and relevant graduates were produced in Fiji. This was conducted on the 7th and 8th of August 2015. With regards to the higher education strategy, we had noted that in our lot of strategic documents, preference is given for early childhood, primary and secondary so we had sought consultation and development work for Fiji's first ever higher education strategy. This was to be the first comprehensive document to provide direction on the development of post-secondary sector.

In addition, in terms to international conferences, we wanted to move from being participants in conferences to actually hosting them so in 2015, we bid for and we won two major international conferences. So in 2015, major preparation work was undertaken for the International Network for Quality Assurance Agencies in Higher Education (INQAAHE) Conference and the Asia Pacific Quality Network (APQN) Conference that was to be held in Fiji in 2016.

In addition, what we wanted to do here at the FHEC in 2015 was to have ourselves externally reviewed and in 2015 we undertook a review by the APQN. The review of FHEC was done by the Asia Pacific Quality Register Review (APQR) team. This resulted in a substantial compliance rating which was granted to the Commission and allowed for its registration with the APQN. The FHEC became the first external quality assurance agency for tertiary education to be registered on the APQR. In addition, we sought MFAT assistance, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Trade of New Zealand provided financial aid amounting to NZ\$100,000 to FHEC to facilitate strategic developments from June to December 2015.

Finally in regards to our open education resources, FHEC spearheaded the work on open education resources which resulted in a national policy that was endorsed, being the first ever of its kind for the Pacific region. Thank you.

MR. R. MISAU.- Thank you ladies and gentlemen. I will speak on the funding of the Higher Education Institutions. What we have on the table is the level of funding in 2015. Over the years the funding has basically being directed to these same institutions and even as of last year, these were same institutions that were being funded. The level of funding has more or less been the same plus minus 10 percent here and there.

Now this funding with FHEC's involvement is to try and leverage the institutions to conduct themselves and produce their outcomes required by the Higher Education Sector; the outcomes that should lead to things such as employment, innovation and entrepreneurship. FHEC's involvement here is with the drafting of the agreements, the supervision and the acquittal of the data that comes back from the Higher Education Institutions. Thank you.

MR. M. RANIGA.-Thank you, good afternoon all. Just going on the financial performance of 2015. Our total income basically was \$1.6 million against our total expenditure of \$1.9 million. The shortfall of \$275,000 was basically met by a surplus that we had accumulated. Just the dissection of the income, which basically shows our collection for the 2015, major part being the Government grant. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- That brings you to the end of the presentation?

MR. A. SAVU.- Just one more.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- All right, thank you. Please continue.

MR. R. MISAU.- The key constraint for FHEC has been the budget and the resources that is at our disposal. That has led to a lot of planning in 2015; planning to develop our systems, policies and various strategies that has resulted after 2015. The New Zealand Government through the MFAT has come on to help with empowering our HR capacity, the Monitoring Evaluation Framework and the improvement of our database. As we speak, there has been collaboration going on between the universities, the Ministry of Education, FHEC and stakeholders to have a similar information system right from ECE right through to tertiary education.

So all these planning had started in 2015 when the very basic constraint of resources and budget were identified. That is basically the major constraint, so around that we have developed policies, procedures, staff training capacity, there was an issue on high staff turnover over the years. We addressed that through the Job Evaluation Exercise that was done in the same year and we hope that has enabled to address that particular issue that we had on high staff turnover. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- *Vinaka vakalevu* thank you so much for your much enlightening presentation. Now we will move onto the question and answer session.

I believe you have a set of questions with you too, we will repeat those questions and you can answer and our Honourable Members do have some supplementary questions as well. But before we go into the questionnaire, as per your presentation Mr. Misau, you said that the level of funding has almost been the same and the key constraints are due to low budgeting, budgetary allocations and of course the resources. We are in 2018 now, and this report is for 2015, has it improved - the budgetary allocation, resources? How has it improved, if it has?

MR. A. SAVU.- I will just make a clarification. A similar level of funding, I was referring to the institutions. But with regards to

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Is the funding enough?

MR. A. SAVU.- At the moment we have a review in place. The review is looking at how best we can finance the sector. That has started, we have gone around to the institutions to seek their opinions and views and the various other stakeholders, so we are in the phase of relooking at the design of the funding model; the model that funds the institutions. But with regard to the question on the constraints facing the Secretariat, we have been blessed with the assistance of the MFAT funds for the various outputs that have been identified. They do not reflect here in this report but they were identified in that year.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So it is improving?

MR. A. SAVU.- - Yes.

MS. L. AUMUA.- Can I also make a point?

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Yes.

MS. L. AUMUA.- You asked whether the Commission's budget has actually improved or increased. It has not, not for the Commission. It has remained static for the last four years.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- So do you want to propose anything?

MS. L. AUMUA.- We have proposed in the new budget.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- All right, thank you. So the coming up budget will see and hopefully there will be a difference and I bet there would be a difference. Any supplementary questions?

HON. S. V. RADRODRO.- Thank you Deputy Chairperson, thank you to the team for your presentation this morning. As you had mentioned that that is your major constraint on your budget line, and the Government is the main provider of that budget line. And as mentioned by the Director that it has not improved for the last four years because if I remember correctly in the 2014 Annual Report, that was also highlighted as the major constraint. Because you rely heavily on the budget line from Government, and it has not improved, what other strategies or what other proposals would you have in place to be able to supplement that budget line? If it is not going to come from Government, and yes, MFAT has given you that and whether that is a continuous budget provision or is just a one-off? What other strategies would you have to be able to sort of assist you in that major constraint?

MS. L. AUMUA.- Thank you for that question. We have actually looked at a few of the possibilities. We do have in fact funding for the next few years. We have got it in place for five years, however, yes we it will dwindle and we have to sustain our organisation. What we have tried to do is, instead of going into the budget round alone, as we have previously done, we have incorporated our strategy inside of the Ministry of Education in the that when we all go in together that this will be advocated and championed under the Ministry of Education, so

that we are not isolated or seen to be advocating on our own. So we are hoping that this is one strategy that we might be able to incorporate. In saying that we will continue to look for further international funding to see whether we can sustain ourselves moving forward.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Another supplementary question to that because if Government does not give you the needed financial resources then this new Act and the roles that are supposed to be carried out by the institution may not be achieved. So, it is like a white elephant in the room, so to speak.

So, I believe that the Government must provide the necessary resources to enable the FHEC to be able to achieve the Government objectives and targets for that organisation. So, if it has not done for the last four years then how can FHEC convince Government in terms of, when the budget consultation was done, was there an opportunity for the organisation to be able to highlight the needs in that budget consultation process?

MR. R. MISAU.- The importance of Higher Education on the economy cannot be overstated. I think the Government realises that and I think in recent times, employers, students, HEIs and all the stakeholders were concerned about employment and unemployment. Higher Education has a very important part and I think that any Government would respond. We have put in place documents to support our case. We have a Higher Education strategy that is a first time document that will map out the way for the Higher Education Sector. So, with all that in place, we are confident that the Government of the day or any Government will respond. The stakeholders here are the children. I cannot over emphasise the importance of that.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Mr. Misau. I get your point that you have put in your submission and proposal and with the Budget a few months away, we are hopeful that you will get what you have asked for.

Question No. 2 - According to Page 34 of the Annual Report, the OAG Report stated that deficiencies in internal control were noted in the area of budgeting, bank reconciliation, procurement and payroll and as such there is a reasonable possibility that material mis-statements or fraudulent activities would not be prevented or detected in a timely manner. What action has FHEC taken so far to address this particular issue?

MR. M. RANIGA.- Thank you, Deputy Chair, the comment made by the OAG with regards to internal control deficiencies:

- i) The Budgetary controls, the Commission is basically actively involved on a monthly basis monitoring our budget versus our actual expenditure. So, they are strictly monitoring our performance against our budget; and
- ii) The Commission has recently approved a finance policy last October to basically mitigate these risks.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Honourable Members, any supplementary questions?

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Deputy Chair. If I am correct, I thought I heard that there was some kind of balance of funding from previous years?

MR. M. RANIGA.- That is right.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Alright, if that was balance of funding, you had mentioned that your challenge is lack of financial resources. What was that balance of funding earmarked for? Why was it not used?

MR. M. RANIGA.- Actually those where the funds unspent from prior years brought forward and utilised in the current 2015 to fund this shortage.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- But even then you had a balance.

MR. M. RANIGA.- Yes, we do maintain a minimum level of balance to cater for our operations because we are not a revenue generating organisation, we depend on the grant so sometimes documentary, the documents, the payment of grant takes up sometime so there is a buffer we maintain all the time.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Could it be a reason for not getting what you asked for because you could not utilise what you have got?

MR. M. RANIGA.- No.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you. Moving on, gender equality. Question No. 3 - How does the Fiji Higher Education Commission actually ensure that there is gender equality in its workplace?

MR. R. MISAU.- We are an equal opportunity employer, we do not discriminate, however we recognise the importance of gender equality, but in our recruitment and selection, we go by what the market provides. But yes, we do recognise the need for gender equality. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Question No. 4 - There is another question by the Committee members on what are some of the major challenges faced by FHEC? How have these been overcome? Low budget was one as you mentioned, what about your office space and staff turnover?

MR. R. MISAU.- Yes, I think this question I had alluded to it in my earlier response but with office space we have extra space now. With staff turnover, we now have a new system now, a new performance panel looks at incentivising the HR so we think with all these things in place, we should be able to manage the staff turnover.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Sir, can we say that you went through a reform as well or internal reform?

MR. R. MISAU.- You can call it that, yes. But it is all part of the MFAT Programme that we are now undertaking now. It is helping us to do a lot of these things. So, we are reviewing our framework, we are reviewing our strategies.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you Mr. Misau.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you Madam Deputy Chairperson. Those three challenges and it must be very frustrating working in such an organisation that has this kind of

challenge, but it is good that you have mentioned that you have got an extra space now. In terms of the staff turnover because these are the same challenges that we heard in the last report, and the staff turnover, it is good now we are hearing that there has been a Job Evaluation Exercise. I would just like to ask, which organisation conducted the Job Evaluation Exercise and the recommendations of that JEE, particularly in terms of salary, how are you going to implement the recommendations of the JEE in terms of salaries and other incentives? We would like to know what were the recommendations and how those recommendations are going to be implemented.

MR. R. MISAU.- Thank you. The Job Evaluation Exercise looked at the complexities of our roles when we made our submission to PWC. So, their recommendation was, we had to align ourselves with certain parts of the market, they gave us options. The Commission took a position as to where it could afford within the options that were given to us. That has resulted in very positive outcomes.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- You said that you are going to have a positive outcome, but still your main constraint is finance, so how are you going to implement it, like if there is to be a salary increase, how are you going to implement that because staff turnover, one of the main cause is incentives (salary). So if that is in the recommendation and finance is your big constraint, how are you going to implement that to be able to retain your staff?

MR. M. RANIGA.- Thank you, Madam. Obviously any financial commitment is basically supported with the availability of funds. The Commission has put in place a performance management system, obviously the 2015 recommendation is pretty much gone by now, the management has changed and the leadership has changed. At present the performance management system basically looks at those areas of appraisals and rewarding the staff based on their performance. In our new budget submission, there is a provision something for the staff subject to our performance review. Once that comes through, then it will basically, dependent on the budget and from our recent consultation with the Ministry, budget consultation for the new year, it looks positive. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you moving on, on Page 1 I can see the Commission's 11 mandated functions and looking at Number 8 is to foster co-operation among higher education institutions and linkages between higher education institutions and industry. Also, looking at Number 10 to develop or cause to be developed an academic broadband facility for use by higher education institutions and so on. So looking at your mandated functions, have you got a central database there at the Fiji Higher Education Commission whereby you collect all the data from all these institutions?

MS. L. AUMUA.- Madam, we just asking the question, as of now?.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Yes I know we are referring to 2015 Annual Report but, yes, as of now you can say.

MS. L. AUMUA.- Yes, we do have a system that collects all of the information for the Higher Education Institutions and also the qualifications that are achieved by students. However, in saying that, it is a system that remains just a way of processing and what we are doing at the moment is we have created a new strategy for our IT Systems and we are trying to create a system that collaborates and pulls the whole of the institutions, organisations and activities together so that if one team wanted to look at one institution and see how it is

registered, another team members can log on to the same system and see how many students are there. So that it is system that actually sits right over the whole of the Higher Education Commission that each team can actually delve into. Currently the database sits separately within each of the teams.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Actually I was wondering because there were so many institutions that were doing their own work and then obviously there are students involved, and the employment as you mentioned, I mean obviously the market need and the production from the Technical Colleges, from the Higher Education Institutes and tertiary institutions. I am looking beyond, thinking about that kind of data collation whereby, I mean, are we producing, what demand is there in the market? Is there a collation?

MS. L. AUMUA.- There is a system that looks after the whole behaviour of the organisation and the stakeholders of higher education institution but Fiji Education Management Information System (FEMIS) which we have just signed a Memorandum of Understanding with both the University of the South Pacific and Fiji National University; (the two largest universities) to bring their data. We have created shelves inside of FEMIS, now we can actually track an early child student right through to primary, secondary and now we have got the tertiary institution. So, now we have got two universities inside. Now we will be able to track the whole progress of that student and then we are going to ask institutions to then supply information into FEMIS, “six months after graduation, you tell us where they have been employed and then we will be able to see the full investment of that student and what the outcome” and “whether that course is actually worthwhile” because they have gained employment or not. So we are hoping that that system will be able to give the information that you have actually asked which is really necessary to drive the whole sector to meet the industry and the economy’s needs.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Definitely. Within that system, I mean, do you have any collaboration with the like Ministry of Youth and Ministry for Employment or other ministries?

MS. L. AUMUA.- Our intention is to bring all of the higher education institutions in. We piloted with a small organisation called ServicePro and put into the system. We actually saw that when they input it, just collated all the way back to early childhood but our intention is not only to get the universities but every higher education institution and every programme. That is the ideal, I suppose, the future that we would like to see for Fiji.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you so much. Members, you got any supplementary question on that.

HON. S.V. RADRODRO.- Thank you, Madam Deputy Chairperson. I mean just linking that to Question No. 7 where you only have the information on those that have completed the programme but not on their employability. I ask the question whether Fiji Higher Education Commission plays that role in having to identify what higher education institutions need to focus their programmes on. For example, and we have raised this in the House in regards to land surveyors and those land programmes. When there is a need in the market but the institutions are not providing them; those are the kind of programmes that should be looked at. My question is whether that role is played by this organisation to be able to provide that to the higher education institutions. But the very fact that you do not have that data, I mean how do you do that?

MS. L. AUMUA.- I think you have asked a really important question because that is how we should be driving the whole of the tertiary sector, the higher education institutions. This is just the beginning of collating all of that data so that we can actually see where everyone is actually enrolled in and we are still collating all of the programmes across the institutions which we are still gathering. But in saying that, ideally when you come into a nation such as Fiji, what you would like to see is a workforce development strategy and so when you can identify what the needs of the economy are, then you can actually drive the institutions to actually respond to what they have identified the need to be.

Currently we have industries that identify within each of their sectors, what it is that they wish to have and at the same time we also need to build qualifications to address what the industries actually want to have. This could be in tourism, mining, security, agriculture so we are busy doing that but actually as a whole nation, we actually have not identified what we actually need for this economy now and moving ahead. So we actually need a five-year workforce development strategy. Once we have that in place then we can move all of the institutions to drive and work towards that direction and in fairness to the higher education institutions, it is very hard for them to actually identify what that need is when you have different organisations that put their own thinking around what the nation requires. So I think a collaborative strategy that everyone inputs into, that can be driven and then we can actually ensure that we actually have the supply in place.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Thank you, Madam Linda. Actually that is what I meant when I said the produce and the market demand. If you really are collaborating with that, that what the market needs is and you are producing what they want, is exactly the same thing which you explained. That is what I asked initially. Anyway when FNU was here, Professor Healy said that internally they do that but the central data system is not there and maybe like you said that it could be a long term plan or a five-year plan. To work in collaboration with the Bureau of Statistics or other relevant authorities, organisations and other ministries and maybe you can formulate which will take time and I hope you will venture into that so that we really get into business and say “ok, we know” and then maybe we can bring down the unemployment rate or whatever because we know what the market need is and we know what we are producing and we are in collaboration with all the major stakeholders. To have this central database is very important. So thank you very, very much. That question on database has been answered.

Question No. 8 - Please explain if the Commission had carried out a detailed survey of all the institutes registered and if so, if a list can be provided and also if those institutes that had been registered have been paid their registration fees?

MR. M. RANIGA.- Thank you, Deputy Chairperson. Yes, the list can be provided.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- That is a question of statistical nature, you can do it later on, not a problem. .

MR. M. RANIGA.- Yes.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- Not a problem. Thank you so much.

Question No. 9 - How do you assure that the programmes developed by institutions meet national standards? There are policies and strategies in place to monitor that?

MR. A. SAVU.- Thank you very much for that, Deputy Chairperson. With regards to national standards, we are at the Higher Education Commission work with our stakeholders to not only develop these national standards but to see that they are compiled to within the sector. So we have various strategies to undertake like working very closely with the industry. We have what is termed an “Industry Standards Advisory Committee that looks at national standards for various trades. We also ensure that programmes that are developed by the different providers that they also have elements of stakeholder consultation within their programmes to show the FHEC, not only FHEC but the general public that their programme needs are relevant that has been identified by them.

All of these standards all feed into our overarching standard which is the Fiji Qualifications Framework ensuring that these programmes feed into one of the levels or one to ten on the Fiji Qualifications Framework. Through other partnerships that we have established, for example, through the Review of the Asia Pacific Quality Network, this allows us for the recognition of these qualifications because an external body has come in and looked at our processes and benchmarked them against international best practices.

So these are the ways that we look at ensuring that national standards are met by programmes developed through the various institutions. Thank you.

DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON.- *Vinaka*, thank you so much Mr. Akuila Savu.

Honourable Members, you have any other questions? Once again *vinaka vakalevu*, thank you so much Honourable Members, thank you Honourable Maharaj for joining us. We have Director FHEC – Linda Aumua with us and we have got the Team Leader Funding and Research – Mr. Robert Misau, Team Leader Quality Assurance – Mr. Akuila Savu, Senior Accountant – Mr. Milan Raniga and the Communications Officer – Mr. Epi Rawalai.

Thank you very much for your time, answers and for your presentation. Have a very good afternoon and *vinaka vakalevu*.

The Committee adjourned at 2.44 p.m.

APPENDIX 2: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION BY THE FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION

APPENDIX 2: POWERPOINT PRESENTATION BY THE FIJI HIGHER EDUCATION COMMISSION





INTRODUCTION

LEADERSHIP

Executive Chair
Dr Richard Wain

Director
Selote Rabuka

5 Units | executive Office, Quality Assurance, Professional Service, Finance and Research, Corporate Services

Total of 35 staff

end of the first strategic development plan :
SDP 2012 – 2015





Major achievements during the year were consistent with the major outcomes in the 2012 -2015 SDP



ACHIEVEMENTS



RECOGNITION – 3
REGISTRATION – 2
PROVISIONAL REGISTRATION – 6

ACCREDITED PROGRAMMES



FQF level	QUALS	No. Approved
2	Cert	2
3	Cert	3
4	Cert	3
6	Diploma	6
7	Degree	2
8	Post Grad	3

Source: Committee Evaluation





TECHNICAL COLLEGE OF FIJI

PROGRAMME QUALITY ASSURANCE

DELIVERY & ASSESSMENT

ROLL OUT OF NQF

EER REVIEW



11 HEIs piloted the EER



FUNDING

INSTITUTION	% of Fijian students	% of non Fijian students	Approved Funding [\$FJD]
1. RNU	95.0	5.0	38,387,000
2. USP	52.2	47.8	36,597,202
3. UoF	97.8	2.2	2,500,000
4. CATD (Nadove)	100	0	755,000
5. Monfort (Valea)	98.0	2	700,000
6. Sangam Institute	100	0	250,000
7. Corpus Christi	95.0	5	150,000
8. Vivekananda Tech	100	0	150,000
9. Filton	64.1	35.9	50,000



FINANCE

INCOME



Government grant Fee grant UoF grant EUP & T&T Release of deferred income Other funds

Financial Performance

		2015		2014
Income		1,650,187		1,292,246
Expenses				
Depreciation	50,206			44,195
Salaries & Employee Cost	1,096,364			993,026
Operating Expenses	778,727			420,839
Total expenses		1,925,297		1,458,080
Operating Deficit		275,110		165,834


- Low Budget
- Populating the FQF Framework
- Work Space



END



APPENDIX 3: RESEARCH ANNUAL REPORT SUMMARY



PARLIAMENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF FIJI

Research and Library Services

Annual Report Summary 180055

Annual Report Summary-Fiji Higher Education Commission (FHEC) 2015

Standing Committee on Social Affairs


Vision-"To build together an educated and globally competitive Fiji"

Mission-"To quality assure the delivery of higher education that meets the needs of our stakeholders"

	2015	MPs Comments
Principal Activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To register and regulate higher education institutions according to provisions of the Promulgation; To foster and safeguard the national interest, the interest of students and parents and also of local higher education providers; To establish national standards for different qualifications; To oversee the review process of higher education institutions; To provide assurances that programmes developed by institutions meet national standards; To promote the development of Fiji as a knowledge society; To allocate government funds marked for higher education annually for higher education institutions according to a transparent and well publicized criteria for allocation; To foster cooperation among higher education institutions and linkages between higher education institutions and industry; To maintain a database of higher education information; To develop or cause to be developed an academic broadband facility for use by higher education institutions; and To make recommendations to the Minister with respect to issues consistent with its functions including special projects. 	
Act in place	The Higher Education Promulgation 2008	

Prepared by Shobhna Rani Email: shobhna.rani@govnet.gov.fj 29 March 2018



<p>Organization structure</p>	 <p>The Fiji Higher Education Commission began operations on 1st January 2010 following the commencement of the Higher Education Promulgation 2008. The Commission is a statutory body that reports directly to the Minister for Education and is responsible for regulating the establishment, recognition, operation and standard of higher education institutions.</p>	
<p>Projects/Achievements</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FHEC became the <i>first external quality assurance agency</i> for tertiary education to be reviewed and then registered on the <i>Asia Pacific Quality Register (APQR)</i> for a period of 5 years (2015 - 2020). In 2015, a total of <i>three Higher Education Institutions (HEIs)</i> were granted recognition and these were: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Black Meridian Watchers Academy (BMWA), Suva; 2. Cannan Institute of Technology (CIT), Nadi; and 3. Pacific Eye Institute (PEI), Suva. <p>BMWA is the first company to register its training department with the FHEC. CIT offers hospitality training in Nadi while the PEI is the Pacific region's first training facility for eye health professionals.</p> In 2015, two (2) HEIs were granted full registration, whilst six (6) were granted provisional registration: <p><u>Full Registration:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department of Youth and Sports (DYS), Suva; and 2. Marist Champagnat Institute (MCI), Suva <p><u>Provisional Registration:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chevalier Training Centre (CTC); 2. Corpus Christi Teachers College (CCTC); 3. Fiji Corrections Service Academy; 4. Methodist Deaconess Training Centre; 5. St. John the Baptist Theological College; and 6. Workbridge Fiji. The FHEC received funding support of \$100,000.00 from <i>Ministry of Foreign Affairs & Trade (MFAT)</i> from July to December, 2015 to facilitate strategic development. The funding focused on attaining 	



	and strengthening FHEC's capacity by linking with institutional partners and accessing technical assistance.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The four types of funding from government to HEIs include:<ul style="list-style-type: none">➢ Operating Grants allocated and administered by the Commission;➢ Capital Grants – allocated by the Strategic Planning office (MOE), but monitored for impact by the Commission and the Strategic Planning Office;➢ Special Grants jointly allocated by different Government departments, e.g. MoH and MPI contributions to FNU; and➢ Student scholarships and loans funding by the TSLB.		
Financial Position (Company's)		2015 \$	2014 \$
	Total Operating Revenue	1,650,187	1,292,246
	Total Operating Expenses	1,925,297	1,458,080
	Operating Loss	(275,110)	(165,834)
	Total Assets	1,101,449	1,170,891
	Total Liabilities	561,515	355,847
	Net Assets	539,934	815,044
	Accumulated Funds	539,934	815,044
Audit Opinion	<p>In the Auditor's opinion, the financial statement presents fairly in all material respects, the financial position of FHEC as at 31 December 2015 and of the statement of comprehensive income and changes to equity and its statement of cash flows for the year ended in accordance with International Financial Reporting Standards for Small and Medium-sized Entities.</p> <p><i>Emphasis of Matter</i></p> <p>Without qualifying the audit opinion attention is drawn to the following matter:</p> <p>As stated in note 22 of the Notes to the Financial Statements, the Commission collected and disclosed revenue from registration fees, annual fees and renewal of registration fees totalling \$48,850 which was deposited in the Consolidated fund account of the Government. The Commission has not carried out a detailed survey of the institutes registered with the Commission in 2015. Therefore, the Commission is not in a position to determine if all institutes operating in Fiji and operation in 2015 were registered and</p>		



	<p>paid their registration fees.</p> <p><i>Other Matters</i></p> <p>Deficiencies in internal controls were noted in the area of budgeting, bank reconciliation, procurement and payroll and as such there is a reasonable possibility that material misstatements or fraudulent activities would not be prevented or would not be detected in a timely manner.</p>																												
Other Information	<p>❖ The <i>FHEC Strategic Plan 2016 - 2020</i> has five strategic outcomes for the next five years. These are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Quality, relevance and consistency of education and training provision across the nation is assured;2. Education and training that is internationally recognised;3. An informed and progressive Fijian society;4. Sustained economic growth supported by key capability development; and5. An education and training culture based on continuous improvement. <p>❖ <i>Mandated Review</i></p> <p>With the first round of Registrations drawing to a close, the Fiji Higher Education Commission had to establish an Assessment and Evaluation procedure to determine how well HEIs had performed against the criteria assessed during the initial Registration process. Thus, the Mandated Review was formulated to meet this operational need. In addition, this process tied the operational need to the legislative requirement for a review process of HEIs as mandated in the Higher Education Promulgation 2008 and the Higher Education (Regulations) 2009.</p>																												
Gender Analysis	<p>Source: FHEC ROI Data Collection 2015</p> <table><tr><th colspan="5">FIJIAN STUDENTS</th><th colspan="4">NON-FIJIAN STUDENTS</th></tr><tr><th>No. of HEIs</th><th>YEAR</th><th>MALE</th><th>FEMALE</th><th>TOTAL</th><th>MALE</th><th>FEMALE</th><th>TOTAL</th><th>GRAND TOTAL</th></tr><tr><td>27</td><td>2015</td><td>15,719</td><td>19,046</td><td>34,765</td><td>7,878</td><td>8,204</td><td>16,082</td><td>50,599</td></tr></table>	FIJIAN STUDENTS					NON-FIJIAN STUDENTS				No. of HEIs	YEAR	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	MALE	FEMALE	TOTAL	GRAND TOTAL	27	2015	15,719	19,046	34,765	7,878	8,204	16,082	50,599	
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29 March 2018

Disclaimer

The Annual Report Summary was prepared to assist the Standing Committee on Social Affairs in its review of the Fiji Higher Education Commission 2015 Annual Report. Although every effort has been made to ensure accuracy, it should not be taken as a complete or authoritative guide to the report. The Research and Library Team shall not be liable for any errors or omissions, or for any loss or damage of any kind arising from its use, and may remove, vary or amend any information at any time without prior notice. The Research and Library Team accepts no responsibility for any references or links to, or the content of, information maintained by third parties. Other sources should be consulted in the review of the Report.

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