

ORDER PAPER

MONDAY, 6th February 2017

Written Question 09/2017

Hon. Mikaele Leawere to ask the Minister for Education, Heritage and Arts – Can the Minister explain why the Fiji National University has not developed Architectural courses to degree level.

RESPONSE

The Fiji National University currently offers a Trade Certificate in Architectural Technology (Level 5). They are in the process of developing the Level 6 Diploma in Architecture.

Background Information

1. FNU has tried to recruit PhDs and Professors in Architecture so that higher level programmes can be developed but they are not able to recruit suitably qualified lecturers.
2. In 2015, after FNU advertised about 3 – 4 times internationally; the only response came from India and an Assistant Professor in Architecture from IIT (India) was hired. However, his contract was later terminated because he was suffering from some mental/psychological illness.
3. An important issue in developing this programme is that it must be aligned to New Zealand and Australian building standards and therefore, FNU would prefer to hire Architectural Lecturers who were trained in New Zealand and Australia and preferably qualified and certified as Professional Architect – to be able to train architects for Fiji.
4. In 2016, FNU managed to recruit 2 more qualified architectural staff (Mr. Mosese Druavesi and Ms Fane Seruvakula) and a third person (Ms Debra Ho)

was supposed to join us in March 2017 after she has the full registration – but she managed to get a scholarship to studies for her Masters in Architecture – from an Australian university. This is a one year programme and she is still keen to join FNU as Lecturer after she completes her studies in 2018.

5. Mr Druavesi is a qualified and fully registered Architecture and is currently the HOD and helping to review the TD programme and Principal Lecturer.

New Architecture Programme.

1. The team is working on reviewing the TD programme to level 6 Diploma in Architecture so that it can be prepared for the degree in Architecture;
2. Also, developing Certificate 3 and Certificate 4 Programmes in Drafting to cater for those who finish at form 5 and form 6 and create a pathway for them.

Difference between Drafting and Architecture

1. Drafting is a low level programme for anyone who draws a house plan etc.
2. Architect is a Professional qualification and they have done 5 years of academic studies at University and 1 year of work experience with a qualified and registered architect.
3. A draftsman will normally work for an Architect – draw the actual plan but the architect will sign-off the plan then it is submitted to be passed by the Civil Engineer.
4. There is definitely potential to train more draftsmen at Cert 3 and Cert 4 level and that's why FNU is working on developing these programmes and then the pathway to Diploma and then Bachelor in Architecture – these programmes should be ready by the second Senate meeting this year (2017).
5. The Diploma (level 6) in Architecture will be equivalent to the first 2 years of the 5 year degree programme. FNU hopes to work on the degree programme in 2018 (equivalent to 2-3 more years after the Diploma).