

## Charan pursues Biomedical Science studies in the UK

Fiji National University (FNU), staff member Premika Charan is honoured to have received a Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) scholarship to study in the Masters of Science in Biomedical Science programme at Nottingham Trent University in the UK.

Charan, an Assistant Lecturer in the Department of Pathology and Medical Science at FNU's College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences' (CMNHS), said the opportunity allowed her to upskill her qualifications and enhance her research skills.

The 31-year-old said teaching at the College for the past four years empowered her to seek greater academic exposure in the field of Biomedical Science.

"When I saw this scholarship advertised, I felt I had to apply and seek an opportunity to achieve the above and gain insight from a developed nation in this field," Charan said.

"When I found out I was a recipient of the scholarship, I was surprised and excited. I couldn't believe that I had been selected for such a prestigious scholarship and was excited to receive such an opportunity."

"I did feel a little bit nervous in the days leading up to my departure, especially considering the huge responsibility that lay ahead."

FNU Vice-Chancellor Professor Nigel Healey congratulated Charan on securing a scholarship to study in the UK.

"I am delighted that Charan has been given this wonderful opportunity to advance her academic career. I was Pro-Vice-Chancellor (International) and Head of the College of Business, Law and Social Sciences at Nottingham Trent University before joining FNU in 2016 and I know that their biosciences research and postgraduate programmes are very highly regarded internationally," said Professor Healey.

"NTU is particularly strong in areas like cancer biology, immunology, antimicrobial resistance, diabetes and ageing, and bioinformatics. I am sure that Charan will return after her postgraduate study and make a real contribution to FNU and Fiji by helping us strengthen our own programmes in some of these important areas," he added.

Charan arrived in the UK in September to acclimatise to the weather and culture and begin her year-long full-time studies at NTU.

"It's currently autumn at the moment, and the weather is already so cold. Rain can be almost as unpredictable as Suva," she said.

"There is a wide variety of cuisines available, and one can be spoilt with food choices, especially with the presence of a highly multicultural society."

"Nottingham Trent University, like most other universities on this



Premika Charan at Nottingham Trent University. Picture Supplied.

side of the globe, is extremely student-centric. Learning materials are backed up with recorded sessions of lectures on "Moodle-like" software and delivery is paperless."

She added that staff and students at NTU were heavily involved in research and support service delivery was well developed and accessible, with most of the services electronic-based.

Charan said that while attaining the Master's qualification would be a personal and professional achievement for her, it would also benefit the staff and students at CMNHS when she returns.

"This much-needed exposure will, in turn, equip me with the necessary tools to impart and share the knowledge with my colleagues at FNU and achieve better delivery of programmes and syllabus to students, resulting in higher quality graduates," she said.

"This opportunity will also provide the exposure for better and quality research, understanding of the latest techniques currently used in the field and provide the potential for enhancing and further developing programmes."

NTU Dean of School of Science and Technology, Professor Mary O'Neill congratulated Charan on gaining a prestigious Commonwealth Scholarship Commission (CSC) scholarship.

"I welcome Charan to the School and to the Department of Biosciences, which is in the top twenty of all UK Biological Sciences departments, according to the Guardian newspaper," said Professor O'Neill.

The Dean for the College of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences, Dr William May while wishing Charan all the best in her studies, said such achievements will encourage other staff and students to strive towards achieving their academic goals.

"Capacity building and training in the specialisms that are not available locally have always been a challenge for us at CMNHS," Dean May said.

"This is one of our strategic priority. It is critical to creating a depth of knowledge and capacity within the College to achieve our vision."

Charan is expected to graduate at the end of next year.