

SMC approves 3.5% COLA adjustment for 2024

The Solomon Islands National University (SINU) Senior Management Committee (SMC) has approved a 3.5% Cost of Living (COLA) adjustment for SINU staff salary for 2024.

In a meeting held on 31 July this year SMC gave the green light to a 3.5% COLA increase in staff salary which will be backdated to January 2024.

The news of the new COLA adjustment was widely welcomed by SINU staff as the last time that SINU made a COLA adjustment was five years ago back in 2019.

Following the COLA increase approval, the SINU Vice Chancellor Professor Transform Aqorau announced the good news to all staff in an email stating, “I am pleased to inform you that the Senior Management Committee convened this morning and approved the payment of the 3.5% Cost of Living Adjustment (COLA), which will be backdated to January 2024.”

“COLA is an increase in salary aimed at counteracting the effects of inflation, thereby ensuring that the pur-

of the HR Department.”

“Once the internal cost analysis is completed for each staff member, the adjusted payment will be processed and deposited into your respective accounts within the coming weeks.”

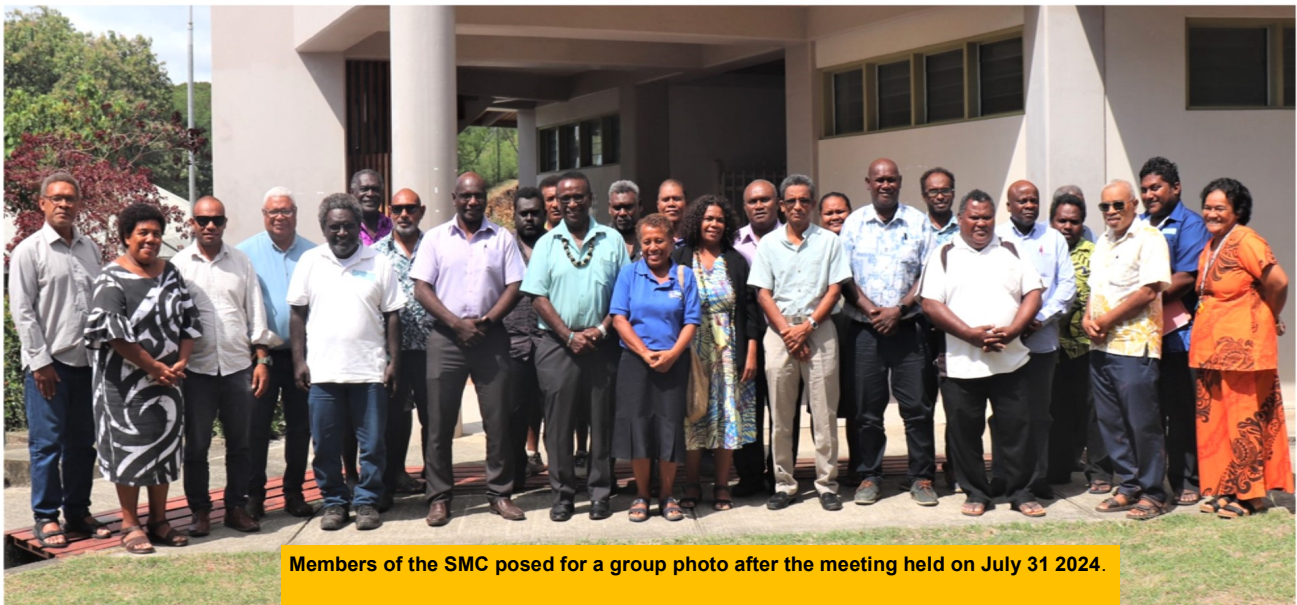
“I am sharing this outcome with you, recognising that the topic has been a source of speculation and concern.”

“I am grateful to the Acting Director of HR for their diligent efforts in preparing the proposal and to the Senior Management Committee for their unanimous support in approving it.”

“Thank you for your patience and understanding as we work through this process.”

“Should you have any questions or require further information, please do not hesitate to contact the HR Department.”

While all SINU staff will be benefited from the latest COLA increase to their salaries, VC Aqorau has requested a waiver meaning COLA will not apply to his salary.



Members of the SMC posed for a group photo after the meeting held on July 31 2024.

chasing power of your income remains stable over time.”

“This adjustment is a crucial staff welfare issue, reflecting our commitment to supporting the well-being and financial security of our valued staff members.”

“The implementation of this adjustment will be coordinated between the Finance Department and the Payroll Division

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SINU team visits Kolobangara to negotiate SINU Poitete plot land

A team from the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) has successfully visited Kolobangara in the Western Province in June this year to meet and negotiate key issues with Kolobangara Forest Products Limited (KFPL).

The team which consisted of SINU Legal Officer Edward Biku, Samuel Pitakaka Vazu, Cypriano Nuake, Peter Mahoa on Tuesday June 11 met and had a successful discussion with KFPL representatives namely Edwin Schramm, Tim Bula, and Greg Naphthale.



SINU team meets with KFPL Manager

The three main objectives of the visit are as follows; Subdivision and seeking land extension over the SINU Poitete Campus land boundary, seek approval from KFPL over the proposed trade-off of Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock land located at Ringgi Cove in Kolobangara Island, and seek approval from KFPL for the proposed practicum opportunity for students doing programs like Nursing, Trades, and Teaching in KFPL's facilities

“It was resolved that Edwin Schramm would seek KFPL Board approval for both the subdivision and extension of the Poitete Campus land boundary, with SINU providing necessary development plans.”

For the land trade-off, SINU would engage with relevant government bodies, it was revealed.



SINU team meets with Western Provincial Government

With regards to the practicum, the practicum opportunities for SINU students were acknowledged as ongoing and aligned with the current Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between SINU and KFPL.

Additional resolutions reached during the meeting included constructing a signboard at Ringgi Cove which was approved and verifying land documents to facilitate the subdivision process.

It is recommended that SINU would liaise with the Ministry of Forestry and Research regarding potential acquisition of adjacent forestry land at Poitete. With that, the SINU team also met the Western Provincial Government during the course of the visit.

Below is a brief background of SINU Poitete campus in the Western Province.

The Poitete campus covers an area of approximately 1.161 hectares and is located in Fix Term Estate (FTE) 081-003-106 registered in the name of Kolobangara Forest Products Limited, one of SINU's campuses situated in the Western Province at Kolobangara Islands.

The Poitete Campus was established in 1987 to train forestry rangers in supervising and managing the country's forestry sector. The campus provides students with practical experience and fieldwork opportunities aligned with the forestry curriculum.

Commencing its training in 1988, the campus's buildings were constructed using timber materials following the design of the Honiara Housing Authority. Funding for the campus construction was provided by the government and SICHE, resulting in the campus housing classrooms, staff houses, a kitchen, dining hall, a male and female dormitory, an ablution block, a garage/storage shop and a library.

These houses have been deteriorated and should be demolished with new standard buildings.

Due to threats during the ethnic tension period, the campus suspended its training, relocating its certificate program to the Kukum Campus until 2018, when a review reduced the certificate program to one year.



SINU team meets with KFPL staff

Additionally, a two-year diploma program in forestry science was introduced in 2018.

Some times in 2020 and 2021 several visits and reports were made by the Office of the Vice Chancellor and staff of Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries (FAFF) to Poitete Campus with the intention to rehabilitate Poitete Campus to offer the forestry programs close to the Kolobangara Forest Plantation Limited.

In 2021, the University through the Faculty of Agriculture, Forestry and Fisheries, with the support of the FAO office and leaders Raushan and Douglas Yee, prepared a proposal to rehabilitate the Poitete campus.

This proposal garnered approval from the Indian government in early 2022, following its submission through the High Commission Office in Port Moresby.

The process to secure the funding commenced in July 2022, with a visit from the Indian High Commissioner and his team to SINU.



SINU team visits Poitete

SINU diploma of construction management students visit SIPA domestic shipping terminal building construction project

The Diploma of Construction Management Students from the Solomon Islands National University (SINU) Faculty of Science and Technology, School of Built Environment, Building and Construction department visited the Solomon Islands Ports Authority Domestic Shipping Terminal building construction project.

The visit was part of the programme's site supervision, sub - contractors and labour relation unit.

The visit was arranged with Solomon Islands Ports Authority's special project coordinator Mr. Ellison Pande for the diploma of construction management students to see and learn firsthand how construction sites are managed and supervised.

The lecturer Mr. Enaly Fifiri who accompanied the students to the site is a part time staff who has wide industry experiences and a current industry professional express his satisfaction of the visit.

He highlighted the professional nature of the project and acknowledged the high standards used in building the project.

He said that the choice to visit the SIPA Domestic Terminal building projects is the right one because students see and learned all the contents and outcomes the unit they were doing is practiced on an actual construction site and done at a professional level expected in the construction industry.

The subcontracting and labour relation parts of the unit are also on full display in the management, supervision and coordination of works



The Diploma of Construction Management students on the Domestic Terminal Construction site

As part of the visit, the students attended a presentation by the project engineer and coordinator of the project showing the students the concept of the building and the detail process involved in the construction of the project.

This includes, the planning, the project contracting methods used to engaged contractors to construct the building, sub - contracting of work on the project, supervision of works, the observance of OHS and quality assuring the works in order to achieve the quality and standard of build expected.

on the project.

This visit is a results of the existing mutual relation between SINU and SIPA.

Previously, SIPA donated used heavy vehicles for SINU's Automotive Engineering department that students are currently using to learn about the heavy vehicle systems such as hydraulic, pneumatic, air brake system, heavy vehicle suspension system and heavy vehicle steering system.

SINU and MCILI reopen National Apprenticeship Training (NAT)

The Solomon Islands National University (SINU), in collaboration with the Ministry of Commerce, Industry, Labour, and Immigration (MCILI), is embarking on a transformative journey to elevate the standards of vocational training in the country with the reopening of the National Apprenticeship Training (NAT) programme.

SINU and MCILI on Tuesday 16 July hosted a grand reopening event with the themed “Building Partnership to Enhance Quality Apprenticeship Training” at the SINU Kukum Lecture Theatre. This event marks the revival of the NAT programme, which has been on hiatus for the past five years.

The reopening of NAT will benefit 102 new students, who will undergo four years of training fully sponsored by MCILI. Speaking at the event, Hon. Harry Kuma, Minister of MCILI, emphasized the Government for National Unity and Transformation (GNUT)'s commitment to supporting the initiative.

He highlighted the historical context of NAT, which began in 1975 under the Honiara Technical Institute and evolved through the Solomon Islands College of Higher Education to its current form under SINU.

Minister Kuma announced plans to sponsor an additional 100 new students under the NAT programme in 2025. By the end of 2027, the country aims to produce over 100 skilled men and women, significantly contributing to national development. He stressed that NAT is a gateway to empowering individuals with skills and innovation, boosting economic growth.

The Minister congratulated the first 102 students embarking on their studies in the second semester at SINU and encouraged them to commit to their studies and work experience.

Speaking during the reopening of NAT, the SINU Vice Chancellor (VC) Professor Transform Aqorau thanked the national government through the MCILI for seeing it fit to reopen NAT which will greatly contribute to the manpower of the country.

Prof. Transform said SINU is dedicated to nurturing an educational ecosystem that seamlessly bridges theoretical knowledge and practical application. He said NAT programme's harmonious blend of on-campus theory and off-campus practical training is a shining example of this approach.

“Our mission is to ensure that every apprentice emerges from this programme not just prepared but empowered to enter the workforce with confidence in their skills and capabilities”.

He further stated that the new partnership is a milestone and a testament to stakeholders' collective dedication and relentless hard work. “As we gaze towards the future, my resolve is steadfast in establishing SINU TAFE.

I am committed to collaborating with the Ministry, the International Labour Organization (ILO), the Australia-Pacific Technical College (APTC), all Rural Training Centres, and our Industries.

Together, let us join hands to elevate our technical and vocational training to be among the best in the region, aspiring to the exemplary standards of Australia and New Zealand.”

Prof. Transform also shared exciting news that the Senate has given its resounding approval for the establishment of the current TVET Department, which was previously nestled under the Faculty of Science and Technology, as a standalone, autonomous entity.

“This pivotal moment, coinciding beautifully with the relaunch of the Nation-

al Apprenticeship Programme, signifies a remarkable alignment of our aspirations and efforts. Henceforth, this entity will be proudly known as SINU TAFE.”

The SINU VC said the development is not merely a procedural change but a significant leap forward in our journey to provide specialised and focused vocational education, stating it positions SINU TAFE as a beacon of excellence in technical and vocational training, setting a new benchmark in the region.

“With this newfound autonomy, we are poised to tailor our programmes more precisely to the evolving needs of our industries and communities, thereby enhancing the quality and relevance of the education we offer.

This strategic move heralds a new dawn for vocational training at SINU, one where we can fully harness our potential to cultivate skilled professionals who will drive the future prosperity of the Solomon Islands and beyond.

I would like to make a heartfelt appeal to the Honourable Minister to champion our cause for fully equipping this programme with the latest, cutting-edge tools and technology. It is untenable to expect our apprentices to master 2024 methods with equipment that hails from a bygone era.”

“The true strength of our partnership lies in recognising and addressing the urgent need to modernise our entire array of training resources. The SINU VC said securing this essential support, we will be able to arm our apprentices with the contemporary skills necessary to construct and propel the future of our nation.

This critical investment in state-of-the-art equipment and technology will not only ensure that our graduates are proficient and skilled but also position them as formidable contenders on the global stage.

It is through such forward-thinking investments that we can guarantee the competitiveness and excellence of our future workforce, thereby

contributing significantly to the development and prosperity of the Solomon Islands.

This reopening heralds a new era for SINU, where our commitment to continually enhancing our offerings takes centre stage.

We are not merely reopening a programme; we are embarking on a transformative journey to elevate the standards of vocational training in our nation.”

“By 2025, with our planned yearly intake, we envision a robust pipeline of skilled graduates, each poised to significantly contribute to the development and prosperity of the Solomon Islands. As we move forward, I call upon all stakeholders—government bodies, industry partners, educators, and apprentices—to remain steadfast in our shared mission.

“To our new apprentices, I extend my heartfelt congratulations. You are the trailblazers of this revitalised programme, and your achievements will set the benchmark for future cohorts.

The reopening ceremony was witnessed by Chief Labour Officer James Gatu, Commissioner of Labour Brown Pwai, Chairman of Labour Atu Balekana, Member of Parliament for West New Geogia-Vonavona Constituency Hon. George Temahua, industry partners' representatives, students and parents of the recipient students.



Staff Profile

Name: Safina Roger

Province: Western

Age: 29

Work station: Kukum Campus

Department: Human Resource Department

Job title: Human Resource Officer-Employment services

Qualification: Bachelor of Commerce (major in Human resource and Public Administration)

How long have you been working here? I've been working here for one month now.

Tell us about your job:

My team provides professional services and advice on human resources practices. We assist HR in planning, monitoring, and controlling SINU staff establishment. Our responsibilities include recruitment, selection, and placement of staff, managing expatriate visa exemptions and work permits, and monitoring employment contracts and probation periods.

What do you like about SINU and your job?

Solomon Island National University (SINU) is a leading institution in the country. Working in this institution provides significant learning opportunities and work experiences.

Such large institution gives me an opportunities to develop my strength, skills and attributes to deal with issues at an operation level, making sure all decisions made are fair and accountable.



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Solomon Islands National University (SINU) is the Prime and ONLY National University of Solomon Islands.

Founded in 2013, SINU is striving to be one of the Best Education and Research Institute in the Pacific Region.

Our VISION: "A quality National University, raising Standards of education and applied research in the Pacific Region."

Our Mission: "Championing the pursuit of knowledge, skills, academic inquiry and applied research to transform lives through higher education and training, inclusive of diverse communities, while providing relevant solutions for the Solomon Islands."