



# NEWSLETTER

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

*Volume 02 / Issue 02 / May - August 2016*



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**We acknowledge the University web team:**

Prof. Hiran Amarasekera (Leader)  
Prof. R. G. N. Meegama (Technical Lead)  
Mr. Harsha Munasinghe (Officer in charge - CITS)  
Mr. Prashan De Silva  
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'Japura Flames' is acknowledged for some photographs.

**Cover page:** The Faculty of Medical Sciences

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**The newsletter of the  
University of Sri Jayewardenepura**

Savidu is brought out as a tri-annual newsletter carrying the vibrant academic, cultural and communal life of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

# 01. Conferences and Research

## *Prime Minister attends the International Industrial Mathematics Conference at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura*

Addressing the gathering at the International Industrial Mathematics Conference 2016 of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, held from 3rd - 5th June, Hon. Prime Minister, Ranil Wickramasinghe stressed the importance of Sri Lanka moving towards becoming a knowledge based society. This conference was the second largest gathering of Mathematicians in the scientific community. This was organized as a tribute to Prof. Sunethra Weerakoon, the very first professor by merit in Mathematics in Sri Lanka, for her 40 years of invaluable and outstanding service done to the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.



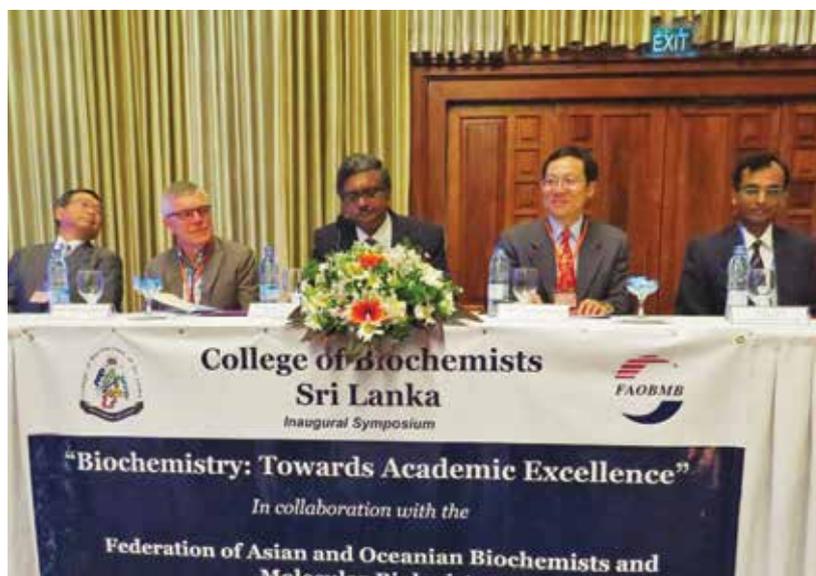
## CONFERENCES AND RESEARCH

## 11<sup>th</sup> Research Symposium of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce

The 11th Faculty Research Symposium of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC), University of Sri Jayewardenepura, one of the noteworthy events in the academic calendar of the FMSC was held on 19th August 2016. The key objective of this semi-annual symposium is to create an opportunity beyond the department level for the established and young academics to share their research findings and experiences with each other to enhance the understanding among the academics with diverse expertise while promoting an intradisciplinary and interdisciplinary research culture in the FMSC. Prof. Sampath Amaratunge who was the initiator of this symposium being then the Dean of FMSC, participated as the Chief Guest and Dr. Anura Kumara, the present Dean of the FMSC, took part as the Guest of Honour. Dr. Lasith Gunawardhana delivered the keynote speech, which was followed by research presentations of the FMSC academics. For the first time in the history of this symposium, an e-version of the symposium prospectus was launched. Dr. Dushar Dayarathne and Dr. Roshan Ajward were the co-chairs of this 11th FMSC symposium.



## The inaugural symposium of the College of Biochemists, Sri Lanka



The College of Biochemists Sri Lanka (CBSL) together with the Federation of Asian and Oceanian Biochemists and Molecular Biologists (FAOBMB) and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura successfully conducted a symposium on "Biochemistry: Towards Academic Excellence" on the 22nd of June 2016 at the Golden Rose Hotel, Boralesgamuwa, with an audience of academics and researchers from Universities and research institutions in Sri Lanka numbering one hundred. This provided a valuable opportunity to all Sri Lankan scientists, working in the field of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology to learn the new advancements in the field and broaden their knowledge.

In addition to the symposium, the council meeting of FAOBMB was held on the 21st of June 2016 at Hotel OZO, Colombo. Bilateral research discussions were held on the 23rd June and 24th June at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura and the University of Colombo.

## CONFERENCES AND RESEARCH

## Global Conference on Entomology 2016

The Global Conference on Entomology, organized jointly by the University of Sri Jayawardenepura and the Century Foundation was held from 22nd August to the 24th August 2016 at Hotel Galadari, Colombo, Sri Lanka. The major objective of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Global Conference on Entomology was to showcase recent advances in research and development in the insect world. Prof Sandun Senarath, (Head, Dept. of Botany), Prof M. M. Pathmalal (Head, Dept. of Zoology), Dr S. Karunaratna and Dr Rupika Perera of University of Sri Jayawardenepura were members of the organizing committee of the conference.



## 21<sup>st</sup> International Forestry and Environmental Symposium 2016

The "21<sup>st</sup> International Forestry and Environmental Symposium 2016" organized by the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science, was held on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and 24<sup>th</sup> of September 2016 at Heritance Kandalama, Dambulla. The Hon. Susil Premjayatha, the Minister of Science Technology and Research was the Chief Guest of the event. The symposium was chaired by Dr. Prasanthi Gunawardena, Head, Department of Forestry and Environmental Science, and Dr. Priyan Perera was the coordinator of the 21<sup>st</sup> International Forestry and Environment Symposium. Over 150 new research findings were published in this forum. The Symposium was attended by over 400 local and foreign participants including key government officials, academics, researchers and business leaders in Forestry and Environment sectors. The Keynote addresses were delivered by Prof. David Newsome, Murdoch University, Western Australia and Prof. Richard Vlosky, Louisiana State University, USA.

## CONFERENCES AND RESEARCH

## Faculty of Medical Sciences – Local Academic Partner of the 2nd International Conference on Public Health (ICOPH2016)

The 2nd International Conference on Public Health (ICOPH2016) was held from the 28th – 29th July, 2016 in Colombo. The Faculty of Medical Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura was the local academic partner among International

partners, Monash University, Malaysia, MAHASA University and the Indian Institute of Public Health, Gandhinagar. The theme of the year was “Bridging the gap between research and policy and creating a global platform to discuss evidence based health policies and interventions in public health”

The Conference witnessed the participation of over 150 participants representing more than 25 countries across the world. Researchers from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura too presented their research findings and won many awards.



## South Asian Fiscal Policy World Bank Seminar at Japura

A special seminar on ‘South Asian Fiscal Policy’ was organized by the Department of Business Economics together with The World Bank – Sri Lanka. The seminar was held on the 16th of May 2016, at the University premises. The guest speaker of the seminar was Mr. Ralph van Doorn who is the Senior Country Economist of the World Bank for Sri Lanka and Maldives. This seminar was mainly targeted at the undergraduates of the Department of Business Economics, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce. Students of all the three batches took part in this and received exposure to the applications of Economics in the real world.



## 02. Awards

### ***Professor Sagarika Ekanayake receives Prof. M.U.S. Sulthanbawa Award***

Professor Sagarika Ekanayake of the Dept of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medical Sciences, is the recipient of the Prof. MUS Sultanbawa award for Research in Chemistry 2015, awarded by the Institute of Chemistry, Ceylon, at the Inauguration of the Annual Sessions of 2016 held on 15th June 2016. The award was for the paper titled "Anti-diabetic compounds in Syzygiumcumini ready to serve herbal drink" presented at the annual sessions 2015 authored by PRD Perera, S Ekanayake and KKDS Ranaweera. The presentation comprised part of the doctoral degree work of Dr Perera attached to the Dept of Food Sciences and Technology of the same university.



### ***Isuru Kariyawasam's paper receives award at the Wild Lanka symposium***

Isuru Udayanga Kariyawasam, Lecturer of the Department of Botany, won "The Best Presenter Award" at the Annual "Wild Lanka" Symposium (2016) organised by the Department of Wildlife Conservation, Sri Lanka, for his paper on Bryoflora at the Yagirala Forest Reserve.



## 03. News

### ***“Jayewardenepura Pradeepa” Awards Ceremony with President Maithripala Sirisena as Chief Guest***

The “Jayewardenepura Pradeepa” inaugural Awards Ceremony organized by the Alumni Association of the university was held with much grandeur on 8th August 2016 at the Waters’ Edge, graced by both President Maithripala Sirisena and the Chancellor of the university, Ven. Dr. Bellanwila Wimalarathana Thero. The event recognized 47 high standing officers serving the government sector of the country. Among those celebrated and appreciated were three venerable priests, Secretaries to Ministries, key government officers such as the Auditor General, the Commissioner of Examinations, Chairpersons and Director Generals of government institutions.



## News

## Dr. D.P.S. Chandrakumara appointed as the new Dean of the Faculty Humanities & Social Sciences

Dr. D.P.S. Chandrakumara was appointed as the new Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences by the Council of the University. He assumed duties at a Ceremonial Induction at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Dr. Chandrakumara graduated from the University of Peradeniya where he earned his Bachelor of Arts degree specializing in Economics. He was appointed as a lecturer in Economics in this university in 1989. He obtained his Master of Arts Degree from the University of Kerala in 1993 and doctorate from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura with training from both Goteborg and Uppsala Universities in Sweden. His major areas of research are 'education and human capital', 'micro-credit', 'community governance' and 'economic analysis of environmental issues'. He has also been involved with a number of institutions as a research consultant in their development or evaluation projects. He has made his presentations in many international conferences in and outside Sri Lanka. He has held positions as either chairman or member of many committees appointed for special or developmental tasks of the university, also serving other national universities and institutions as a visiting lecturer or resource person.



## Evaluating ETCA

The Masters Association of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura organized an open forum titled "ETCA Hiccough" to discuss matters pertaining to Sri Lanka's proposed trade agreement with India. It was held on 8th April 2016 at the Grand Ballroom of Galadari Hotel, Colombo, marking the first ever forum of this nature organized by this association. The forum which consisted of two sessions featured four keynote speakers which included the former Central Bank Deputy Governor W.A. Wijewardena, Government Medical Officers Association (GMOA) President Dr. Anurudda Padeniya, United Professionals Movement (UPM) Media Spokesman Eng. Gamini Nanda Gunawardena and former Ceylon Chamber of Commerce (CCC) Chairman, Suresh Shah. It was followed by a panel discussion moderated by Nisthar Cassim, Editor of Daily FT.



## Appointing a new Directress to the Career Guidance Unit

Dr. (Mrs) M. G. Tharangani, senior lecturer of the Department of Human Resource Management was appointed to the post of the Director of the Career Guidance Unit on 3rd of May 2016.



## Website launch of the Rajagala Archaeological Project

The official website containing all the future initiatives and current progress of the Rajagala Archaeological project was ceremonially launched by the Vice Chancellor together with the participation of all the academics and students of the Department of History and Archaeology, on 5th June 2016.

The Department of History and Archaeology of the University of Sri Jayawardenepura is the only academic department in Sri Lanka which is capable of handling all archaeological activities connected to a site - namely, archaeological explorations, excavations, conservations, maintenance, management, security and public relations. The Rajagala Archaeological Project aims at revitalizing the character of the ancient Ariyakara Viharaya at Rajagala archaeological reserve to a forest monastery for the use and enjoyment of the present and future generations.



## අමීපාර රජගල පුරාවිද්‍යා කැණීම්වලින් පිළිමගෙයක් හා සෙල්ලිපියක් හමුවේ

### පිළිමගෙය

ශ්‍රී ජයවර්ධනපුර විශ්වවිද්‍යාලයේ ඉතිහාස හා පුරාවිද්‍යා අධ්‍යයනාංශය පුරාවිද්‍යා දෙපාර්තමේන්තුව සමග ඒකාබද්ධව 2012 වර්ෂයේ දී ආරම්භ කළ අමීපාර රජගල පුරාවිද්‍යා ව්‍යාපෘති භූමියෙහි පසුගිය දිනවලදී කරන ලද පුරාවිද්‍යා කැණීම්වලින් අනුරාධපුර යුගයට අයත් පිළිම ගෙයක සාදක හමුවිය. ඉදිකිරීම් අංග සමුදායකින් යුතු රජගල පුරාවිද්‍යා භූමියෙහි කඳු මුදුනේ ඉදිකර ඇති අනෙකුත් ඉදිකිරීම් අතර මෙම පිළිමගෙය ඉදිකොට තිබුණි. නිදන් භාරුන්ගේ බරපතල හානිකරීම්වලට එහි දොරටු සංකීර්ණය ලක්ව තිබූ අතර මුරගල්, සඳකඩපහණ, පියගැට පෙළ ආදී වටිනා පුරාවිද්‍යාත්මක අවශේෂ සියල්ලම පාහේ කඩා බිඳ දමා තිබුණි. වාසනාවකට මෙන් පිළිමගෙය ඇතුළත කොටස මෙම විනාශකරුවන්ගේ හානිකරීම්වලට ලක් වී නොතිබුණු බැවින් කැණීම් කිරීමේදී අනුරාධපුර සමයෙහි මධ්‍ය භාගයේ පමණ පිහිටුවන ලදැයි සිතිය හැකි පද්මපීඨයක් සහිත ගල් පුවරුවක් සොයා ගැනීමට හැකිවිය.

තෙවැනි මලක හැඩයගත් මෙම පද්මපීඨයෙහි මැද සිදුරු දෙකක් ගල තුළට භාරා ඇති බැවින් ලංකාවේ වෙනත් ස්ථානවලදී ලද සාදක අනුව එහි ශිලාමය හෝ දාරුමය හිටි බුදුපිළිමයක් තැම්පත් කර තිබෙන්නට ඇතැයි සැලකීමට හැකිය. පාදස්තලය සහිත මෙම ගල් පුවරුව ආරක්ෂාකාරී ලෙස පුරාවිද්‍යා නිලධාරීන් ඉදිරියේදී කැණීම්කර නිරාවරණය කොට ගල් පුවරුව යට පරීක්ෂා කිරීමේ පතුලට ගොඩල් කැටයකුත් ඒ වටා සතර පැත්තෙහි තවත් ගොඩල් කැට හතරක් තැම්පත්කොට, ඒ මතු පිට ගොඩල් කැට දෙකකින් වසා පූර්ණ ලෙස ආවරණය කොට සරල මංජුසාවක් සකසාගෙන තිබුණි. මෙය ස්ථිර වශයෙන්ම බුදුපිළිමය එහි තැම්පත් කිරීමට පෙර කරන ලද අභිවාරාත්මක තැම්පතුවක් බව පෙනී ගියහෙයින් ගොඩල් කැට දෙකින් යුතු පියහ ඉවත්කොට ඇතුළත පස් සියුම්ව ඉවත් කිරීමේදී ඒ තුළ මධ්‍ය ප්‍රමාණයේ හක්ගෙඩියක් තැම්පත්කර තිබී හමුවිය. බෙහෙවින් දිරාපත් වී තිබූ හක්ගෙඩිය හැරුණුවිට එහි වෙනත් කිසිදු වස්තුවක් දැකගත නොහැකිවිය. මේවා පූජා වස්තූන් ලෙස සලකා අදින් වසර 1400 කට පමණ පෙර එහි තැම්පත් කරන්නට ඇතැයි ගොඩනැගිල්ලෙහි වාස්තු විද්‍යාත්මක ඉදිකිරීම් ලක්ෂණ අනුව හා වෙනත් ඉදිකිරීම් සමග සාපේක්ෂව සැසඳීමේදී තීරණය කළ හැකිවිය. පැරණි ප්‍රතිමාවලත් දැගැබවලත් මහා ධන නිධාන තැම්පත්කොට ඇතැයි සිතා අපගේ උරුමය විනාශ කරන්නන්හට මෙම තැම්පතුව හොඳ පණිවිඩයක් ලබාදෙන බව සඳහන් කළහැකිය.



### සෙල්ලිපිය

තව ද රජගල කඳුමුදුනේ උතුරු දකුණු දිශානුගතව විහදී යන අඩි 15ක් පමණ පළල ප්‍රධාන පෙත්මගෙහි කරන ලද කැණීම්වලින් ක්‍රිස්තු වර්ෂ 7-9 සියවස්වලට අයත් අක්ෂර ජේලී තුනකින් යුත් ශිලාලේඛන කොටසක් ද හමුවිය. මෙහි “ශ්‍රී අභසලාමෙවන් තුන්වන්නෙ(හි).....” යනුවෙන් සඳහන්වේ. රජුගේ නම අභිධානයෙන් පමණක් සඳහන් කොට ඇති හෙයින් අදාළ රජු කවුරුන්දැයි නිශ්චිත වශයෙන් හඳුනාගත නොහැකිය. අක්ෂර ලක්ෂණ අනුව අනුමානාත්මක වශයෙන් පළමුවෙන් උදය (ක්‍රි.ව. 797-801) හෝ දෙවන උදය (ක්‍රි.ව. 877-898) රාජ්‍ය සමයට අයත්වීමට පුළුවන. මෙම කැණීම් තව දුරටත් සිදුවෙමින් පවත්නා බැවින් ලිපියේ ඉතිරි කොටස් ද හමුවෙතැයි විශ්වාස කළහැකිය.



## News

## Environment Day Commemoration

Organized by the Faculty of Graduate Studies in collaboration with the Department of Forestry and Environmental Sciences of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, the Environment Day Commemoration was held on 15th June 2016 at the Auditorium of the Department.

As a build up to this day, a press conference led by Prof. Hemanthi Ranasinghe, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, and other resource persons shed light to the latest initiative of the university which was to launch the concept of a Green University. This forum dedicated most of its time in conducting a workshop with guest speakers sharing their knowledge under the theme "Steps towards a Green University". This was to be the university's contribution towards celebrating the World Environmental Day.

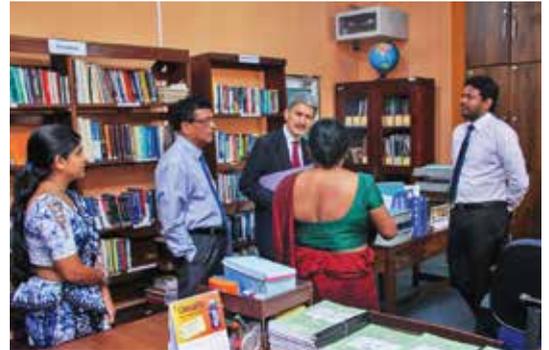


## Establishment of the Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice.

A separate Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice was established on 17th May, 2016 and Ms. M. P. A. Anuruddika Buddhadasa was newly appointed as the Head of the new department.



## B.Sc Estate Management and Valuation Degree evaluation specified in RICS – UK accreditation



Professor Ali Parsa, Dean of the Faculty of Real Estate and Land Management, Royal Agricultural University, United Kingdom, visited the Department of Estate Management and Valuation during 04 - 06 May 2016 to evaluate the B.Sc. Estate Management and Valuation Degree programme (EMV Degree) as an external examiner. This is a mandatory evaluation as per the recommendation made by the RICS-UK as its accreditation to the B.Sc. Estate Management and Valuation Degree programme. The B.Sc. Estate Management and Valuation (Special) degree offered by the Department of Estate Management and Valuation, Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, is the first and the sole land base higher education programme in Sri Lanka in the field of Real Estate Management and Valuation. This degree programme has been accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS – UK) since 2015. EMV graduates are eligible to get full membership of the RICS once they fulfill the Assessment of Professional Competence (APC) as prescribed by the RICS.

## MOU between BDO partners and the Department of Accounting

BDO partners, Chartered accountants and the Department of Accounting (DA) of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, made and entered into a Memorandum of Understanding on 10th June 2016.



## Department of Entrepreneurship gets an honorary adjunct faculty member from China

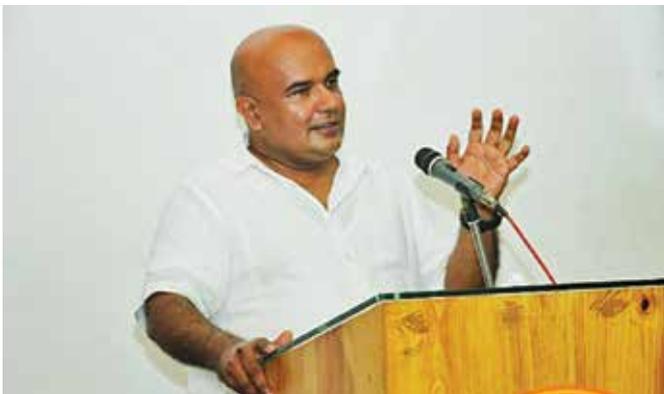
Dr. Huang Qiubo, Deputy Dean, Institute of Modern Service Institution Zhejiang Shuren University arrived at the Department of Entrepreneurship, on 28th July 2016 on a three months official appointment to the Department of Entrepreneurship as an honorary adjunct faculty member to engage in academic activities in the fields entrepreneurship, innovation and research methods.

Dr. Huang Qiubo is a PhD holder in the area of Business Management at the School of Business Administration, Zhejiang Gongshang University. He will engage in lectures on Global Business Management, Contemporary Issues in Entrepreneurship, Managing Creativity and Innovation for the academic programs of the B.Sc. Entrepreneurship (Special) and Masters of Entrepreneurship, Masters of Business Administration as well as several other programs conducted by the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce.



## Guest Lecture series in the B.Sc.(Hons) Degree Programme

"Frontiers Today" is a cross-disciplinary, cutting-edge seminar series organized by B.Sc. (Honors) degree students to learn from experiences of renowned experts in their field of excellence in a short amount of time, thereby inspire to take the lead in going on them different attractive career paths. Mr. Rohan Pallewatta, Executive Chairman, The Lanka Harness Co. Pvt. Ltd. and Otara Gunawardene delivered two lectures in this series in May 2016.



## News

## Impact Assessment studies by the Center for Sustainability

The Center for Sustainability of the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science has been awarded the contract of providing consultancy services to conduct an Environment Impact Assessment for the Reinstatement of the Kudawilachchiya Tank in the Anuradhapura District by the Department of Irrigation, Sri Lanka.

It has also been asked to conduct an Impact Assessment Study of Sustainable Agriculture Network (Rain-forest Alliance) Certification on Sri Lanka's Tea Estates by Unilever Sri Lanka Limited. The objective of the study is to evaluate and validate measurable economic, social and environmental benefits in adopting SAN certification. Dr. Priyan Perera of the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science is leading the project.



## ELTU- Social Responsibility Programme II

The second programme to improve English proficiency in a chosen sector of society was done by the English Language Teaching Unit at the invitation of the Bodhi Maga Padanama of the Kaluthara Bodhi Trust and the English Language Professionals' Association, at the Kaluthara Bodhi Temple premises on September 24th.

This was an interactive programme involving 15 English teachers of Dhamma schools and 10 lecturers from the ELTU. This was a workshop which explored new ways of teaching English - through meditation and literature; through music and singing; through language games and drama, for example. Workshops were conducted by the organizer of the outreach programmes, Karunesena Lokumudali, the Head, ELTU, Sarath Ananda and visiting lectures.

Under its social responsibility initiative, the ELTU did its first programme involving school students in the Rathnapura zonal area of education on 24th September 2015 in the Meneripitiya Resource Center of the Ministry of Education.



## Research Collaboration between the Department of Computer Science and Shibaura Institute of Technology



A Global Project Based Learning (GBPL) program will be established between the Department of Computer Science and the Shibaura Institute of Technology, Tokyo, Japan, from year 2017. The goal of GBPL is to exchange and share knowledge based on joint projects conducted between the students of the Department of Computer Science and students of the Department of Electronic Engineering, Shibaura Institute of Technology. Dean of Faculty Applied Sciences, senior researcher, Professor Chinthaka Premachandra and students from the Department of Electronic Engineering, Shibaura Institute of Technology, Head, Academic Staff and students from the Department of Computer Science, were present for the initial workshop that was held on 31st, August, 2016, at the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies.

## Workshops for Music Students

Two workshops were held for the students of music at the Department of Languages, Cultural Studies and Performing Arts. On 24th June, students were fortunate to have famous Indian classical violinist Professor V Balaji conduct a workshop and give a concert of classical music afterwards, at the Sumangala Reading Hall. Professor Balaji is the former Dean of the Faculty of Performing Arts of Benares University, India. All teachers and students of music attended this event.

On 11th July, students of folk music were given a workshop on the music the "Kolam" drama style connected to southern Sri Lanka. A traditional troupe of Kolam performers lead by Tukka Vadu Harishchandra Gurunnase conducted this day long workshop at "Sandella" in the Sumangala building.



## Development of a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Plan for the Environmental Protection Sector in Sri Lanka

The Center for Sustainability has successfully completed the development of a Vocational Education and Training (VET) Plan for the Environmental Protection Sector, for the Tertiary and Vocational Training Commission (TVEC), Sri Lanka. The report identified current and future trends in "Green Jobs" in the country, and proposed a training plan to address skill shortages in the labour market.



## EMV Students Association - CSR Project

Estate Management and Valuation Students Association and the EMV staff organized an educational program for the students in Madurakatiya Kanista Vidyalaya in Monaragala on 18th July, 2016, at the Department of Estate Management and Valuation. Around 100 school children, teachers and parents participated in this event. Resource persons from the Department of Human Resource Management, Department of Marketing Management, Department of Entrepreneurship and the National Dangerous Drugs Control Board Sri Lanka contributed.

EMV Department is pleased to extend this service to the school level students especially in remote areas in the country by providing financial and non-financial assistance to them.



## Awarding of scholarships by Australian Alumni



Financial aid for needy students in the university was awarded with scholarships by the Australian alumni of USJP on 17th May 2016.

## Rural Development Projects done by university students

Students of BEC 3324, a Project Management course for the third (3rd) year students from the Departments of Business Economics, Business Administration and Finance are required to undertake Rural Development Projects as their group assignments. For the year 2016, all the projects will be established in Pareigama village which belongs to the Walallawita DS division in the Kalutara District. The problems prevailing in the village were identified in a Participatory Planning Session held on 25th Thursday, August 2016 at Sri Jinadharmaramaya, Pareigama, with the participation of stakeholders from the village and representatives from various groups.



## **Library Workshop on Facilities Available through OUP for Researchers**

A workshop was organized by the library in collaboration with the Oxford University Press (OUP) on "Facilities Available through OUP for Researchers" on 28th June 2016, to inform researchers on how they can get maximum benefit from the OUP online databases. The resource person was Mrs. Sumita Sen, trainer from OUP South Asia & South East Asia. The workshop was held at the Information Technology Resource Center.



## **MoU between the Department of Accounting and HSBC Electronic Data Processing Lanka (Pvt) Ltd.**

The Department of Accounting signed a MoU with HSBC Electronic Data Processing Lanka (Pvt) Ltd. ("HSBC EDPL") on 05th August 2016. The MoU was signed by Prof. Sampath Amaratunga, Vice Chancellor of USJP and Eduardo Mereadillo, Centre Director/ Managing Director, HSBC EDPL. Under this MOU, HSBC EDPL will provide internship placement for students of the DA and conduct training programs on English language and skill developments. Further, HSBC EDPL shall provide the services of its resource personnel in the education and training requirements of the DA before the commencement of Internship in Accounting and Finance Programme of the B.Sc. Accounting (Special) Degree Programme.

## **MoU between the Department of Finance and Chartered Institute for Securities and Investments – (CISI)**



The Department of Finance signed a MoU with the CISI, one of the leading professional bodies for securities, investment, wealth and financial planning professionals in UK, on 16th Thursday June 2016. This event was graced by Prof. Sampath Amaratunga, Vice Chancellor, Dr. Anura Kumara, Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, Prof. Hareendra Dissabandara, Head of the Department of Finance and all the other academic members of the Department, together with Mr. Simon Culhane, Chief Executive of CISI, Mr. Brian Selvanayagam, Country Manager of CISI and Mr. Asanka Wijeratne, Assistant Vice President of CISI. The Department of Finance, with the association of globally recognized professional bodies, strives to uplift the quality of their degree program and be the leaders in producing competent young professionals for the challenging global investment industry.



## International Exchange Internship Program -FAS

Initiated by the University-Industry interaction cell of the Faculty of Applied Sciences to seek internships for undergraduates not only in Sri Lanka but also around the globe, the University of Sri Jayewardenepura signed a contract with Cottey College, Nevada, USA, for an exchange internship program for three years, starting in May 2016. Under this program, the first research internship was successfully completed by Ms. Peace Olaoluwa from June 23 to August 14 at the Department of Chemistry, under the supervision of Dr. Pahan Godakumbura.

Ms. Olaoluwa is a final-year undergraduate student at Cottey College, working on a Bachelor's of Science in Health Sciences. In USJP, she did research with the aim of investigating the medicinal properties in a whole plant of dried polpala (Aervalanata) by preparing decoctions and infusions. She will continue in this field of research further under the supervision of Dr. Ganga Fernando, Associate professor in Cottey College, USA, who is an Alumni of USJP.



## Mrs. Upuli Perera represented the University of Birmingham at the Chicago Forum on Global Cities



Mrs Upuli Perera was selected to represent the University of Birmingham at the Chicago Forum on Global cities, 2016 from June 1-3. This was a forum hosted by the Chicago Council of Global Affairs and the Financial Times, bringing world leaders, CEOs, artists and scholars for a cross sector dialogue on global cities. Upuli Perera, Senior Lecturer, Department of Estate Management and Valuation, is currently a Commonwealth Scholarship Commission scholar and a doctoral researcher at the Centre for Urban and Regional Studies, University of Birmingham, UK.

## Dr. S.C. Paul Memorial Oration given by Dr Chandima Jeewandara

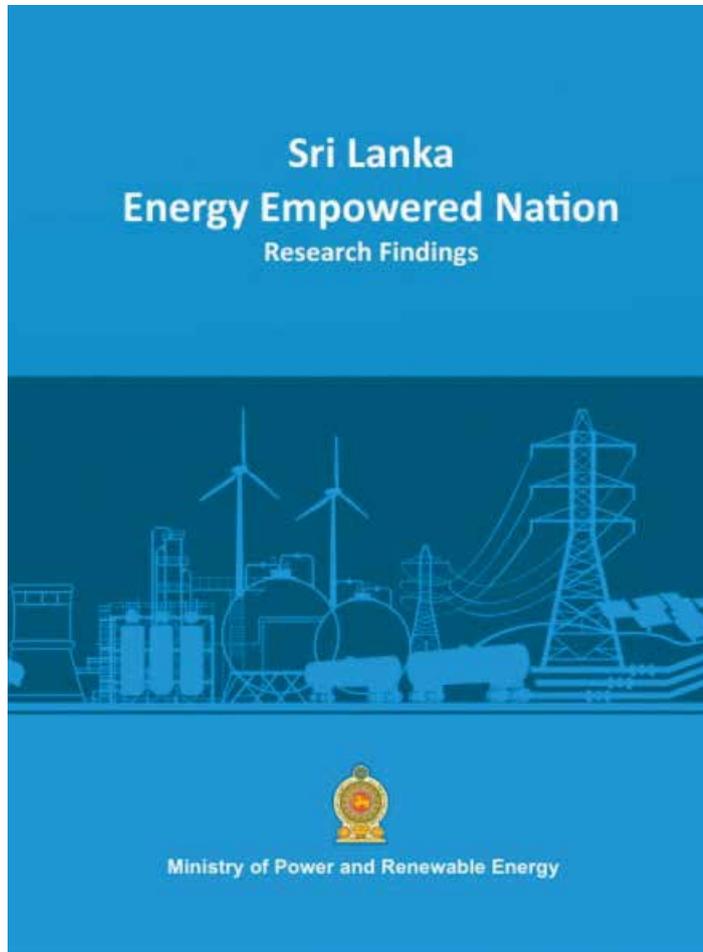


Dr. S.C. Paul Memorial Oration 2016 was delivered by Dr. Chandima Jeewandara, on "Emerging risk factors for severe dengue infection" on 26th July 2016 at the Grand Ballroom, Galadari Hotel, Colombo. Dr. Chandima Jeewandara is a Lecturer of the Department of Family Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences.

Dr. S.C. Paul Memorial Oration is one of the most prestigious orations of the Sri Lanka Medical Association (SLMA) instituted in 1966. It recognizes outstanding achievement in research and is delivered during the International Medical Congress of the SLMA.



## 04. Publications



### Publication of the Journal "Sri Lanka Energy Empowered Nation"

The Center for Sustainability of the Department of Forestry and Environmental Science published Volume 01 of the Research Journal of the Ministry of Power and Renewable Energy. The Journal's peer-reviewing process and management was handled by the CFS. The online version of the Journal is available at <http://sustainability.sjp.ac.lk/publications/>

### Research @ Jayewardenepura Website launched

The webteam of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura has launched a website called Research @ Jayewardenepura (<http://research.sjp.ac.lk>), to provide a platform for all research personalities of the university to showcase and share their research.

## Research @ Jayewardenepura

[Council](#) [Centers](#) [Grants](#) [Awards](#) [Publications](#) [People](#) [Symposia](#)



### About Jayewardenepura Research

University of Sri Jayewardenepura has a strong research base across a spectrum of academic disciplines engaging in research at national and international levels. The University provides strong support for research activities including encouraging links with commercial and industrial bodies in Sri Lanka and overseas.

Research is carried out either directly in the Academic Departments or in Research Units and Centres associated with Faculties.

Research Awards 2015  
**Apply Now**

### Research Centers



## 05. Announcements

### **Faculty of Medical Sciences: hosting partner for ICDDD 2017**



The Faculty of Medical Sciences, signed the MOU as the Hosting partner for The International Conference on Drug Discovery and Development (ICDDD 2017) with the International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIKIM). The International Conference on Drug Discovery and Development will be held from 09th -10th March, 2017 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The theme of the conference is "The Role of Natural Products in Modern Drug Discovery and Development". ICDDD 2017 will be chaired by Prof. David Thurston who is a Professor of Drug Discovery at King's College, London.

### **MOU for the International Conference on Economics and Development for the Department of Business Economics**

The Department of Business Economics of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce signed an MOU as the Hosting partner for the International Conference on Economics and Development (ICED 2017) with the International Institute of Knowledge Management (TIKIM). The conference will be held from 26th -27th January, 2017 in Colombo, Sri Lanka. The theme of the conference is "Inclusive Economic Growth: Rethinking the Development Process in a Time of Paradigm Shift". ICED 2017 will be chaired by Dr. Sumudu Perera who is the Head and Senior Lecturer of the Department of Business Economics.



### **Annual Scientific Sessions 2017 - FMS: 'Building Bridges for Better Health'**

The Annual Scientific Sessions 2017 of the Faculty of Medical Sciences will be held on the 24th and 25th of May 2017 in collaboration with the Colombo South Teaching Hospital, Sri Jayewardenepura General Hospital and Homagama Base Hospital, at the Golden Rose, Borlasgamuwa. The theme for this year will be 'Building Bridges for Better Health'. The Inauguration ceremony will be held on the 24th evening followed by full day sessions on 25th May 2017. The oration will be delivered by Prof. Kamani Wanigasuriya, Professor, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medical Sciences, USJP. Abstracts may be submitted online from 1st January 2017 onwards.

# 06. Award Ceremonies and Convocations

## *42nd Convocation of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura*

The 42nd Convocation of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura was held on the 2nd & 3rd of August 2016 at the BMICH, Colombo.



## Award Ceremonies and Convocations

## 42<sup>nd</sup> Colours Awarding Ceremony 2015

The Colours Night of the University was held with much glamour on the 19th of May 2016 at the Kingsbury Hotel, Colombo, to award exemplary sportsmen and sports women of Japura. The chief guest for the evening was Prof. Sampath Amaratunga, Vice Chancellor of the University. Sumedha Ranasinghe, the athlete who qualified to represent Sri Lanka at the Rio Olympics, was adjudged the Most Outstanding Sportsman and Vinuri Ranasinghe, a National Netball player, athlete and basketball player, was awarded the Most Outstanding Sportswoman. This year's event recognized 318 Colour's holders and 33 Best Players and gave out 28 special awards. Athletes chosen to represent Sri Lanka at the South Asian Federation Games were also felicitated.



## First Batch in Master of Entrepreneurship in Sri Lanka



The first batch of the 'Masters in Entrepreneurship' graduated at the 42nd Convocation of University of Sri Jayewardenepura, held on 02nd and 03rd August, 2016 at the Bandaranaike Memorial International Conference Hall, Colombo.

Fifteen Masters of Entrepreneurship degrees were conferred at the convocation. Emeritus Professor C.M Madduma Bandara of the University of Peradeniya delivered the convocation address at this session. The Department of Entrepreneurship is the first department in the Sri Lankan University system to specialize in the field of Entrepreneurship. With this graduation ceremony, the Department of Entrepreneurship takes pride in being the first apex government educational body which has produced postgraduates in the field of Entrepreneurship.

## 07. Sports

### **J'pura Shuttlers' Victory at Badminton Tournament 2016**

The Inter University Badminton Tournament organized by the University of Moratuwa was held from the 6th to 16th of May at the University of Moratuwa.

Our girls managed to seize the 1st place in the Open Girls' Singles Championship and the Girls' Doubles Championship whereas the boys managed to secure the 2nd place in the Open Boys' Doubles Championship and the 4th place in the Boys' Team Championship. Further our team grabbed the 1st place in the Individual Mix Doubles Championship as well as the championship of the team event of the 2016 Badminton Tournament.



### **Champions at Baseball for the first time at 12th SLUG 2016**

The Sri Lanka University Games (SLUG) Baseball tournament was held at the Wayamba University grounds from 19th to 22nd August 2016 where the University of Sri Jayewardenepura was crowned the champions. It was indeed a proud moment not only for the team, but also for the entire university community as it was the first ever SLUG Baseball Championship title which was brought home.



### **12th SLUG Torch Relay Arrived at J'pura**

The Torch relay of SLUG 2016 reached the University of Sri Jayewardenepura on 30th August 2016. The torch was handed over to our athletes by those of the University of Moratuwa and it was then passed onto the athletes of the University of Visual and Performing Arts.

This relay commenced on 26th August from the University of Jaffna and reached the University of Wayamba – Kuliypatiya on 1st September for the lighting of the cauldron during the Opening Ceremony of SLUG 2016.



### **Participation at 2nd Asian University 3x3 Basketball Championship**

The 2nd Asian University 3x3 Basketball Championship was held in Macau, China, from the 20th to 23rd July 2016. The Sri Lanka universities basketball team saw the representation of 9 undergraduates in both men & women categories from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura.

## Sports



## Runners up in Track & Field events - 12th SLUG 2016

The Sri Lanka University Games (SLUG) Track & Field events were held on the 27th & 28th August at the Diyagama Mahinda Rajapakse stadium. Both Men's & Women's teams of University of Sri Jayewardenepura were able to clinch the 2nd place after completion of all the events.

## Champions at J'pura 3x3 Basketball Tournament 2016

The J'pura 3x3 Basketball Tournament 2016 was held on 7th and 8th of May, 2016, on the courts of University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The University of Sabaragamuwa, Wayamba, Peradeniya, Colombo, Moratuwa and Uva took part. After an eventful and exciting two days, both men and women teams of J'pura won the championships on their home grounds, bringing glory to the university.



## 08. Community Celebrations

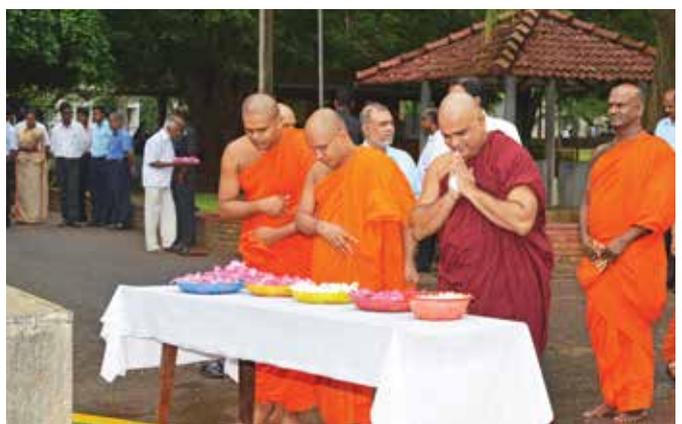
### *Vesak at Japura*

Despite the floods during that time, students and staff at Japura found ways and means to add colour to the university in celebration of Vesak 2016. They also made this an opportunity to bring all devotees together not only in prayerful meditation but also in unity to help those affected by the devastating floods and landslides. Most departments and student bodies which usually contribute to Vesak celebrations in the form of Dansal used the funds to help those affected.



### *53rd Commemoration of Ven. Welivitiye Sri Soratha Maha Thero*

On 15th July 2016, the 53rd Commemoration of Reverend Weliwitiye Sri Soratha Thero, the trailblazer of the contemporary Piriven Education system and the pioneer of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, was held with the Vice Chancellor of the university and staff in attendance. The staff and undergraduates of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura celebrated his eminent and charismatic personality on this day, recalling his words that hold much relevance to the present times.



## Community Celebrations

### Geethangjali 2016

A unique Buddhist devotional songs contest organised by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies was held on 15 June at the university premises. Professor of the Department, Venerable Magamma Pannanda Thero, Head of the Department, Venerable Professor Madagampitiye Wijithadhamma Thero, venerable academics, Vice chancellor Professor Sampath Amaratunge, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mr C.L.K Nawarathna, other lecturers of departments and a large number of students participated in this wonderful contest among ten departments of the university.



### Haritha Wasanthaya 2016

Haritha Wasanthaya, the annual Sinhala Tamil New year celebrations organized by the Department of Forestry of the Faculty of Applied Sciences was held on 5th May 2016 at the faculty premises. The occasion was graced by the presence of the Vice Chancellor of the university, Prof. Sampath Amaratunge, members of the staff and students representing all departments of the faculty. This lively and fun filled couple of hours undoubtedly gave an unforgettable experience to many, while bringing together all students of the faculty as one big joyful family.



## Community Celebrations



## Career Guidance Unit donation at Maharagama Cancer Hospital

The Career Skills Development society guided by the Career Guidance Unit of Ja'pura launched its initiative to "Donate Happiness" for the 3rd consecutive time on 18 May 2016. This time they decided to contribute towards purchasing a PET scan machine along with other essential items to the National Cancer Hospital, Maharagama. Word was spread throughout the university via social media and other forms, resulting in academics, non-academics and other external parties lending a hand in donating Rs 200,000 for the PET scan machine and the collection of essential items worth approximately Rs 400,000.



## Donation for flood relief

A special donation project called 'People for People' was organised by the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies of the FHSS for helping people who were affected by the flood in Galahitiyawa, Genemulla. It was held on 13th June at the Galahitiyawa, Genemulla Purana Viharaya with children in Early Childhood Development Centres and villagers.



## 09. Concerts and Cultural Activities

### *Talents 2016 - An evening of aesthetic splendour*

The Arts Circle of the Faculty of Medical Sciences, organized an evening of aesthetic splendour on 30th July 2016 - the 20th instance of their annual entertainment show - Talents. Staged at the Youth Center, Maharagama, with Prof. Surangi Yasewardene, Dean, Faculty of Medical Sciences, as the Chief Guest and Dr. Manella Joseph as the Guest of Honor, it was a vibrant and vivacious appreciation of music, song, dance and drama, showcasing the very best of the artistically talented students of the faculty. Talents sets the stage to introduce the junior most students of the Faculty of Medical Sciences.



### *“ සත්සරවියමන සංගීත ප්‍රසංගය 2016 ”*

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### *Sisi Arundathe 2016*

Sisi Arundathe 2016 was organized by the Students' Union of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, and held on the 29th of August at the BMICH.

Sisi Arundathe is the annual talent show of the Faculty of Applied Sciences organized by the students Council. (The budget is arounds 3 million rupees and the funds are raised by students through sponsorships, advertisements and other activities.) The profit will be forwarded to the annual charity project of the faculty called “Sip Sayura” – plans are to set up a computer laboratory in a rural school.



## 10. Student Activities

### **A Two-Day Residential Workshop for Global Business Management**

A two-day residential workshop on global business management was conducted for the students of the Master of Entrepreneurship of the Department of Entrepreneurship on 10th and 11th September at Kolonne River Side Garden Hotel, Awissawella. The program was organized by the students of the Master of Entrepreneurship 2014/16. The main objective of the program was to enhance the knowledge and skills of the students regarding global businesses and to encourage them to go beyond the local boundaries tapping global opportunities. Many professionals and academics delivered valuable speeches during this workshop. Students were given an exposure to the global context highlighting the importance of becoming global entrepreneurs for the development of themselves and the nation as a whole.



### **Motivational program for schools by the FAS**

Seven 'Sihina' motivational programs were organized in several schools such as Ananda Balika College, Colombo, Girls' High School, Mount Lavinia, Jayatissa Maha Vidyalaya, Mirissa, Sumangala Girls' School, Panadura, Princess of Wales, Moratuwa during the period of March - May 2016 to give motivation to 8,910 students to become leaders and teamworkers. This motivational program is done by the 2nd year students with the collaboration of the 1st year students of the Faculty of Applied Sciences.

### **'SandaKirana' – Annual Pirith Chanting Ceremony and Almsgiving Programme – 2016**

The Association of Business Administration (ABA) organised the annual Pirith Chanting Ceremony and Almsgiving programme named 'Sanda Kirana – 2016' with the support and participation of the Vice Chancellor, Dean of the Faculty, academic staff, non-academic staff and the students of the university and the wider community on the 23rd and 24th of August 2016 with the main purpose of commemorating Weliwitiye Sri Soratha Thero and Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Thero.



## Student Activities

Along with the “Sanda Kirana” pirith chanting and almsgiving programme, the students of the Association of Business Administration organized a CSR project named Āndurata Eliyak, aimed at the visually handicapped undergraduates of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. In this project, blind students were donated stationery and were promised “Desiplayers” –a tool useful for the visually handicapped students in their learning process. The total cost of the Desiplayers is estimated at Rs. 1, 80,000.



## ‘Nethusara’ – A Community Development (Social Responsibility) Project by the Department of Commerce

‘COMSO’ the student society of the Department of Commerce organized a social responsibility project called ‘Nethusara’ on 02nd September 2016 at CP/ Dolugala Primary School, Hanguranketha. Nethusara is a community development project aimed at enhancing project management skills of the B. Com degree Part III students. Books and stationery for the next year were distributed to all the students and an aluminum book cupboard and a printer were also donated. Two computers donated by Vice Chancellor were handed over to the Dolugala Primary School. Students from the Bachelor of Commerce (Special) Degree Part III and the academic staff of the Department of Commerce participated in this event.



## Student Activities

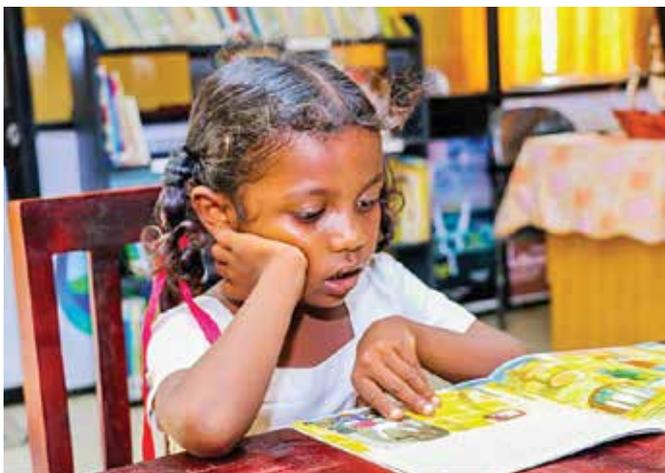
### **A Community Project – the Renovation of Imbulgoda Kanishta Vidyalaya**

A community project was carried out by the final year students of the Department of Business Administration under the subject BUS4328 Corporate Social Responsibility and Ethics on 20th July 2016. For this project a less privileged school (Mr/Imbulgoda Kanishta Vidyalaya) located at Akuressa was selected. In this project both material donations as well as a motivational inspiration were given with the purpose of helping those students to develop their future successfully. As material donations, funding to get drinking water, classroom partitioning, renovation of the school shrine room, a new filling system, painting of wall pictures, re-establishment of the school playground, renovation of the school home science and computer rooms, etc were done. Moreover, a motivational speech on 'the importance of education' was delivered by Ms. Udari Nisansala, Counselor at the Career Guidance Unit of the University of Ruhuna. A ceremony was organized to celebrate the project completion day.



### **Sahurda Yathra 2016**

The tenth consecutive Sahurda Yathra library project was organized by the first year students of the Faculty of Applied Sciences together with the Vidudaya Vidya Sahodarathwaya where a library of books was donated to Madurankuliya Model School, Madurankuliya. The project was carried out through the months of August and September and the cost amounted to about Rs 2 million.



Student Activities

**ජාතික පුරාවිද්‍යා දිනය වෙනුවෙන් ඉතිහාස හා පුරාවිද්‍යා අධ්‍යයනාංශයෙන් කොස් දන්සැලක්**

සෑම වර්ෂයකම ජූලි මස 07 වෙනි දිනට යෙදෙන ජාතික පුරාවිද්‍යා දිනය වෙනුවෙන් ඉතිහාස හා පුරාවිද්‍යා අධ්‍යයනාංශයේ අවාර්ය මණ්ඩලයේ උපදේශකත්වය යටතේ අධ්‍යයනාංශයේ සිසු සිසුවියන් විසින් 2016 ජූලි 07 දින සුමංගල මන්දිරය අතිසය කොස් දන්සැලක් පවත්වන ලදී. මධ්‍යස්තයේ සිට සවස් වන තුරුම පැවති වීම දන්සැලට උපකුලපති මහාචාර්ය සමීපත් අමරතුංග මහතා, විශ්වවිද්‍යාල ආචාර්ය තවතුන්, කාර්ය මණ්ඩල සාමාජිකයන් හා සිසු සිසුවියන් සහභාගිවූයේ ඉමහත් උද්යෝගයෙනි.



**Dansala - FAS**

The Annual Dansala was organized by the 1st year students of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, on June 21st 2016 at FAS premises to mark traditional practices and to encourage sharing between students. Though it is a traditional event, it clearly showed the team building capacity and unity among the newcomers. Both students and faculty enjoyed this event. Funds are mainly raised by the Students Union and from donations.



**Amicizia- Sports day**

This was organized by the Student Union 2016, Faculty of Applied Sciences on the 29th of January by the 2nd years for their fresh 1st year batch, in order to acquaint them with the university system. This event consists of team activities which leads them be good leaders and team workers. Lecturers and seniors also participated in this event



**Annual six a side cricket tournament 2016**



The annual cricket tournament of the Faculty of Applied Sciences, organized by the 2nd years of FAS to build collaboration between batches of the faculty was held on 16th of September at Piliyandala Central Grounds.



# 11. News Feature

## Professor Sunethra Weerakoon



Senior Professor Sunethra Weerakoon with her students Dr. Sirani K. Perera, Kusal Madhushankha, Isanka Udayanga and Dr. Menaka Liyanage.

**We carry a profile on Professor Sunethra Weerakoon today in whose name the International Industrial Mathematics Conference of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura was held from 3rd to 5th June 2016. She will bring an illustrious career to an end as she retires from the university on 31st December 2016.**

Sometimes you watch a person and think – in the words of Arundathy Roy - there is a story here.

This had occurred to me a couple of times as I had glanced at Professor Sunethra Weerakoon in and around the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. She is a Professor in the Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Applied Sciences, the first in the country to have been made Professor of Mathematics on merit, and the first female in Sri Lanka to get a PhD in this subject.

The reasons are many

– tales I had heard from others: she wore white saree for years to mark the death of a university student due to a fight over ragging; she fights fiercely in Faculty Boards; a colleague says with a wistfulness, 'There are not many teachers like her, who has the interest of students paramount in her heart. When she retires, that loss will be hard to fill.'

– what I had seen: the tension palpably quivers on her slight figure as she sits in on a seminar on gender violence, she gets up to hand out a photocopied newspaper article on ragging to the participants; she does a quick walk to Wijerama Junction, a handloom saree worn absolutely correctly the Kandyan way clearly visible among the crowds, head down, intensely focused on her direction on her way home every evening

– what I have experienced: a furious voice in my ear when she thinks we have not been fair by those students of her faculty who are weak in English. Even during that very loud interaction on the phone – when her voice breaks to say that shouting is not going to get anything done – I think, "There is a story here."

Since Professor Weerakoon's remarkable official career ended with her retirement at the end of December 2016, there is a chance to say it and have others know of this remarkable woman. With her story that starts in 1951 when she was born, we are also allowed quick glimpses into our country's past – coloured snapshots flit by as she speaks.

"I was the ninth of ten children. So I remember my parents as old people. We lived in Badulla, in the village of Medapathana. My father was from Kalutara but we never went to the South. We were never taken to his home. No one explained why clearly. But if I were to put two and two together, perhaps I can come up with this: My mother was very beautiful. She was from Ratnapura. She had never gone to school. She learnt to read from my father. She learnt to sign from me. Perhaps why we were never taken to his home in Kalutara is because he didn't want to expose her to ridicule.

My mother was a very hard worker. All her children studied well and did brilliantly in school. We never had much money and it was often a problem to have all our needs met. My father dabbled in business for some time but that did not flourish because I do not think he was cut out for business. He had brains and he was tough. He was good with books. He brought down lessons from Germany and learnt homeopathy and became a doctor. But he was always strongly oriented towards politics. He always wanted to do something for the people. He founded both the SLFP and the UNP in Badulla and became their organizer – his political involvement was such.

I started my education in 1956. There were very posh schools in Badulla, but we could not afford them. So all of us went to a Sinhala medium school that was called 'Welagedera Iskole'. What I remember about this was how good the teachers were. They were an organized methodical group that did very well by the students and I got a very good education in this school. No tuition or extra coaching was heard of then. The school had only a few buildings so the nursery and the higher grades

## News Feature

met in the morning. The primary school had classes in the afternoon. Even in conditions like these, we were not short of anything education-wise, there was even sports.

I was always first in class – like most of my siblings – but I do not remember studying when I was small. There was plenty of space around us – the land was about one and a half acres where we lived. There were guava trees in the garden and I was on top of them most of the time. We did not have many toys. The ‘kolapatha’ – the stem of the arecanut palm was our badminton racquet. The shuttlecock was the ‘daspetiya’ flower.

In 1964 there was a reorganization of schools. St Bead’s, a private school a short distance away was amalgamated to the Welegedera Iskole and the whole, turned into Badulla Maha Vidyalaya. Students from the whole area came here now for the higher grades. Only two were qualified from the whole school to do Science for the A/Levels. I was one of them.

But there was no Science stream available for A/Levels where I was. But by then my siblings could support me - my oldest brother was 24 years my senior. They gave me the means to go to Mahamaya College in Kandy. I did everything extracurricular there as well. I was a sprinter, a dancer, a debater. But I managed to get an A for my A/Levels which was not so common then as it is now. I got into the Peradeniya Engineering Faculty, which at that time was the leading center for engineering.

I was never really interested in Engineering. And also there was a scholarship on offer for a ‘pure science’ student. So I applied for it and got it. My financial problems were solved. There was Rs. 100 given a month and that was enough for me even to have some savings left. I went to university in 1972.

There was first an Intensive Course in English for the majority of students at Peradeniya. That is how I know how important that course is for students who came from backgrounds that had no exposure to that language. I was not so badly off because my father had known English but it wasn’t so for everyone. It also helped that the first year had both Sinhala and Tamil medium courses along with the English medium ones, so that students had a chance of sitting in on everything and getting used to the language. There was no division then between those who knew English and those who didn’t know it very much. That mixing was such a useful and effective way of improving one’s proficiency in the language. This doesn’t happen now and I worry about the students who have to struggle with the language while struggling with new subject matter.

I was chosen to do a special in both Maths and Chemistry and chose to do maths. And when I passed out, I taught at Peradeniya for some time before coming to Colombo and joining Vidyodaya Campus, which our university was called then, as a probationary lecturer. My marriage was to a Peradeniya Engineering graduate.

My first idea was to do my postgraduate studies here. But the advice I got was that if I was to follow mathematics, the best would be to go abroad. So I applied to US universities and got into Pennsylvania State University and I went there as a Fulbright scholar. This was in 1979. My husband joined me after about a semester. The course there required that I learn two languages to be able to read journals in those languages.

So I learnt German and French. And also taught as a Teaching Assistant. By then I had children too. But since we lived in Graduate Housing and there were wives of graduate students there, there was plenty of child care available.

When we came back to Sri Lanka, five years later, we had two Masters Degrees, two PhDs, and two kids. I rejoined the University and my husband went on to become a professor at the Moratuwa University.

That was the time I got heavily involved in mainstream activities in the university. It was also the time that was called the Time of Terror – “Bheeshana Samaya”. I worked as the Joint Secretary in the organization called University Teachers for Human Rights. That was a time when intense political action was needed in the universities. The universities were anyway hotbeds of political activity.

That was not a good time. We had to look upon the dead bodies of our own students. I had to see so many people die. I do not believe that anything that calls for taking another’s life, is worth it.



*Sunethra Weerakoon with her husband Professor G.K. Watugala and her children in the USA in 1984*

From 1990, I stopped being in mainstream activity in the university. I realized that no matter what your own beliefs are, it is possible for one to get used for someone else’s ends. And I did not want to be used like that. So I restricted myself to peripheral activities.

I am a practicing Buddhist. I have taken sil every month even when I was school girl. I believe very strongly in the dhamma. So I have learnt to face many things with equanimity. And now, when I retire, I finally hope to invest some time on myself.”

At the end of the story of her personal journey, I will make just three interventions – to speak of her academic significance, to speak of her desire to fight injustice where ever she sees it and to see how she has managed the roles of being a woman with everything else. In each case, there is much she can teach us.

Professor Weerakoon started a pioneering MSc. Programme in Industrial Mathematics in her department in 1996. This provided a much needed course for Sri Lankan graduates, some of her students are now Professors of Mathematics themselves – both here and in the US. There are also many high ranking officials in various institutions who are students of hers. She is also the author of the first university level book of mathematics written in Sinhala – ‘Moolika Sankyathmaka Krama’ –Elementary Numerical Methods. This book greatly helped students who

## News Feature

were struggling with English to tie over the initial months of English medium instruction.

It is not only to Sri Lanka that she has given of her knowledge. In each Sabbatical year, she has worked in well known universities, Curtin University of Technology in Australia, Cornell University and Texas A & M University, as a full fledged Professor of Mathematics.

Maths research is not something that is done very easily in this country and in fact, it had not been done in an effective way at all before the start of the MSc. Programme in Industrial Mathematics. But in the 50th Anniversary Celebrations of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Professor Weerakoon and her team won the Best Researcher Award of the Faculty of Applied Sciences. She also won the award for the Most Cited Scientist of the faculty. Research papers in Mathematics are the type that do not get cited much, but three of her papers, of two of which she is the sole author, have a record number of citations.

There are academics who go abroad for postgraduate studies and do not return home, the reason most given being the fact that they cannot put the knowledge thus gained to good use in Sri Lanka. Most of Professor Weerakoon's own batchmates, in fact, are currently working in foreign universities.

"When I was getting ready to come home after my PHD, my thesis advisor asked how much I would be getting as my salary. When I told him the amount – around eighty dollars at the time - he asked why on earth I was going back," says Professor Weerakoon. After serving two years in the Curtin University, Australia, on her sabbatical, she was informed that her position had been advertised and was requested to apply.

But her decision had always been to return home. Her desire had always been to serve where her service was most needed.

Perhaps her father's love of serving the people, his political slant, made Professor Weerakoon have this attitude. Also from him, perhaps, came her practice of speaking up against any form of injustice anywhere. Even at school she had walked into the principal's office to say that getting teachers to nominate the names for prefects was not fair when all this time the names had been picked by the votes of students. All she got was a reprimand and orders to march out, for her pains – but the desire of the girl to see justice done never left the woman she became.



This doesn't earn her popularity points – rarely does a woman fight and get admired for it but Professor Weerakoon dismisses popularity as irrelevant with the confidence of someone who knows of the level of reverence and faith she inspires in many. "I wrote an article some time ago on the question 'Is trade union action for increased salaries suitable for university lecturers?' I hung a photocopy of the article in the common room as no newspaper was willing to publish it given that it dealt with trade union action." Her eyes twinkle behind her glasses. "That didn't make me well liked."

During our conversation she tells me that heavy involvement in university work did not give her enough time for her own children. I ask where they are now and she says that her daughter got into MIT, USA – one of the leading universities in the world – at seventeen. She has a PhD from Oxford and is now an Assistant Professor at Cornell in Financial Economics. The sons went to CalTech (California Institute of Technology, again a leading research institution) and Cornell, also at a young age. Now, one has a PhD and the other has two Masters in Financial Engineering and Data Science. They had all got full scholarships to go there on their grades.

'All this without you having time for them?'

'Sometimes stepping back is a favour you do your children. Unless the path is going down. Then you should step in, as it is always easier to go down than up. Otherwise, it is good to remember that strong parents can create weak children.'

Strong, she is. She has seen a lot in her career that officially ends on 31st December 2016. Yet her desire to do service will probably not let her rest. She and her colleagues started a teaching course for students doing Combined Maths for their A/ Levels on the university website. "I will probably help with this even after retirement," she says, as a matter of course.

This website at <http://learn.sjp.ac.lk/course/gce-al-combined-mathematics/> supervised by the highest team of lecturers at the Department of Mathematics was created so that, according to Professor Weerakoon, 'Students would know how to use their critical faculties while they are learning. This is what is not taught in tuition classes. This is our answer to the unwelcome tuition culture prevailing everywhere. Critical thinking is an important skill. Students need to activate it.'

That perhaps is our greatest need now - the creation not of unthinking rote learners but critical thinkers "When an individual cannot take a decision for himself or herself, that does not make a person worthy of anything," she says who has seen the harm that uncritical adherence to a doctrine can cause young lives.

Despite the prevalence of seemingly unquestioning acceptance of many wrongs in the country today, Professor Sunethra Weerakoon remains positive. "I still believe that Sri Lanka has good human resources. We are very rich in it. But I do not think that we are on the correct path. Our plans are not very good. But we can change. Indeed, we must, if we are to go make this country go forward."

**by Madhubhashini Disanayaka Ratnayake**





# NEWSLETTER

University of Sri Jayewardenepura

Volume 02 / Issue 02 / May - August 2016



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