

University of Sri Jayewardenepura Vice-Chancellor Professor Sampath Amaratunge recently said companies, products and individuals including professionals must harness their uniqueness or else face failure.

Delivering the keynote speech at the inaugural research conference of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka (CA Sri Lanka), he said that the world is living in an era of ideas which promotes uniqueness and no longer focusing on mass scale production. "If you are unique and have good ideas for development then you can sell them. If you don't possess a uniqueness in the product that you promote, then you will fail. So every company, product and individual must harness their uniqueness or they will fail," he warned.

Speaking on the innovation of technology, Prof. Amaratunge pointed out that although the world cannot operate today without computers, the fact that usage of computers has become common also means the end of this technology. "Computers are a common technology, and when technology becomes common then that technology cannot drive the system again and again. The computer can no longer change the world even though we cannot do anything without computers," he said, while adding that it was important to keep innovating by utilising research.

While commending CA Sri Lanka for giving the leadership in kick starting research activities to further enhance the accounting profession, Prof. Amaratunge said that without research there is no future. He said that most of the research comes from medicine, including dental and veterinary as well as science, engineering and architecture. "Research from accounting is very negligible, therefore we congratulate CA Sri Lanka for taking this important initiative, and the University of Sri Jayewardenepura looks forward to working with the institute and its accountants on this," he said.

Elaborating further on the importance of promoting ideas and research even among undergraduates at his university, Prof. Amaratunge said that he has given special focus on helping students gain understanding on the importance of invention, innovation and startups at the university by establishing an invention, innovation and business startup council. "The students are encouraged to write a proposal and pitch it to us, and then we select the best and most unique ideas and fund them," he said.

He also highlighted the need for professionals as well as students to continuously develop their soft skills. "I always tell my graduates to be humble. Soft skill is the most important skill one needs. Even when you answer the phone, no matter how busy you are, you must be polite. If you are busy, and cannot say 'hello' politely, then don't answer the phone," he said

Prof. Amaratunge also noted that to change the world one does not need much, but should possess uniqueness and an innovative mindset. He recalled how a Sri Lankan academic, who is also a well-known sitarist, produced millions of worth award winning music within a small area with just a few of his students, an organ and two computers. "This was a massive innovation, and it proves that you don't need big bands to produce award winning music, but only require the brain, and some machines to make a difference," he said.

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