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Biannual Newsletter

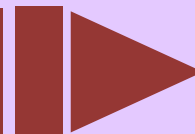
# UoR Highlights

UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA - SRI LANKA

**Feature Article:**  
Towards a Blue Economy  
By Professor R.A. Maithreepala &  
Professor K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda



# Main Story



## 27<sup>th</sup> Convocation 2020

The 27<sup>th</sup> Convocation of the University of Ruhuna was held on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at the Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium of the University of Ruhuna. A total of 2174 graduates including 290 postgraduates were conferred with degrees of nine faculties in four sessions. Convocation speeches were done by Professor Emeritus Susirith Mendis, Professor Saman Senaweera, Professor Emeritus Sarath Amarasinghe and Professor Kapila Perera in respective sessions.

Every year the most outstanding graduates are selected from faculties for the Vice Chancellor's Gold Medal based on academic performances and achievements in extracurricular activities. The recipients of the Vice Chancellors Gold Medal in 2020 were Rajakaruna Herath Mudiyanseelage Priyanthi Nirmala Rathnayake (Faculty of Graduate Studies), Jayasekara Gajasin Gamage Don Akalanka Jayasekare (Faculty of Medicine), Shalini Upekha Sithumini Bandara Wijewickrama (Faculty of Agriculture), Attanayake Mudiyanseelage Ransirini Chandrika Attanayake (Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology), Sakuntha Devaka Gunarathna (Faculty of Science), Dassanayake Mudiyanseelage Maleesha Hansahi Dassanayake (Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences), Welmillage Don Chamanie Dinuwanthi Welmilla (Faculty of Engineering).

The list of Gold Medal recipients is given below.

Faculty of Management and Finance
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Yasindee Maheshika Liyanapathirana (02 Gold Medals)</li> <li>2. Liyana Wannu Arachchige Dulshika Savindi</li> <li>3. Pandi Gamage Madhushika Rasanjalie Pandigama</li> <li>4. Danapala Mudiyanseelage Rashmi Dinuka Wickramasinghe</li> </ol>
Faculty of Medicine
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Rathnayake Mohottalalage Jinali Bhagya Rathnayake</li> <li>2. Batuwanthudawa Kankanamge Navoda Thathsarani</li> <li>3. Ponarasa Arachchige Ruwanthi Ishara Kulathunga</li> <li>4. Diyani Chathurika Sadeepani Wickramanayaka</li> <li>5. Vidhana Maha Durage Dilinee Wasana Pushpa kumari</li> <li>6. Kasuni Welathantri Dharmaratha</li> <li>7. Jayasekara Gajasin Gamage Don Akalanka Jayasekare</li> <li>8. Baduraliyage Dona Buddimani Madavi Baduraliyage</li> <li>9. Kanduruwana Gamage Rashmi Tharanga</li> <li>10. Kiridiwalage Chamodi Virajani Kiridiwala</li> </ol>
Faculty of Allied Health Sciences
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Pulwansha Tharika Amandi Thilakarathna</li> <li>2. Katudampe Hewage Umanda Sewwandi Keerthisinghe</li> <li>3. Thalpapwila Widane Kankanamge Sanith Sri Jayashan</li> </ol>
Faculty of Agriculture
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Thammita Arachchige Dinusha Sewwandi</li> </ol>

2. Raddadduwa Wanasinghe Anushka Tharangane
3. Willoru Mudiyansele Nuwanjalee Kaumadie kumari Kulasinghe
4. Heiyanthuduge Thilini Madushika Perera
5. Divya Sandamali Gunasekara (03 Gold Medals)
6. Wijesooriya Mudiyansele Achini Manesha Karunarathne
7. Dissanayake Mudiyansele Nirosha Dilrukshi (04 Gold Medals)
8. Kamburugamuwa Liyanawaduge Maneesha Kalpani
9. Keerththana Kumareswaran (02 Gold Medals)

#### **Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology**

1. Jayalath Pathirana Kanishka Ashan
2. Korale Kankanamge Dinuka Chamodi

#### **Faculty of Science**

1. Rathnaweera Patabadige Takeesha Yohani
2. Handapangoda Mudalige Manushi Yasara Mudalige
3. Deegoda Gamage Poornima Nayanani
4. Wijemunige Shakya Sankalpani Gunasena
5. Aneesha Dewindi Waniganayaka Yapa
6. Moditha Viraj Wijethunga (02 Gold Medals)
7. Galapitige Kalani Manoja Wijepala

#### **Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences**

1. Gajaman Hewage Theemathi Kaushalya Wijerathna
2. Baddegamage Mayumi Nishara Dilrukshi
3. Rathnayaka Mudiyansele Ruwani Erandika Rathnayaka

#### **Faculty of Engineering**

1. Senadheera Pathirannahalage Poorna Anjalika Gunawardana (02 Gold Medals)
2. Dodangodage Chatura Kumara Dodangoda
3. Mayushi Amaya Jayasinghe
4. Millawa Gamage Thulitha Theekshana Senevirathna



## Colors Nite 2018/2019

Colors Nite 2018/2019 of University of Ruhuna, a glamorous ceremony, was held on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium of University of Ruhuna.

The Colors Nite is considered as one of the much-anticipated and prestigious ceremonies of the University which recognizes and acclaims exceptional performances of university sportsmen & women. University colors are the most prestigious award, a sportsman or woman can achieve in their University life. The occasion was graced by the Chief Guest, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna and the Guest of Honor, Colonel Dr. Saveen Semage, Consultant Community Physician, Deputy Director Army Preventive Medicine & Mental Health Services.

It was a truly memorable occasion, an event of joy and sparkle for the color holders, bringing pride for their families and gratitude for their coaches. A total of 185 color holders, 65 best players & 16 special prizes for years 2018 & 2019 were honored.

It was an event heavily affected by Covid-19 Pandemic, however with the patronage of the present Vice-Chancellor of University of Ruhuna, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena and the Deputy Vice Chancellor Professor E.P.S.Chandana, the event was successfully held with all the health guidelines prescribed by the Ministry of Health.

The list of special award winners is given below.

Most Outstanding Player for the year 2018/2019

**Ms. SUSB Wijewickrama, Faculty of Agriculture**

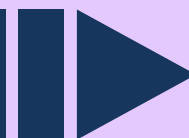
Best Performer for the year 2018/2019

**Ms. HPA Jayamini, Faculty of Engineering**



Name	Faculty	Sport	Year
Ms. SUSB Wijewickrama	Faculty of Agriculture	Karate	2018
WV Perera	Faculty of Management and Finance	Powerlifting	2018
Ms.SUSB Wijewickrama	Faculty of Agriculture	Taekwondo	2018
Ms. SWCM Samarasinghe	Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	Netball	2019
WKS Wickramaarachchi	Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology	Swimming	2019
MAJ Induruwa	Faculty of Medicine	Swimming	2019
DA Dias	Faculty of Management and Finance	Swimming	2019
WAM Fernando	Faculty of Medicine	Swimming	2019
Ms. HPA Jayamini	Faculty of Engineering	Track & Field	2019
AVKD Dias	Faculty of Management and Finance	Track & Field	2019
HMPB Piyathilaka	Faculty of Engineering	Track & Field	2019
Ms. SUSB Wijewickrama	Faculty of Agriculture	Taekwondo	2019
Ms.WHIS Chandrasena	Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences	Taekwondo	2019
WV Perera	Faculty of Management and Finance	Powerlifting	2019
AMTD Atapattu	Faculty of Science	Weightlifting	2019
LGH Udara	Faculty of Management and Finance	Weightlifting	2019

## Feature Article



### Towards a Blue Economy

Blue Economy, also referred to as 'Blue-green economy' or 'Green economy' or 'Blue growth', is a concept that began to get the attention of experts as well as the general public after the book 'The Blue Economy: 10 years – 100 innovations – 100 million jobs', written by Gunter Pauli, first published in 2010. Currently, there are various definitions for the Blue Economy (BE), starting with that given in the seminal book of Pauli (2010). Oceans cover 70% of the Earth surface and 90% of the biosphere, and thus BE will not be a reality without concerning the oceans. Thus, BE has, in recent years, become a concept closely related to maritime resources and developed economies based on the oceans. Economic sectors using oceans include fisheries, aquaculture, tourism, shipping, biotechnologies, maritime security, mining, and ecosystem services. Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) promotes BE in support of food security, poverty alleviation and sustainable management of living marine resources, while other organizations and institutions expand it to other marine and maritime sectors, including shipping, tourism and mining. Since the Ocean remains a major natural resource in the world that is yet to be fully exploited and explored, it is crucial and thus the usage of the resources should be done sustainably.

In the Sri Lankan context, being an island that is geographically located at the critical point in the Indian Ocean, the economic development of Sri Lanka must be a castle that has to build upon the foundation of marine-based

activities and services. As a requirement for marine-based economic development, Sri Lanka has several advantages naturally received such as high accessibility to both biotic and abiotic resources from a coastline approximately 1600km around the country, having a major navigational route combining the Pacific Ocean with the Arabian Sea which lies near to the land surrounding the country, having a considerably larger exclusive economic zone which is around seven times of the country area, having coastal zone with high biodiversity and a high potential for marine-based fishery industry and, plenty of ornamental fish and coral reefs that attract maritime tourism. Moreover, Hambantota harbour and recently designed Colombo Port city will be the biggest commercial and international trading hub in the South Asian region. Sri Lanka embraces 530684 km<sup>2</sup> of territorial waters and its vivid natural resources for sustainable development, and the country is working in parallel with the UN sustainable development goals (SDG 14) for this purpose. Thus, the scope of this feature article is to brief the challenges that Sri Lanka has to face in achieving the goals of the blue economy and the necessary steps that have to be considered/ taken for developing human resource and technological improvements in Sri Lanka.

Marine resources considered in the article are mainly under sections of fisheries and aquaculture, renewable ocean energy, marine biotechnology, maritime tourism, and coastal resources. Similarly, another important point is maritime disaster management. Currently, the only ongoing industrial level application that significantly contributes to the GDP of Sri Lanka is coastal and marine capture fishery. Because of that, the fisheries sector is becoming socially and economically complex and plays a vital role in the socio-economic development of Sri Lanka by providing direct and indirect employment opportunities for about 560,000 people and livelihoods for more than 2.7 million coastal communities. The majority of Sri Lankan fishery depends on the wild capture of finfish and shellfish which are bestowed by nature. Fisheries management strategies should be adopted appropriately to avoid overexploitation of fishery resources, and mariculture has to be developed to balance the increasing demand.

Natural products (secondary metabolites), from terrestrial plants and microbes, have traditionally been the major source of drug molecules and continue to be an important pipeline for the development of new pharmaceuticals. The application of marine biotechnology that involves marine biotic resources is the main tool to develop valuable products. Some marine natural products already used as anticancer drugs are originally from sea sponge species. In addition to pharmaceuticals, several commercially available marine bio products are used as molecular probes in biomedical research. DNA polymerase enzyme has been obtained from deep-sea hydrothermal vent bacterium while marine microalgae are the source for the fatty acids used as additives in infant nutritional supplements. Marine bacteria and marine fungi have received increasingly high attention among these organisms, sponges have proven to be the most prolific producers of unique natural products and sponge and tunicates have yielded a high percentage of anti-tumour compounds. A large number of invertebrate phyla, including Coelenterate, Porifera, Bryozoa, and Echinodermata are exclusively aquatic and largely saline in habitats. Marine reefs are highly crowded ecosystems where numerous invertebrates and algal species coexist. Most marine invertebrates are expected to depend heavily on secondary metabolites that are toxic or objectionable to their competitors for survival and thus present several opportunities for extraction and development of new drugs. However, the exploration of marine organisms for drug extraction is still at a relatively early stage and goes back about seven decades. Sri Lanka has reef habitats widespread in the coastal, around the island and their area is estimated to be nearly 680 km<sup>2</sup>. The biodiversity of these reefs is largely unrecorded and represents a mostly unexplored and untapped resource for the discovery of bio-molecules with commercial potential. While improving the existing



measures and adopting sustainable measures, the country must invest in research and development. Since the blue economy is a new concept, highly planned research is needed, and technological knowledge on marine biotechnology must be brought into the country.

Special attention must be paid to the reservation of unused hydrocarbons including Oil and gas, exploration of rare-earth metals, etc. Seawater itself is a vast resource and it is estimated that one cubic mile of seawater weighing approximately 4 billion tons, contains more than 165 metric tons of solids these include 140 metric tons of NaCl, 26 metric tons of Mg salts, 4 metric tons of K<sub>2</sub>SO<sub>4</sub>, 25 tons of Au, 45 tons of Ag, etc. The biggest abiotic natural resource currently used in Sri Lanka is the saline water in the salt industry but still Sri Lanka imports 30% annual salt requirement, this industry can be easily developed in the country, targeting to export table salt and other types of salts used for different purposes. Using seawater caustic soda and other related chemical production is also possible and before the civil war in the Jaffna peninsula, Sri Lanka produced a considerable amount of caustic soda, and thus, that industry can be developed again to adopt blue economic policies. More than a hundred years ago Marine geologists have found that Manganese, Ferromanganese, and polymetallic nodules are littered over a large part of the deep-sea floor and these nodules contain base metals like Fe, Mn, Cu, Ni, Zn, and Co beside the rare earth elements either as oxides/hydroxides or adsorbed species. However, they are economically important only for their Copper, Cobalt, and Nickel content, because Iron and Manganese ore deposits are plentifully available on land. Cobalt-rich ferromanganese crusts and polymetallic deposits are also available in the deep sea. However, purified minerals are high-income sources and only excavated by developed nations. But these resources in the exclusive economic zones belong to the country, and Sri Lanka should reserve them currently and plan such mineral excavations for future usage and necessary human resources development should be done at this moment.

Usage of renewable energy resources for the BE is the harnessing of energy from solar, wind, and sea waves. The harnessing of solar power has already received attention and the government has planned to popularize solar power plants in government and private places. Sea waves are also ultimately a source of solar energy. The sun heats the earth's surface, creating winds that push against the surface of the ocean, forming waves that can travel thousands of kilometres from their point of propagation, continually invigorated by the new wind as they pass. As a result, waves retain their energy long after the wind that is first created and dies down. Sea waves are one of the most concentrated and consistent sources of renewable energy. When compared to conventional fossil fuel-generated energy, wave energy offers the double benefits of nearly limitless free supply and a total lack of environmental pollutant emissions. According to the International Energy Agency, the global primary energy demand would increase by 40% by 2030. Sri Lanka experiences two monsoons throughout the year and has great potential for tidal and wave energy along the South-West and North-West coasts. Wave, solar, wind, hydroelectric energy can all be generated with the available resources in Sri Lanka. In this context, Sri Lanka should adopt proper research, development, and implementation.

Even in the current context, the Tourism sector contributes significantly to the GDP of the country. Some marine-based tourism is already existing. However, Maritime tourism and leisure-based activities should be developed and should be implemented with proper management plans minimizing the effect on the cultural and social condition and natural environment. Currently, Sri Lanka has a wide array of leisure and pleasure activities based on coastal areas but the endurance of the same is questionable. Coastal geomorphology, flora, and fauna give higher attraction to tourists and thus marine-based tourism contributes to 70% of the total tourism infrastructure in

the country. Coastal tourism can be expanded to new heights, but there must be regulations in place to manage the activities and quality of the service. However, at any cost the tourism industry should not disturb the development of the natural marine cycle or break apart the natural habitat of fauna or flora. Thus, coastal zone management should be a major component of the Sri Lankan blue economic policy.

Considering the number of ships visiting, Colombo Port, which comes into the twelfth place in the world, is one of the busiest ports in the region and more than 2/3 of global seaborne trade is routed through the Indian Ocean. Thus, Sri Lanka's geostrategic location provides a higher potential for port and shipping services and it must be reorganized and developed into attracting Triple E class (Economy of scale, Energy-efficient, and Environmentally-friendly) vessels to come into operation. By imposing more systematic, target-oriented, and futuristic policies and regulations, current services can be enriched.

Coastal zone comprising coastal communities, built infrastructure environments, and ecosystems are exposed to a wide range of hazards arising from natural phenomena and human-induced activities. Cities and economically, defensively, and socially important places within these hazard zones are at high risk and on most occasions such natural or man-made disasters have been resulted due to unplanned accelerated development without concerning vulnerability. Therefore, it is not surprising that communities in the coastal belts and stakeholders involved in marine services especially in ships and ports are increasingly at high risk from coastal hazards. There are several unforgettable experiences of recent disasters, especially the Indian Ocean Tsunami in 2004, hurricane Katrina in 2005 and cyclone Nargis in 2008, several Oil spills from ships and the most recent fire incident in X-Press Pearl ship nine nautical miles away from Colombo port in 2021. Although many of these events are inevitable, the hazard level could be minimized if Sri Lanka has proper disaster management strategies and qualified human resources, and necessary facilities. Therefore, policies and guidelines for disaster management should be developed as an avenue for avoiding and minimizing ocean-related hazards and accidents. Necessary facility and infrastructure development can be done considerably within a shorter period. But human resource development cannot be performed within a short period and thus, it should be started in education and training. Scientific knowledge in the above-mentioned fields should be given to the young generation if the country is supposed to adapt to a blue economy in the future. Higher educational institutes have a big responsibility in producing useful graduates to take on future challenges in the country.

Concerning the growing demand for fisheries products and relatively constant capture fishery landings, the government is insisting on sustainable resource utilisation, through effective management of fisheries resources. Adequately educated scientists, officials and entrepreneurs, having sound knowledge of coastal and marine resources are essential for the economic development of the country. Considering this timely need in fisheries and marine sciences education to cater to fulfil the needs of the community/country, the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology (FMST) was established in Ruhuna University by an extraordinary Government Gazette notification of the year 2005, by upgrading the Department of Fisheries Biology of the Faculty of Science of the University of Ruhuna. The Faculty of FMST houses three Departments, i.e, Fisheries & Aquaculture, Limnology & Water Technology, and Oceanography & Marine Geology. Faculty initially offered the Bachelor of Science Honours in Fisheries and Marine Sciences Degree, which is of 4-year duration for a maximum capacity of 60 students, at the Level 6 of the Sri Lanka Qualification Framework (SLQF). The degree programme was reviewed by the expertise and stakeholders of the fisheries and Marine Sciences sector on 9<sup>th</sup> June 2010 and their comments and recommendations were addressed at several internal curriculum revisions with the approval of the senate. The



degree programme was further strengthened and a new Degree program; Bachelor of Science Honours in Marine and Freshwater Sciences was introduced in 2017, considering the needs of the country. The faculty also produces capable researchers, scientists and capable persons in relevant research fields by giving hands-on experience for Master of Philosophy (MPhil) and Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) research degrees. Currently, state higher education system is not producing graduates in marine resources and service management, and thus the Faculty has taken steps to introduce a new degree programme in 2023, namely Bachelor of Science Honours in Marine Services and Resource Management in collaboration with the Faculty of Management and Finance, which is a key item in the five-year Action Plan (2019-2023) of the University of Ruhuna. As one of the prospectuses of the Faculty is to establish international collaborations, Faculty of FMST has already signed MOUs and implemented collaboration with different Universities in China, Taiwan, Norway, Japan and USA etc. It is a major requirement to carry out advanced academic and research programmes targeting the enhancement of the quality of graduates produced, to help the socio-economic development in the country.

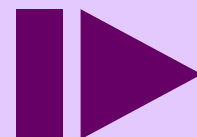
**Professor R.A. Maithreepala/Professor of Limnology & Water Technology**

**Professor K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda/ Professor of Fisheries Biology**

**Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology**

**University of Ruhuna**

# Academic Events



## 18<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 17<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards – 2021

The 18<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 17<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards ceremony of the University of Ruhuna was successfully held on the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March 2021 under the theme 'Together towards excellence' at Professor T.W Wikramanayake auditorium at the Faculty of Medicine. The event was jointly organized by the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences & Faculty of Medicine.

Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice-Chancellor of University of Ruhuna, graced the inaugural ceremony as the Chief Guest. Professor Shaman Rajindrajith, Professor of Paediatrics University of Colombo delivered the keynote address titled "Building a Research Culture in Sri Lanka" and the oration was delivered by Dr. R.H.M.P.N. Rathnayake, on "Menopause; a significant milestone in women's life" in the presence of the distinguished gathering, comprising the Most Venerable Akuretiye Nanda

Thero, Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, Professor Saman Chandana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, all Deans of the faculties, senior professors, emeritus professors, academic and non-academic staff members.

The conferment of Emeritus Professorships to Professor (Mrs.) K D C E Liyanage, Professor Ranjith Senaratne, Professor S G J N Senanayake, Professor W G D Dharmaratne, Professor (Mrs.) M V Weerasooriya was among the highlights of the inauguration.



17<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards were awarded for the following winners under four categories.

1. The Most Outstanding Scholar – Dr Nadeesha M. Wickramage
2. The Most Outstanding Young Researcher – Dr Amila Buddhika Sirisena
3. The Highest Recipient of Grants –Dr Shirani Manel Kumari
4. The Most Outstanding Promoter of International Relations – Professor K.H.M. Ashoka Deepananda

The Best Presenter awards for 17<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions were awarded at the inauguration ceremony. Eighty seven oral presentations under 9 themes were delivered in nine hybrid, technical sessions. Under four themes, 36 poster presentations were delivered. Nearly 50 evaluators contributed to the evaluation.



### **International Symposium on Agriculture and Environment (ISAE 2021)**



Being a pioneer institute responsible for higher education in Southern Sri Lanka, the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna strives for excellence in education, research, and outreach in the field of agriculture leading to sustainable development. Among the annual events organized by the Faculty, the International Symposium on Agriculture and Environment (ISAE) is the most significant academic event which creates a promising platform for our staff and students to blend with the professionals around the world. With the objective of securing the future of sustainable agriculture and the environment, ISAE 2021 was held on 7<sup>th</sup> May 2021 under the main theme of “Challenges in Agriculture: Impact, Resilience, and Adaptation for Sustainability”. Due to the prevailing global Covid-19 pandemic situation, this year the symposium was held as a virtual event. The Chief Guest of the main event was Mr. Mahinda Amaraweera, honorable minister of Environment, Sri Lanka, and the keynote speech of the inaugural session was delivered by Professor David



Rowlings from the School of Biology & Environmental Science, Science and Engineering Faculty, Queensland University of Technology, Australia. Further, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice-Chancellor, University of Ruhuna, and Professor E.P.S. Chandana, Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Ruhuna also graced the inaugural session of the symposium. Overall, ISAE 2021 was able to facilitate a constructive virtual gathering for researchers around the world to share their valuable research findings and to develop intellectual discussions related to future research in sustainable agriculture.

### **Faculty of Medicine Academic Sessions- 2020**

Faculty of Medicine Academic Sessions (FMAS) – 2020 was successfully held on the 03<sup>rd</sup> February, under COVID-19 regulations, at T.W. Wikramanayake Auditorium, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna under the theme “**Viral Pandemics: A New Beginning**”. The Chief Guest was Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna. Keynote Address was delivered on “Hopes with COVID-19 crisis. Are there any?” by Dr. Ananda Wijewickrama, Consultant Physician, National Institute of Infectious Diseases. FMAS oration titled “Institutionalization of Postpartum Intrauterine Device Service: A story of successful Implementation” was delivered by Dr. Lanka Dasanayake, Senior Lecturer, Department of Obstetrics and Gynecology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna.

Dean’s award ceremony was also held in line with the inauguration ceremony. Three medical students, Ms. UMC Wijesinghe, Mr. PNSL Priyadarshana and Dr. JGG Akalanka were offered the Dean’s award for overall good performance in 2020 by the Vice Chancellor, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena and Professor Vasantha Devasiri, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna.

Morning sessions after the inauguration was enriched with FMAS symposium on “Life in the time of COVID: Winning battles and forging ahead”. Symposium subthemes were “Fresh insights and new directions in university education” by Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, “Role of viral diagnostics in living with the pandemic” by Dr Nayomi Danthanarayana, Consultant Virologist, Teaching Hospital Karapitiya, “Transforming the ETU: Leading the way in making hospital safe for all” by Dr Ganaka Senaratne, Consultant Physician, Teaching Hospital Karapitiya, and “Forging Ahead with COVID-19” by Dr Lasantha Malavige Consultant in Sexual Medicine and Chairman Lassana Group of companies. There were four presentations on completed postgraduate research projects.



There were 36 abstract presentations in the free paper sessions, including both oral presentations and poster presentations. Best and commended places for oral and poster presentations were selected separately for the open category and the undergraduate category. Professor Vasantha Devasiri, Dean, Faculty of Medicine, awarded the certificates to the winners. Prof R S Janaka Lenora and Dr. Pushpika Jayawardena were the Chairperson and Secretary of FMAS-2020.



### **Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference- RISTCON 2021**

The 8<sup>th</sup> Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference (RISTCON 2021), organized by the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna, Matara, Sri Lanka was held on 17<sup>th</sup> of February 2021 with the participation of the chief guest, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasekera and the guest of honour, His Excellency Mr. Eric Lavertu Eric Livertu, Ambassador of France to Sri Lanka. The RISTCON-2021 was enriched by the keynote speech of a renowned scientist, Dr. Daniel Gorman, CSIRO, The University of Western Australia, Crawley, Australia while the plenary lecture by an eminent scientist, Professor Ragupathy Kannan, University of Arkansas Fort-Smith, Arkansas, USA. The conference was a great opportunity for all conference attendees (about 150 presenters) to hear the latest findings from their respective fields of research and also to learn from their vast experiences.





## MOOC Modules on climate change and energy efficiency offered by the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna

Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna is a one of partners out of 14 partners of BECK (Integrating education with consumer behaviour relevant to energy efficiency and climate change at the universities of Russia, Sri Lanka and Bangladesh) project which is funded by European Union under Erasmus+ programs.

The BECK project focuses on climate change and energy discipline and has strong connections with various other disciplines such as engineering, management, environmental science, economics, health, culture, psychology, ethics, etc. Multidisciplinary adaptive recognized and certified BECK MOOC modules are offering to create a suitable basis for education in the field consumer's behavior related to energy efficiency and climate change in the built environment. Further, BECK will be empowering individuals and organizations with the skills, competencies, and credentials needed to continue to pursue research and to lead research at institutions.

The module introduces and gives an overview of conceptual theories and applications for sustainable consumption stimulation by changing consumer behaviour into green for addressing climate change.

Three MOOC modules are offered by the BECK project.

1. Green behaviour and sustainable consumption stimulation (15 weeks)
2. Spirituality and relaxation techniques for personality development (15 weeks)
3. Climate change at urban and peri-urban scale in tropics: Impacts, Mitigation and adaptation (15 weeks)

All three modules were approved by the Internal Quality Assurance Unit and the Senate of University of Ruhuna. Modules were developed by the BECK team: Senior. Professor CM Navaratne, Emeritus Professor KDN Weerasinghe, Mr. HAC Priyankara, Mr. Ravindu Hashan, Mr. PP Ruwanpathirana, and Ms. AN Dissanayke. First intake of students was registered in June 2021 and modules are running since June 20, 2021. The next intake will be advertised in August 2021 and all undergraduates/graduates are welcomed to join this program.



## Symposium on “Responsibility of media in strengthening the battle against Covid 19”

Department of Sociology in collaboration with some other local and international universities organized a symposium on “Responsibility of media in strengthening the battle against covid 19” on 19<sup>th</sup>, March 2021 at the auditorium of the faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology. The main purpose of this symposium was to unveil the findings of the research for the attention of policy makers and journalists in southern Province.



Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna was invited as the chief guest to this event. Apart from, Professor Saman Chandana, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna, Professor Upali



Pannilage, the dean of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Suranjith Gunasekara, the head of Department of Sociology and other academic staff of the university participated in this event. Majority of the participants and the research collaborators participated for this event online due to the restrictions of the covid 19 pandemic. The department coordinator of this event was Ms. Ishara Wanniarachchi.

### **Launching ceremony of “Wings of Brotherhood”**

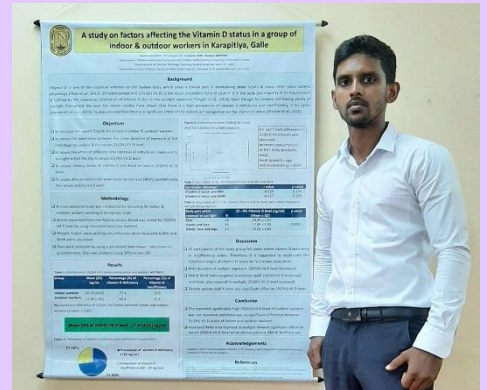
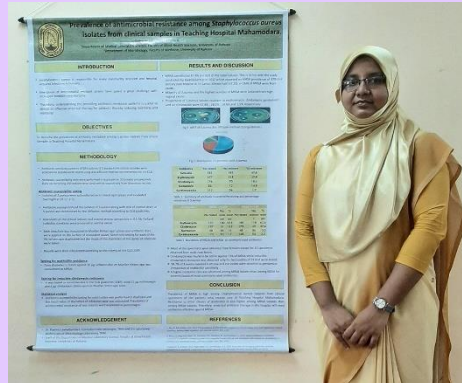
The book “Wings of Brotherhood” (සමාජීය පියාපත්), a collection of students’ experience, based on a field research in Jaffna was launched on 08<sup>th</sup> March, 2021 at the faculty auditorium. This event was organized by the Department of Sociology and the Sociological Association, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. This was edited by Dr. Suranjith Gunasekara and Mr. Susith Nimantha Siriwardane. Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna graced the event as the Chief Guest and he released E-copies to the University website. Distinguished guests including Professor Upali Pannilage, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Mr. Nimal Hettiarachchi, Librarian (acting) of the University of Ruhuna and other academic, non - academic and the student community participated in this event. The keynote speech was delivered under the topic



of “Modern State and Ethnicity: The Problem of Identity Politics” by Dr. Darshana Liyanage, Head, Department of Sinhala, University of Ruhuna.

### Poster Presentation Based on Final Year Research Projects

The 2014/2015 (8<sup>th</sup>) batch of the students of Bachelor of Science Medical Laboratory Sciences (BSc MLS) degree programme presented their final year research project findings in poster mode on 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences. The students presented their research findings in different disciplines including, Hematology, Microbiology, Andrology and Clinical Biochemistry.



### Launching Ceremony of “Cyber Pohottu”, a Poetry Collection

සයිබර් පොහොට්ටු (Cyber Pohottu), a collection of poetry of the 2019/2020 academic year 1000 level students of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, was launched on 29<sup>th</sup> March 2021. This event was organized by the Department of Sinhala. Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, graced the event as the Chief Guest while the acclaimed critic Dhammika Bandara delivered the invited speech.

Veteran artists Saman Lenin and Nilakshi Helapitiya, along with Ravi Royster and S.K. Methun, two popular artists in the field of experimental music, added much glamour to the occasion. Distinguished guests including Professor Saman Chandana, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Upali Pannilage, Dean of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, and other professionals representing various fields were present. The audience comprised the university community, parents and invitees.





## Oath Taking Ceremony 2021

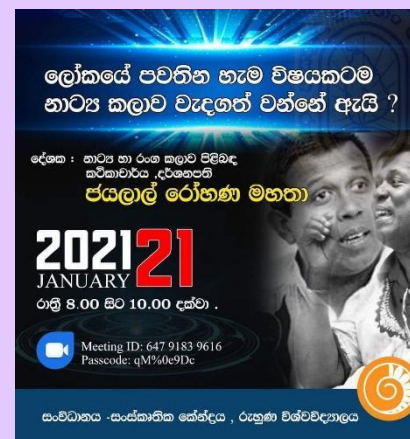
Oath taking ceremony is a calendar event of Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna. The oath taking



ceremony 2021 for 2017/2018 (11<sup>th</sup>) Batch of undergraduates of Department of Nursing was successfully held with the participation of Dr (Mrs.) KDL Meegoda, Head, Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura as the Guest of Honour, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna as the Chief Guest and other distinguished guests and students. This event commemorates their foot stepping from 1<sup>st</sup> year to 2<sup>nd</sup> year as Nursing undergraduates while taking the oath for service.

## A Virtual Session on the Importance of Theater Arts

Dramatic/theater arts are of greater importance for igniting the curiosity of individuals and love of learning in other subject areas. Hence, with the aim of educating people on the importance of dramatic/ theater arts, the Cultural Center at the University of Ruhuna together with the Faculty of Management and Finance conducted a virtual guest lecture via Zoom on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021 from 8.00 to 11.00 p.m., with the participation of 110 participants. Dr. Jayalal Rohana, Lecturer- drama & theater arts served as the resource person, and the cornerstone of the session had been its emphasis on demonstrating the multiple benefits of learning dramatic arts, and how it is positioned in the streams of various subject areas.



## How to Avoid Desk Rejection: An Emerald Editor's Perspective

In line with the staff development action plan of the Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna, a virtual research methodology-related workshop was conducted via Zoom on 27<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from 04.00 to 06.00 pm, with the participation of nearly 45 academic staff members at the University of Ruhuna. The session was centered upon the theme of “how to avoid desk rejection: an Emerald editor's perspective” and, was hosted by Associate Professor (Dr.) Saeed Pahlevansharif, Editor-in-Chief/Asia-Pacific Journal of Business Administration, Head of Research/Faculty of Business & Law, Taylor's University, Malaysia. The session was coordinated by Dr. G.T. Wasantha Sriyani, the SDC





coordinator of the Faculty of Management and Finance, was helpful for participants to understand how to create a solid first impression for a journal's Editor-in-Chief.

## Two Internship-Related Sessions by the Department of Human Resource Management

The Department of Human Resource Management at the University of Ruhuna organized two internship awareness sessions for final year undergraduate students to guide them toward an effective internship program completion. The first session, hosted by Mr. Thushara Balasooriya Senior Manager, Talent / HR Admin Siam City Cement Public Limited was conducted on 14<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at 9.00 a.m. via Zoom under the theme of “how to be a productive intern”. The second session was conducted on the same day at 2.00 p.m. under the theme of “career development through an effective internship”. Resource person for the second session was Mr. Indika Wewaldawa, Head of Human Resources, Administration & Compliance for Mount Castle Group Australia, and Director – Global HR Solutions / Nations HR Academy.



## A Series of Workshops on Doing Qualitative Research

The Faculty of Management and Finance together with the Staff Development Centre at University of Ruhuna host a series of online workshops, with the objective of sharpening the qualitative research skills of the academic staff members at the University of Ruhuna. The first two workshops were already conducted via Zoom, and the organizers expect to host the remaining sessions in the second half of 2021. Professor Danture Wickramasinghe, Chair in Management Accounting and the Director of the PhD program in Accounting and Finance at Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, UK served as the resource person of the first two workshops while the sessions were coordinated by Dr. G.T.W. Sriyani, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna. The first online session was centered upon the theme of “doing qualitative research critically”, and conducted via Zoom on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2021 from 2.30 to 5.30 p.m., with the participation of nearly 50 academics at the University of Ruhuna. The second workshop titled “how to use storytelling in your academic research” was conducted on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2021 from 2.30 to 5.30 p.m., with the participation of above 70 academics at the University of Ruhuna.



Staff Development Programme of the Faculty of Management and Finance collaboratively with the Staff Development Centre of the University of Ruhuna organizes a Research Methodology Session on: **“Doing qualitative research critically”**



**Resource Person:**  
**PROFESSOR DANTURE WICKRAMASINGHE**

Professor in Management Accounting, Chair in Management Accounting and the Director of PhD programme in Accounting and Finance at Adam Smith Business School, University of Glasgow, UK

The session covers:

- Its meaning and philosophical foundation
- Varieties of qualitative research
- The process and tips for doing it meaningfully
- Actions to be taken internationally

Date: 03/02/2021 from 2.30 to 5.30 pm  
Meeting ID: 683 9673 4458  
Passcode: 6ew%Zth!

**Organized by:**  
Dr. G. T. Wasantha Sriyani  
Staff Development Centre Coordinator of the Faculty  
Faculty of Management and Finance



An academic over 38 years, Professor Wickramasinghe is now globally known as a qualitative researcher in critical and interpretive studies in accounting, governance, and accountability. His international visibility is evidenced by his outstanding track of publications in reputed journals, including *Accounting, Organizations and Society*, *Auditing and Accountability Journal*, *Critical Perspectives on Accounting*, *Accounting and Business Research*, *Accounting & Organizational Change*, *Qualitative Research in Accounting and Management*, *International Journal of Accounting*, and *Accounting in Emerging Economies*. Currently, he serves on editorial boards for 6 journals.

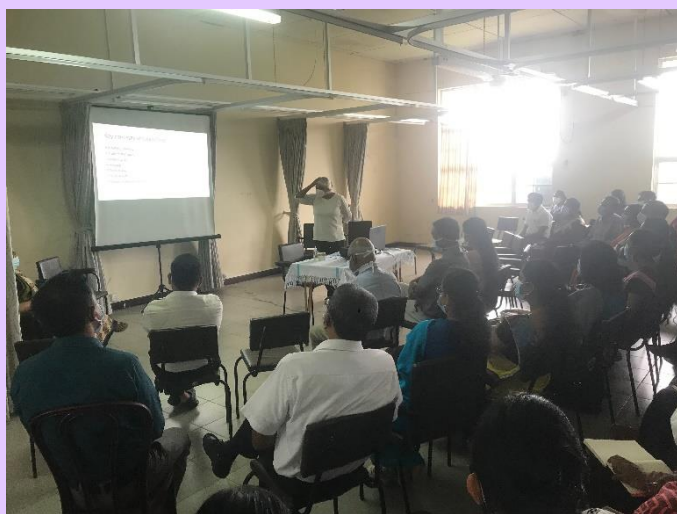
Danture has produced 17 PhDs both at Manchester and Glasgow and supervised over 30 PhDs in the UK, Australia, Norway, France, New Zealand, Malaysia, and Sri Lanka. He has held visiting appointments in, and research collaborations with Paris Dauphine University, Nord University in Norway, Manchester Business School in the UK, York University in Canada, and several Sri Lankan universities. Currently, he supervises 10 PhD students at Glasgow.

### **Two Sessions on Introduction to Mediation and Moderation Analysis**

In line with the staff development action plan of the Faculty of Management and Finance, the faculty conducted two sessions under the theme of “Introduction to Mediation and Moderation Analysis: A Regression-Based Approach”. The first session was held on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at the Faculty Computer Lab from 8.00 a.m. to 12.00 noon with the participation of 36 academic staff members. Among the participants, 32 were from the Faculty of Management and Finance while the rest was from the Faculty of Science and Faculty of Agriculture. The second session was conducted on 08<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from 8.30 a.m. to 12.00 noon and 23 academic staff members participated in this session. Of the participants, 21 were from the Faculty of Management and Finance and 2 were from the Faculty of Agriculture. Mr. W.M.R. Laksiri from the Faculty of Management and Finance served as the resource person of the both sessions while the organizing was coordinated by Dr. G.T. Wasantha Sriyani, the SDC coordinator of the Faculty of Management and Finance. The two sessions were very advantageous for the participants to enhance their data analytical skills with SPSS, assisting in writing an impactful quantitative research paper.



### **Student Counselor Training Workshop conducted by the Faculty of Medicine**



A workshop was organized by the Faculty of Medicine on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2021, covering different facets of counseling for the newly recruited team of student counselors. The workshop was conducted by a panel of experts drawn from the Department of Psychiatry. The participation was extended to other faculties as per the request of the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna. Prof C. G. Hewage, Dr. H. Rajapakse, Dr. S.A.C. Senadheera, Dr. A. Jayasekera, Dr. G.D. Punchihewa and Dr. N. Gamage were the resource persons of the session. There were 50 participants from different faculties of the University and there were three participants from Faculty of Technology, University of Colombo. Training in counseling will be an ongoing process and future training programmes will be organized by the Faculty of Medicine, considering the excellent feedback from the programme.



### **Workshops on SER Writing and Labeling of Evidence for Programme Review**



Internal Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC), Faculty of Medicine, successfully conducted two workshops for the year 2021 on Self Evaluation Report (SER) writing and labeling of evidence for the Programme Review (PR). The workshop on SER writing was held on 16<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at the Medical Faculty premises with the participation of academic

members of the SER writing committee. Out of 46 members representing the 15 departments of the Faculty, 40 members participated in the workshop. The resource person for the workshop, Professor Kalyani Perera, acting director of Quality Assurance Council, University Grants Commission, gave a clear insight into how the SER writing should be done for the PR. The workshop concluded with a discussion and a Q&A session, which allowed the participants to clarify their doubts on SER writing.

The second workshop, labeling of evidence for the PR, was conducted on 17<sup>th</sup> May 2021 via Zoom due to the country's prevailing situation. 37 members of the SER writing committee representing the 15 departments, along with the Dean and Senior Assistant Registrar participated in the workshop. Professor Kalyani Perera, the resource person for the workshop, did a concise presentation on how to properly label the collected evidence for the PR, avoiding redundancy. The workshop concluded with a discussion and a Q&A session.

### **Initiation of Laparoscopic Anterior Resection for Rectal Cancers in the Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine**

Rectal cancer is the third most common cancer diagnosed in Sri Lankan population each year. Laparoscopic surgery for rectal cancer is a safe and established alternative to traditional open surgery. The surgical team of the Department of Surgery, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna performed the first laparoscopic anterior resection on the 22<sup>nd</sup> of May 2021 at Teaching Hospital Karapitiya.



The team members were Prof R.W Senevirathne, Dr Rajitha Abeywickrama, Dr Malaka Uluwitiya, Dr Vidu Ruchira De Silva. Further, the surgeons revealed that they had experienced the early benefits of laparoscopic procedures following the surgery, such as speedy recovery and early discharge. Moreover, the establishment of laparoscopic procedures would improve the surgical outcome as well as the economic burden on the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka. Dr Upul Hapuarachchi, Consultant anaesthetist and his team, nursing staff and health care assistants in theatre E and F and ward three, Teaching Hospital Karapitiya have contributed to achieve this success.

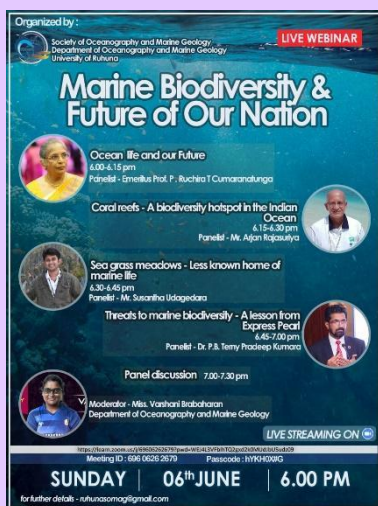


## Webinar on Environmental Day 2021

To celebrate the world environmental day 2021 a webinar was held on 5<sup>th</sup> June 2021, in a virtual platform by Limnology and Water Technology Society, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology. The Theme of the environmental day 2021 was “Ecosystem Restoration”. In the session, two speeches were conducted by keynote speakers. Dr. P.B. Terney Pradeep Kumara, the general manager of marine environmental protection authority delivered a speech about “Marine pollution and emerging threats”. Miss. Nadeeka Amarasinghe, assistant director of the Sustainable development council, conducted a speech about “Environment and sustainable lifestyle”. More than 150 participants joined the event to share their thoughts in this successful webinar.



## SOMaG Celebrates World Ocean Day 2021



World Oceans Day was celebrated on 8<sup>th</sup> June 2021 by worldwide thalassophiles on the theme Ocean: Life and livelihoods. On behalf of celebrating this universal day, a live webinar was organized on 6<sup>th</sup> June by the SOMaG (Society of Oceanography and Marine Geology), Department of Oceanography and Marine Geology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology, University of Ruhuna with the aim of making aware the community about Marine Biodiversity and Future of Our Nation.

Amidst all the challenges prevailed at the moment due to the COVID 19 pandemic, zoom platform aided the success of live webinar with the participation of panelists; Emeritus Senior professor P. Ruchira T. Cumararatunga who was the founder Dean of Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology, Dr. P.B. Terney

Pradeep Kumara, Mr. Arjan Rajasuriya, Mr. Susantha Udagedara. Informative and fascinating sessions were conducted by the panelists regarding the respective topics; Ocean life and our future, Threats to marine biodiversity- A lesson from MV X-press Pearl, Coral reefs – A biodiversity hotspot in Indian ocean, Seagrass meadows – Less known home of marine life with an audience exceeding 300 participants. More or less, it was a superb experience due to the live interactive sessions happened in between the panelists and participants during panel discussion time. Recent issues on marine life specially because of the ship accidents, man-based threats on marine biodiversity, future actions that can be taken to reduce harmful impacts were major areas of questions directed to the panelists.

### Peer Assisted Teaching/Learning, Department of Pharmacology, Faculty of Medicine

Peer assisted teaching-learning programme started in 2019 for the 37<sup>th</sup> batch for 3<sup>rd</sup> MBBS part II Pharmacology repeat students and was continued for 38<sup>th</sup> batch as per evaluations by students on its success. Fourteen peer tutors who were distinction holders in Pharmacology contributed to teaching sessions. They were asked to make simple notes on what they were going to teach students and their accuracy and clarity were checked by the academic staff and further guidance was given. So, the professional teacher passes the responsibility of teaching to the student whilst remaining responsible for the strategy and the accuracy of the content that is shared. This results in standardization of the programme and both peer tutor and tutee benefit from the expertise of the professional teacher. The classes were conducted at the department skills lab. At the end, the academic members clarified any questions the students had and several MCQs and essay questions were discussed on the topics that were taught.



### Webinar Conducted on “Enhancing Writing Skills in Developing the Literature Review”

A webinar was successfully organized by the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna based on the topic “Enhancing writing skills in developing the literature review”. The webinar was conducted by Mrs. Nirmani Gardihewa lecturer in English Language in the Department of Interdisciplinary Studies, Faculty of Engineering on the 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from 5.30 to 8.00 p.m. The webinar was particularly targeted to the sixth semester students aiming to assist them in their future dissertations and to enhance the academic writing skills of undergraduates since academic writing is a very important skill that every student must develop. The objectives of this session were to enhance the academic writing skills of the students while developing the critical reading approaches and the grammatical knowledge in writing the literature review. The names of different writing tasks, the format of long and short writing tasks, the use of sentences and paragraphs were discussed in the webinar. In addition, the most appropriate text types for academic work, effective reading methods, common text features including abstracts were discussed during this session.

### ESPRIT'21



COVID-19 has become a global health concern, causing societal perceptions that it limits the ability of the younger generation to grow their innovative and creative talents.

ESPRIT'21 is a virtual event organized by AIESEC in University of Ruhuna with the aim of dispelling the aforesaid misconception. Our main goal is to develop the skills of the younger generation and to maintain their mental stability despite the global crisis. Hence ESPRIT'21 encourages them to focus on their innovative

abilities while maintaining a steady mentality. This is based upon the third Sustainable Development Goal, which is good health and Well- Being.

Our Vision is to assist to maintain a healthy mentality within the younger generation and to enhance their skills and bringing out the best in youth. Our Mission is to gather innovative ideas through Ideation and create a platform to enhance their knowledge and to gain new experiences through quiz and webinar. Ideathon, Quiz, and Webinar are the two main components of Esprit'21. Our main goal in the above two phases is to develop the younger generation's unique thoughts while also stabilizing their mentality.

Ideathon is based on SDG goal number 3 which are to gain more innovative and valuables ideas from talent pools. This is an open competition for those who are under age 29. Candidates are assigned a problem regarding the mental health of the younger generation, and they must propose their solutions using one of three categories given. The webinar will be based on the 3<sup>rd</sup> SDG goal which is good health and well-being. An expert in the field leads the discussion. It is mostly concerned with ways to minimize stress among the younger generation. The quiz is an open event for all the delegates. The quiz provides an opportunity for delegates to put their knowledge to the test. The delegates will gain the opportunity to know the subject from the best resource persons in the field. Thus, all of this would eventually lead to the achievement of the goal of ESPRIT'21.

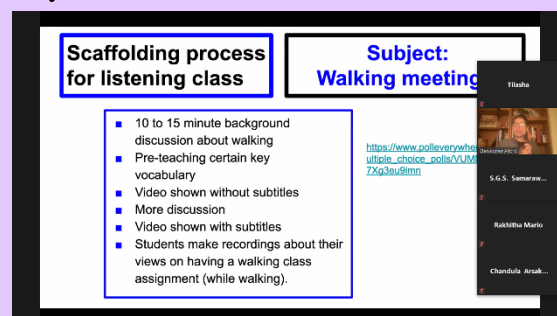
### **Virtual English Language Fellow (VELF)**

The 'Virtual English Language Fellow' (VELF) programme organized by the Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna commenced on the 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021. It is a programme funded by the United States Embassy in Sri Lanka, and conducted by Mr. Christopher Alford.

VELF is conducted for three different focus groups in the university; namely: the academic staff of all the faculties, the staff of the Department of English Language Teaching, and the 1000 Level undergraduates (English Medium) of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The aim of VELF is to support the staff of the University of Ruhuna in designing lesson plans in English on the existing curriculums and use 'English for Academic Purposes' efficiently; and also, to support the undergraduates in improving their speaking and writing skills in English language. This interactive programme is conducted on every weekday from 5.30 p.m. -7.30 p.m. via Zoom.

The resource person, Mr. Christopher Alford earned his MA in TESOL from California State University, Los Angeles, and a BSc. in Business Administration from the University of Texas at Austin. As a lecturer, he had taught many international students at the University of Southern California. Over the years, he has got to work with academics from various cultures on a meaningful level. He is now acquainted with the people and culture of Sri Lanka.

VELF is an immensely fruitful series of sessions that enhances the participants' understanding of the cultural diversity among two cultures while cultivate lasting relationships with their American counterparts.





## STEPARC



Life adjustments often come with a range of new experiences. The new normal transition can be smooth, and the journey to a new normal is struggling. STEPARC gave the knowledge and enthusiasm for foreign internship opportunities that ultimately advance and enrich the career of everyone.

Accordingly, STEPARC could quickly introduce as an event campaign designed for encouraging the youth for new jobs by providing them with a platform to seek new internship opportunities and to develop their leadership while boosting their career prospects through an international internship.

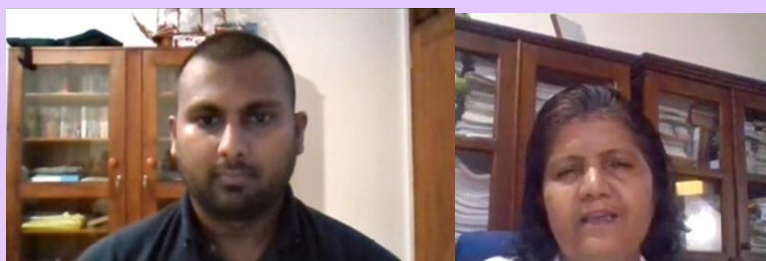
## Go Greener

“We don’t need a handful of people doing zero waste perfectly. We need millions of people doing it imperfectly”. – Anne Marie Bonneau aka The Zero Waste Chef

Plastic usage has been a great issue when it comes to the current context. AIESEC (Activating the Leadership Potential of Young People) University of Ruhuna embarked on this project “Go Greener” as a webinar. The title of the webinar was “How to reduce environmental pollution through eco bricks while helping to create sustainable cities” and was held on 21<sup>st</sup> March 2021 from 7pm onwards via zoom platform. Three main panelists contributed to the session and the ideas were really motivating the audience.

The panelists were.

- Dr. Sunanda Kodikara (Senior Lecturer-University of Ruhuna)
- Professor Mrs. Chintha Jayasinghe (Senior Professor, Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa)
- Mr. Pasindu Liyanage (Executive, Sustainability and Compliance- Eco Spindles)



The evening was moderated by Ms. Taniya Linton, SPARKS Student Ambassador for Unilever, who is an undergraduate of the Faculty of Management and Finance. The event was organized by an organizing committee comprising undergraduates of the University which was headed by Mr. Manura Lakshan (Faculty of Technology-University of Ruhuna) and Ms. Anjalee Nelson (Faculty of Management and Finance-University of Ruhuna).

This webinar was not just for the undergraduates of University of Ruhuna but was open for all the school kids over grade 11 and all the undergraduates of the public and private universities. The session was graced with the participation of more than 200 people including foreign undergraduates as well.

Eco bricks, sustainable cities, environmental pollution, and Sustainable Development Goals were the main topics addresses via this webinar. Many innovative ideas were raised as an inspiration for the young crowd gathered.

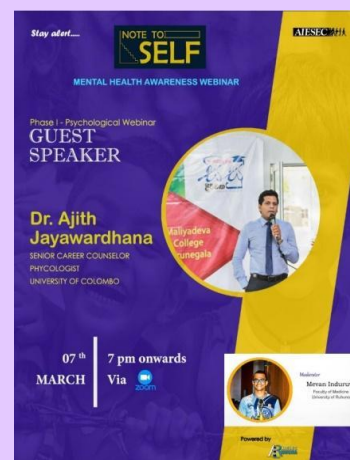
### Note to Self

In this 21<sup>st</sup> century many people experience stress as they combine busy lives and the demands of study and or work while trying to save time for friends and family, especially in college life. Stress has become almost a way of life.

Note to self is a virtual webinar carried out by the Faculty of Engineering with the most influential speaker in Sri Lanka addressing the importance of mental health and mindfulness wellbeing which took place on 7<sup>th</sup> March of 2021 from 7.00 to 8.30 pm. The guest speaker was Dr. Ajith Jayawardhana, phycologist and senior career counselor of University of Colombo.

In this webinar Dr. Ajith Jayawardhana focused on mental health, the stress and anxiety which most of the youth generation is facing and the steps which need to be taken to relieve those issues. “Note to Self” was a huge success with the active participation of more than 100 university students and school students who were motivated about how a man and a woman can stand up their own foot, facing their future with confidence as a strong person.

An E-magazine named “Note to Self” was also published following the “Note to Self” virtual webinar. This magazine intends to raise awareness about what mental health is and how positive mental health can be the key to an active and healthy life.



### Virtual Nuit – 2021: Virtual English Discussion Series

The Department of English Language Teaching initiated a programme namely “Virtual Nuit – 2021-Virtual English Discussion Series” with the objective of enhancing the English speaking skills of undergraduates in a drudgery-free, fun-learning environment. It is conducted for the undergraduates of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences on Wednesdays from 6.00 p.m. to 7.30 p.m. In the first phase of the programme, discussions are stimulated by thought-provoking video clips which cover a wide array of areas, enabling students to share their knowledge, experiences and perspectives related to the video clip with the audience. This innovative approach to language acquisition which goes beyond the traditional methods has encouraged the undergraduates to converse with their lecturers and peers leisurely and sharpen their oral skills gradually without succumbing to the pressure of assessments or examinations.



# University in Progress

## Received an Unqualified Audit Statement (Clean Opinion) from the Auditor General

"University of Ruhuna has received an Unqualified Audit Statement (Clean Opinion) from the Auditor General, for the Final Accounts of the year 2020. This has been achieved for the first time in the history of the University of Ruhuna. The work to be completed, documented and submitted to the Audit General to obtain such a report is huge and is not easy to do according to the standards set in the National Audit Act No.19 of 2018. However, preparing Annual and quarterly Financial Statements, Annual programme budget, fixed assets register, balance statements, payments, answering audit queries and maintaining budgetary control of the university are activities included in these mundane activities. These had to be outstanding to obtain such an unqualified report. It also needs maintaining accounts properly, regular submission of financial reports to regulatory authorities and management; without which we would not have been able to achieve this success. The Vice-Chancellor commended all the relevant staff members, especially the staff of the Finance Branch headed by Bursar for their immense contributions in achieving this. He was also thankful to DVC, Registrar, all Deans and Senior Assistant Internal Auditor for their support in financial management and administration.

## A Memorandum of Understanding between UoR and CIPM



A memorandum of understanding (MoU) between the Faculty of Management and Finance at University of Ruhuna (UoR) and Chartered Institute of Personnel Management (CIPM) was signed at the Vice-Chancellor's office, University of Ruhuna on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2021. The objective of signing this MoU was to commence a partnership on educational collaboration between UoR and CIPM. Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor of UoR, Professor P. A. P. Samantha Kumara, the Dean of Faculty of Management and Finance, Dr. B. L. Galhena, the Head of Department of Human Resource Management, academic staff of the Department of Human Resource Management, Mr. U. A. C. Obeysekere, the Chief Executive Officer of CIPM, and the Executive Council members of CIPM participated in this ceremonial occasion.



Notably, as per the terms of the MoU, the most outstanding student of the Human Resource Management (HRM) specialization area is to be awarded a gold medal and a cash prize by the CIMP at the General Convocation of UoR. Moreover, the HRM graduates at the UoR will be entitled to apply for the CIMP affiliate membership while a merit scholarship will be awarded to a selected student in each year to pursue a CIMP's professional study program. Additionally, the academic staff of the Department of Human Resource Management at the Faculty of Management and Finance, UoR will be provided with a fertile opportunity to take part and serve as resource persons in seminars, workshops, and conferences hosted by CIMP in the area of HRM, leading to a mutually beneficial relationship where both parties can enjoy added advantages. From the UoR's perspective, this MoU will allow HRM graduates at the UoR to associate themselves with a pioneering professional body in the island, especially in the HRM discipline. Furthermore, the academic staff of the Department of Human Resource Management, UoR will be provided with an opportunity to expose them to the industry in a viable way, leading to the enhancement of their skills.



### **Acquiring the Land to Construct a 7-Storey Building for Computer Engineering Program**

Acquiring a land for the construction of the proposed 7-storey building for the Computer Engineering program was completed and it was officially handed over to Assistant Registrar, Faculty of Engineering by Divisional Secretary, Bope-Poddala Divisional Secretariat on 8<sup>th</sup> April, 2021. This 0.1955 hectares (77.3 perches) land is located next to the existing Department of Electrical and Information Engineering building. It is planned to array a number of state-of-the-art laboratories inside the proposed building such as Embedded Systems and IoT Laboratory, Robotics and Automation Laboratory, High-Performance Computing Laboratory, Network Engineering Laboratory, Precision Agriculture Laboratory, Bio-instrumentation Laboratory, Virtual Reality Laboratory, Mobile Computing Laboratory, etc.

### **Appointment of the Director of the Staff Development Centre, University of Ruhuna**

Professor (Mrs.) Nilantha De Silva from the Faculty of Agriculture has been appointed as the Director of the Staff Development Centre, by the Council of the University of Ruhuna with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> April 2021. She serves as a Professor at the Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna. Currently, the Staff Development Centre is organizing a series of workshops for all the staff members of the University of Ruhuna regarding essential administrative procedures important in carrying out routine university work effectively and efficiently.



### **Establishing the Professor Ranaweerabanda Center for Sociological Research, Innovation and Social Development (CSRISD) at the Department of Sociology**

With the purpose of a clear understanding of social reality, some empirical research can be carried out, even though bringing about innovative policy decisions to effective changing of existing structures so that people

would achieve well-being has been challenging. Therefore, the established CSRISD (Center for Social Research, Innovation and Social development) would facilitate students, academic staff and researchers to evidenced-based-innovative thinking to intervene social policy making process and proceeding social development. The establishment of this center has been acknowledged by the 358<sup>th</sup> senate meeting held on 28<sup>th</sup> May 2021. This is going to be the pioneering and dedicated institute for research on sociology, social policy and cultural anthropology at the university of Ruhuna. Mr. Samitha Udayanga was appointed by the Department of Sociology as its first coordinator.

### **Acquisition of an Archaeologically Potential Area**

Professor Anura Manatunge, the Director-General of Archeology has granted permission to hand over the Archaeological site of the Shasthrawela of the Southern Province to the University of Ruhuna for conducting practical training and research of students of the Department of History and Archeology. At present the academic members of the department are processing in this regard.



### **Workshop on Course Information Sheet Preparation**

A workshop on course information sheet preparation was held on 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at Faculty of Technology. The objective of this programme was to enhance the knowledge on course information sheet development among the staff in the university. The course information sheets work as a reference for colleagues, administration, and accreditation agencies. This will be important in future as faculties need to introduce new academic programs and revise the curriculum. In this process, the academic staff of the faculty needs to develop or revise course information sheets. Therefore, the knowledge in developing course information sheets among the academic staff is very important.



This programme was organized by the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the Faculty of Technology and the resource person of the programme was Professor B.P.A. Jayaweera, Department of Livestock Avian Sciences, Faculty of Livestock Fisheries Nutrition, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. Programme was successfully conducted with the participation of Chairperson of the Centre for Quality Assurance of the University of Ruhuna, Dean of the Faculty of Technology and academic staff members of the university.



### Workshop on "SLQF Guidelines"

The Sri Lankan Qualifications Framework (SLQF) is a nationally consistent framework for all higher education qualifications offered in Sri Lanka. It recognizes the volume of learning of students and identifies the learning outcomes that are to be achieved by the qualification holders. Therefore, the Internal Quality Assurance Cell of the Faculty of Technology organized an online workshop on "SLQF guidelines" with the objective of enhancing the knowledge of SLQF guidelines among the academic staff in the Faculty of Technology.

Resource person of the programme was Professor Mahinda Athapaththu, Director of the Center of Quality Assurance cell, University of Ruhuna. Programme was successfully conducted on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 with the participation of the Dean of Faculty of Technology and academic staff members of the faculty.

### Workshop on A/L Technology Stream Practical for Richmond College Students

The Department of Engineering Technology conducted a two-day workshop on A/L Technology stream practical demonstration on 24<sup>th</sup> and 25<sup>th</sup> February 2021. For this event 40 students and 5 teachers of Richmond College, Galle participated. In this workshop, practicals related to Production Technology, Workshop Machineries, Automobile Technology, Electrical and Electronics were successfully demonstrated.



### Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) Workshop

A "Programmable Logic Controller (PLC) Workshop" was successfully conducted on 05<sup>th</sup> April 2021 from 10.00 a.m. onwards at the Electronics Laboratory, Department of Engineering Technology. The targeted audience of this workshop was final year students of the department. The resource person was Mr. Ishara Gunawardhana, Head of Industrial Automation, Electro Metal Processing (PVT) Ltd. The program was organized by the Industrial





Collaboration Pillar in the department under the coordination of Ms. M. P. P. Mithila (Lecturer) and under the guidance of Head of the Department of Engineering Technology, Dr. B.L.S.Thilakarathne. The event was successfully completed with the contribution of all the staff members of the department.

### **A Series of Workshops Organized by the Staff Development Centre**

As directed by the Vice-Chancellor, the Director/ Staff Development Centre is organizing a series of workshops for the University staff. The first workshop on 'Direct Purchasing Items' was held in June 2021. It consisted of three weekly sessions. The first session on 'Direct Purchasing Items' was held on 4<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The main objective of the first session was to educate university staff about direct purchase procedures and to discuss main problems encountered. The second session on the 'Procurement Process' was held on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The third session on 'How to avoid the delays in procurement: sharing experiences' was held on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021. The objective of this session was to collect ideas to prepare an action plan/guideline on the procurement (internal) to the University. Prof Sujeewa Amarasena (Vice Chancellor) Mrs. Senani Kalugama (Registrar), Mr. K.A.R.S. Jayakodi (Bursar) and Ms. D.V.L. Krishani (SAB Supplies) participated as the resource persons. Mr Anura Lokugamage (Senior Consultant/ SLIDA) conducted the guest lecture of the third session. Each session was moderated by Professor (Mrs) Nilantha De Silva (Director/SDC). More than 300 staff members joined and they actively participated in this workshop series. This programme was highly appreciated by all categories of the staff.

# International Collaborations

## Kick Off Meeting of EU+ Funded THREE Lanka Project

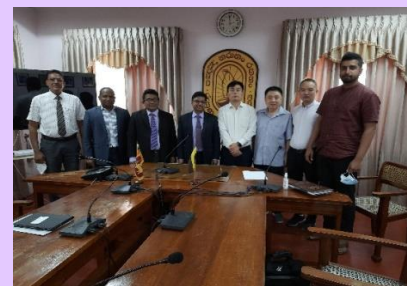
EU Erasmus+ funded THREE Lanka (Training Hub for Renewable energy Technologies in Sri Lanka) Project Kickoff Meeting for Local Stakeholders was held on Sunday, 4th April at the Jetwing Light House Hotel, Galle with the participation of Hon Minister of power, Mr Dullas Alahapperuma and the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna.



## Visit of a Delegation from China Railway to the University of Ruhuna

A delegation from China Railway lead by Prof Mao Weimin of Longhua Institute, China, Mr Xia Weiguo, China Railway International Group, China, and Mr Ye Zuihua, Qiao Zhen Lanka International (Pvt) Ltd visited University of Ruhuna along with Mr Ramesh Yapa Abewardane and Dr Chameera Yapa Abewardane, the secretaries to the Hon Speaker of the Parliament to discuss future collaborations with the University in the area of crop improvements programs in the field of Agriculture.

University team consisted of Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena the Vice Chancellor, Professor Saman Chandana, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Professor K.L.Wasantha Kumara, Director CINTA. Areas of collaboration were identified as introducing and improving saline soil tolerant rice varieties in Sri Lanka, vegetable hybrid seed production, Introducing mushroom varieties, and student exchange program with Wuhan University. A MoU is expected to be developed in order to establish a joint research center supported by China Railway International Group, China.



### **Signing of the Memorandum of understanding between Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna and Graduate School of Environmental and Life Science, Okayama University, Japan**

With the Government approval, the Memorandum of understanding between Faculty of Agriculture University of Ruhuna and Graduate school of Environmental and Life Science, Okayama University was signed on 07<sup>th</sup> April 2021, at the University of Ruhuna.

Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna and Professor Murata Yoshiyuki, Dean, Graduate School of Environmental and Life Science, Okayama University were the signing authorities. Professor Saman Chandana, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, and Professor K.L. Wasantha Kumara, Director CINTA, and Professor D.A.L. Leelamanie, Coordinator of the MOU, joined the event.

Areas of collaboration were identified as exchange of students, exchange of faculty staff, collaborative research, instructional and cultural programs, and exchange of research information.



### **Virtual SAKURA Science Youth Exchange Program in Science, 2020, with Okayama University, Japan**



Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture conducted the SAKURA Science Youth Exchange Program in Science for 2020, with Okayama University, Japan, as an online two-day event on 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

The event was originally planned to be held physically in Okayama

University, Japan, from September 22<sup>nd</sup> to 30<sup>th</sup>, 2020, and changed to virtual mode due to COVID-19 Pandemic situation. Six students from the Department of Soil Science, two students from the Department of Animal Science and Professor D.A.L. Leelamanie, Coordinator of the program were the official participants from University of Ruhuna. Professor Morihiro Maeda, Professor Yasushi Mori, and Professor Hiroaki Somura with graduate students from different laboratories were the official participants from Okayama University. Professor Anton Perera, Dr. Chamila Wijekoon, and Mr. UI Samarawickrama also joined the online event.



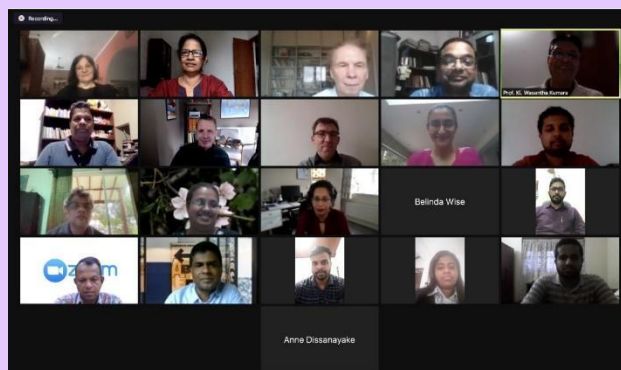
### **Online Discussion with a Delegation from South China Sea Institute of Oceanography (SCSIO), China and University of Ruhuna**

An online meeting was arranged between South China Sea Institute of Oceanography (SCSIO) with a team of delegation led by Professor Lijuan Long, Director, SCSIO, Chinese Academy of Science and University of Ruhuna with a team lead by Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor, to discuss further collaborations and other issues related to China Sri Lanka Joint Center for Education and Research (CSL-CER) on 08<sup>th</sup> June 2021 over zoom.

### **BRITAE (Building Resilience in Tropical Agroecosystems) Project) Funded by European Union under Erasmus+ programs**

#### **Fourth Consortium Meeting**

The fourth Consortium Meeting of the BRITAE project was held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021 as a virtual event, with the participation of all the members of each partner university. The basic objective of the meeting was to discuss the progress of the work packages and the way forward.



#### **Orientation program for lecturers to strengthen the course structure**

Two orientation programs were organized collaboratively with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania on 8<sup>th</sup> April and 13<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to build appropriate e-education infrastructure in partner countries. Virtual training courses were organized for academic staff members of Sri Lankan universities to practice and apply the intelligent tutoring systems to the university education system in Sri Lanka.

#### **Professional development workshops for academic staff and stakeholders (Industries) in Resilience Building in Tropical Agroecosystem**

The inaugural session of the series of workshops for professionals was held successfully on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021, with the valuable participation of academics and stakeholders. This workshop was organized as a virtual/online event due to the prevailing COVID 19 pandemic situation in the country. Developing different interpersonal, intrapersonal, and institutional skills, skills to effectively acquire and manage research grants, combine top-down national priorities with bottom-up peer review, solicitation, and communication skills were among the prime objectives of conducting this workshop.

#### **Establishment of SAR Centre**

The BRITAE project intends to establish a “Smart Agro-ecosystem Resilience” (SAR) Centre, to enable the delivery of the BRITAE curricular and to provide teaching materials, learning materials, evaluation procedures, assignments, and other required materials for complete the courses. The floor plan for the establishment of the SAR centre has been already prepared, equipment for the SAR centre has also been finalized and the purchasing process is in progress. Discussions are being carried out with Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania

about the development of Adaptive Biometric Examination System and Adaptive Examination System, Affective Tutoring System and Adaptive MOOCs and personalized learning system with moodle for SAR centre.

### Strengthening University-Enterprise Collaboration for Resilient Communities in Asia (SECRA) Project

Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna is a partner of Strengthening



Co-funded by the  
Erasmus+ Programme  
of the European Union

University-Enterprise Collaboration for Resilient Communities in Asia (SECRA) project under the grant scheme of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (Erasmus+) Capacity-Building projects in the field of Higher Education (E+CBHE) of the European Union.

The leading University of the project is Mid Sweden University, Sweden, and twelve other partner universities including University of Sri Jayewardenepura and University of Peradeniya, Sri Lanka. From the University of Ruhuna, Professor Champa Navaratne acts as coordinator, and Emeritus Professor K.D.N Weerasinghe acts as co-coordinator of the SECRA project.

During this period of time, the SECRA team is working with work package 01 (Mapping the Collaborative Landscape) and conducting the document studies on collaborative frameworks, social network analyses, and market analyses and mapping the institutional landscape at the institution level.

SECRA will contribute to the following regional priorities; University enterprise cooperation (such as support for students' practical placement, entrepreneurship, employability of graduates), knowledge triangle, innovation (such as reinforcing links between education, research, and business), and definition, implementation, and monitoring of reform policies.

At the end of the project, linkages among universities, enterprises, and industries in Sri Lanka will be developed considering the experience and best practices of European universities.

### Virtual Student Exchange

The virtual student exchange program was held from 1.00 to 3 p.m on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021 among the Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka, and Department of Nursing, College of Medicine, National Cheng Kung University, Taiwan and Faculty of Medicine Ramathibodi Hospital, Mahidol University, Thailand.

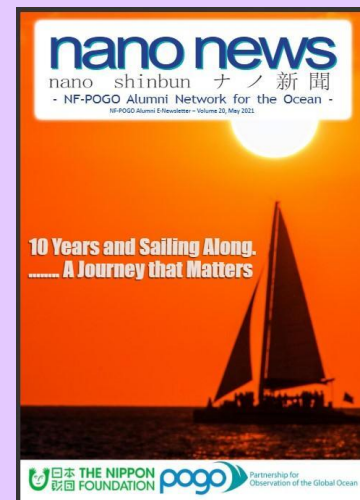


Following students and staff members participated.

Students- Ms. KAUH. Samarasinghe- MD/BN/2016/381, Ms. KA Madushani-MD/BN//2016/410, Ms. EMN Sarangi -MD/BN/2016/409, Ms.NP Weeramun -MD/BN/2016/391, Ms. GH. Weerasinghe -MD/BN/2016/399 Academic members as observers  
Ms. BI Wickramarachchi, Ms. SMEB Weerathunga, Ms. MWK Gamage, Ms. HJH Madushanthi and Dr. SMTD Sundarapperuma

### Editor-in-Chief of the International Oceanography Newsletter “Nano News” – Celebrating the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Biannual Newsletter – 20<sup>th</sup> Volume

Professor Kanthi Yapa of Department of Physics was invited to be the Editor-in-Chief of the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary special issue of the NF-POGO (Nippon Foundation – Partnership for Observation of Global Ocean) alumni E-newsletter “nano news” published bi-annually. She had been the Editor-in-Chief of the inaugural newsletter of the same published in 2011. The newsletter mainly disseminates research findings and outreach activities carried out by alumni who are from academic/research institutes from all around the world engaged in many oceanography and related projects. Nippon Foundation of Japan provides major funding to support capacity building and ship-board training programmes of young ocean researchers organized through the collaboration with POGO. The newsletter can be read from NANO website ([www.nf-pogo-alumni.org](http://www.nf-pogo-alumni.org)) or through [https://issuu.com/nano4oceans/docs/nn20\\_04junehr](https://issuu.com/nano4oceans/docs/nn20_04junehr).



### Inauguration Ceremony of the TROPIMUNDO Master Degree Programme

TROPIMUNDO is a European Commission funded and excellence-labelled Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems (<https://www.tropimundo.eu/>). The second batch was welcomed to TROPIMUNDO Master Degree Programme on 09<sup>th</sup> April 2021 with the participation of the Vice Chancellor, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Deputy Vice Chancellor, Professor Saman Chandana Ediriweera, the Local Coordinators of the programme, Senior Professor L. P. Jayatissa and Dr. K. A. Sunanda Kodikara.





## EXPEDITO

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**Mr. Francis Kweku Ansah**  
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Moderator

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In this new normal surrounding, all of us are dreaming of a day in which we can fly out of the country for something vital and empowering. “EXPEDITO” brings you the knowledge and ardor to explore overseas working experience opportunities which ultimately uplift the career of everyone who takes part in.

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representing different industries will share their thoughts and opinions about how overseas work experiences help in your career ladder.

## Students in Action

### Donation to Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya for Covid 19 Management

The items needed for Covid 19 patients’ management purposes were handed over to Deputy Director and special grade Nursing officers of Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya, Galle by students of Department of Nursing and staff of Faculty of Allied Health Sciences on 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021.



## Unleashing the Potential to Thrive in a New Normal

The Department of Marketing at the Faculty of Management and Finance conducted a virtual session via Zoom on 20<sup>th</sup> January from 4.15 to 6.45 p.m., under the theme of "preparing undergraduates for the job market in a new normal/post-pandemic context". The session was targeted at undergraduates at the faculty, and intended to educate them on how to cope up with the challenges in the ever-changing corporate environment. The session had been split into two sub sessions, in which the first session focused on delivering a lecture on skills and competencies required to secure a job in a post-pandemic context while the second session was an experience sharing session by two managers at Nestle, in particular, ones who graduated from a state university in Sri Lanka. Ms. Rovina Vandersay, Ms. Yasasi Bandaranayake, and Mr. Chinthaka Chathuranga representing Nestle Lanka served as the resource persons, and 229 unique participants took part in the session, signaling that the session was an absolute success. The resource persons of the session were able to make the online platform more interactive through allowing participants to bring their diverse ideas and questions into their attention.



## බැති ගී සරණියා (“Bethi Gee Saraniya”)

As the Buddhist all around the world are celebrating the thrice blessed day marking the birth, enlightenment and passing away of lord Buddha. As the country celebrate Vesak, art society brings out a “Bathigee Saraniya” via zoom media (as online session) due to Covid pandemic to enhance harmony and unity of all batches in Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna. Simultaneously a Vesak creation competition was also held on that day.





### Donation for Children's Orphanage

Students of 2017/2018 batch of Faculty of Allied Health Sciences successfully completed this event on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021, and they have donated essential items for these children at the orphanage considering their requirements. The student counsellors of the faculty were with students during the whole event to guide and support the students.



### Color Washing of Department of Nursing Premises, Mahamodara

The Department of Nursing premises, Mahamodara was color washed by students of 12<sup>th</sup> batch of Nursing with the participation of the staff of the Department. The activity was supported by Vice chancellor and Deputy Vice Chancellor of university of Ruhuna, Dean and Deputy Senior Student Counselor of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences.



### Poson Bakthi Gee

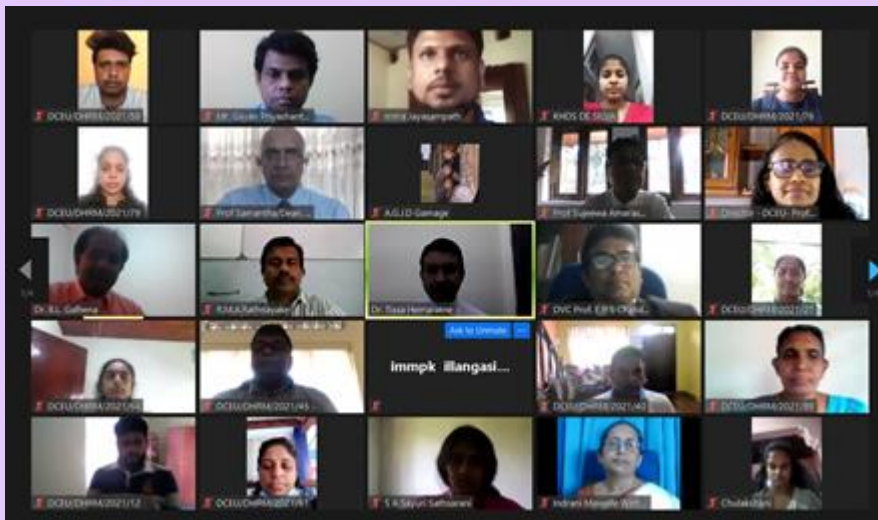
Undergraduates of the academic year 2018/2019 of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences conducted the “Poson Bhakti Geetha” programme at 2.00 pm on 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2021 via zoom technology, to commemorate the visit of Arahath Mahinda Thero and introducing Buddhism to Sri Lanka.





## Inauguration Ceremony of Diploma in Human Resource Management

The inaugural ceremony of the Diploma in Human Resource Management (DHRM) first intake was conducted by the Distance and Continuing Education Unit (DCEU) together with the Faculty of Management and Finance on 20<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at 1.30 p.m. onwards via Zoom. Distinguished invitees of University of Ruhuna and students of the DHRM 1<sup>st</sup> batch participated in this occasion. Professor P.A.P.S. Kumara, the Dean, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Ruhuna delivered the welcome speech, and Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice-Chancellor, University of Ruhuna, Professor E.P.S. Chandana, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Ruhuna. Professor (Mrs) Vajira Bulugahapitiya, Director, DCEU, University of Ruhuna also addressed the occasion. Dr. B.L. Galhena, the Head, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management and Finance delivered the vote of thanks at the end of the ceremony.



## පිරිම (“Piritha”), Faculty of Engineering

The Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna held a Pirith chanting ceremony in the faculty auditorium to ward off the diseases and hope of prosperity. The pirith mandapaya which was created only from natural materials took a very special place on that day and also the whole faculty was illuminated by lamps.



## A New Dawn - අලුත් උදෑසනක්: The Inter-University Students' Competition

The Sociological Association of the Department of Sociology, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences has organized “A New Dawn - අලුත් උදෑසනක්: The inter-university students’ competition” in collaboration with the Cultural Centre of the University of Ruhuna. This competition consists of eighteen distinctive events and is open for undergraduates from all the UGC approved universities of Sri Lanka. The entries for the competition are accepted in all three languages; Sinhala, Tamil and English. This programme is launched under the guidance and advice of the Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna. The preliminary preparations for the competition are being made under the supervision of the Sociological Association and the events will commence towards the end of the year 2021.

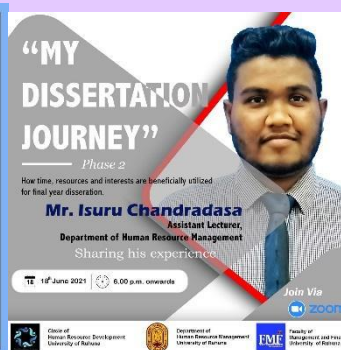
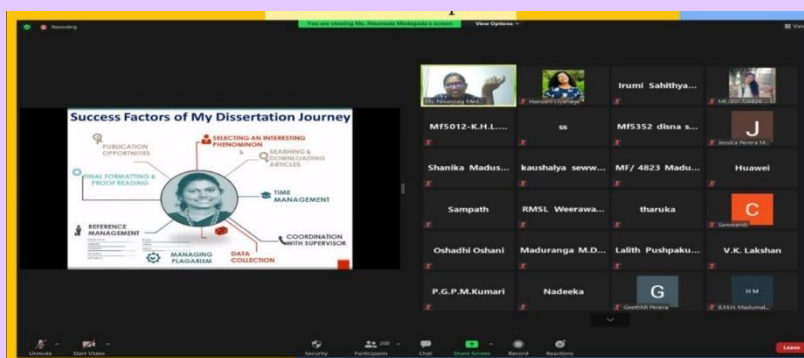
## Pirith Chanting and Almsgiving 2021, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

Pirith chanting and almsgiving was held at the library premises, Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences on 29<sup>th</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021. All academics, non-academics, students, and the staff of Teaching Hospital, Mahamodara attended.



## My Dissertation Journey

The Circle of Human Resource Development, University of Ruhuna conducted a research experience sharing session titled “My



Dissertation Journey” for the final year undergraduates of the Faculty of Management and Finance to discuss how time, resources, and interests can be effectively utilized in completing a successful dissertation. The first session was hosted by Ms. Nisansala Maduwanthi, Lecturer (probationary), Department of Human Resource Management, University of Ruhuna, where she was sharing her undergraduate research experience, followed by a questions and answers session. The session was conducted via Zoom on 11<sup>th</sup> June 2021, from 6.30 to 8.30 p.m., with the participation of above 200 undergraduate participants at the faculty. To carry on the momentum, the second session of “My Dissertation Journey” was conducted via Zoom on 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021 from 6.00 to 8.00 p.m. The session was hosted by Mr. Isuru Chandradasa, Assistant Lecturer, Department of Human Resource Management, University of Ruhuna, and nearly 200 undergraduates participated in the session, signaling that the session was an absolute success.



## වසන්ත උදානය (“Vasantha Udanaya”)

The Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna celebrated the Sinhala and Tamil New Year blessed with all under the banyan tree, Aurudu celebration commenced that morning with a marathon event. Many traditional games such as weaving coconut leaves, kotta pora, and balloon explosion took place in line for that day's event. In addition, it was colorful with enthusiastic musical and dancing experience. Everything was done in accordance with the rules and regulations of covid pandemic.



## Professional Me; A Panel Discussion

A panel discussion on ‘making most out of internships’, organized by the Department of Marketing at the Faculty of Management and Finance for final-year undergraduates was conducted via Zoom on 06<sup>th</sup> April 2021. The session was rolled out to provide the undergraduates with an opportunity to listen to the professional career narratives of three proud products of the Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management and Finance at University of Ruhuna. As such, Mr. Ashoka Liyanage from TV Derana, Mrs. Oshadee Gunasekara from Singer Sri Lanka PLC, and Mr. Ruwan Wickramaarachchi from CBL group participated in the panel discussion as panelists.



## English Drama Competition 2021

A month-long English course for the 43<sup>rd</sup> batch of medical students culminated in the much-awaited annual English drama competition of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, held at the faculty auditorium on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2021. The event was organized by the English Unit of the faculty, led by Coordinator Dr. Clifford Perera. All 253 students of the new entrance came together to create a memorable night for the audience, performing ten dramas on diverse themes.

The chief guest was Mrs. Saraswathi Dahanayake, former principal of Sanghamitta Balika Vidyalaya, Galle. The event was also graced by guests of honour Professor Vasantha Devasiri, Dean of the Faculty of Medicine, and Professor Sampath Gunawardena. Mrs. Dahanayake was joined by the staff members of the English Unit in



forming the judge board. The award-winning performances of the day were; Best drama – “Elixir of Life”, Best actress – Charushi Abeysekara, Best actor – Dileep Ishan, Best supporting female – Dilushi Rathnayake, Best supporting male – Abdullah, Best script – “The Dear Departed” and Best group leader – M. N. F. Amnah. The competition served not only as a display of the theatrical skills of the students but also as a great opportunity for students from all over the country to familiarize themselves with each other.



### Inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Anatomical Society, Faculty of Medicine



The inaugural Annual General Meeting of the Anatomical Society was held on the 09<sup>th</sup> April at the T.W. Wikramanayake auditorium, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna. First, one minute of silence was maintained in remembrance of late Professor Darrel Wijeratne, founder professor of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna. Following the appointment of the inaugural committee, Dr Eisha Waidyaratne, Head of the Department of Anatomy was appointed as the Senior Treasurer. The Anatomical Society is a registered student body initiated in collaboration with the Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna with the aim of promoting interest of learning anatomy among the faculty's medical undergraduates with a view of shaping their future career in surgical and affiliated disciplines along with encouraging them to involve in related research. The Anatomical Society shall incorporate novel methods of knowledge dissemination while collaborating with academic staff of the faculty and specialist clinicians employed in the faculty-affiliated health institutions in order to provide a close-knit atmosphere conducive to academic interest and excellence.

### Sinhala-Hindu Aluth Avurudu Celebrations, Cultural Centre, Faculty of Medicine- අමුරුදු කතාබහ

Traditionally, the new-year celebrations in April bring about festivities and celebrations for both the Sinhala and Hindu communities in Sri Lanka. As it was in 2020, social activities including celebrating the new year were on a subdued scale due to the persistent COVID-19 pandemic situation. In this light, a new-year programme in a COVID protective but culturally enriching matter was carried out within the Faculty of Medicine, under the auspices of the Cultural Centre of the University of Ruhuna. Guidance was received from the Vice Chancellor of the University and the Dean of the Faculty of Medicine.

There were reasons which prompted the faculty to organize this event. In the COVID pandemic situation, the students and staff continue to encounter higher psychological stresses. It was felt that a joyous social activity, which brought about an air of celebration, could lessen the life stresses. In addition, of importance was the fact that a new batch of students had just entered the faculty three weeks earlier. The avurudu celebrations were considered an ideal moment for them to interact with others and build confidence, becoming more comfortable with the social life of the faculty. Importantly, the University Cultural Centre's vision is to develop ongoing cultural hubs in the faculties. This event was considered a potential starting point that could expand into regular humanities related activities.

The programme was conducted on 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at the Faculty auditorium from 2 to 4 pm. It consisted of two intertwining segments. Sangeetha Visharada Sampath Kottawa, who works as an advisor on cultural activities to the Southern Province Ministry of Cultural Affairs, who was the resource person for the event, discussed the background of various traditions of the Sinhala-Hindu New Year. The discussion was conducted as a dialogue that helped both the student and staff communities further their knowledge and understanding of why we do what we do as new year rituals and traditions. Each of the six batches performed an entertainment item on stage related to the new year in between the questions. There were new year related songs and dances performed by groups representing each batch. An item was provided by even the newest entrants from the 43<sup>rd</sup> batch who had been in the faculty for less than one month. To improve harmonious relationships between students and staff, separate items were performed by the academic and nonacademic staff members. As per the suggestion of the Vice Chancellor, the event was streamed live for students and staff of other faculties also to join in. With the assistance of the Faculty COVID steering committee, the entire event was thoughtfully planned out with COVID preventive measures being in operation.

At the conclusion, the participants and the performers were invited to a celebratory avurudu tea table, with traditional sweetmeats on offer. Feedback from both performers as well as those in the audience was positive and encouraging. It is hoped that the initial aspirations when planning the event were met as expected and that this would be a tradition that will continue.





## Olu Dola Documentary

As a nature loving society, the members of Limnology and Water Technology Society (LIMSO) of Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, created a video documentary on Olu Dola which is a sensitive and pleasant ecosystem and a tourism hot spot in the Southern province of Sri Lanka. The main purpose of this documentary was to make a public awareness on the value of a sensitive ecosystem and guide the people to enjoy the environment without harming it.



## Donate Red Save Breath - Blood Donation and Organ Donation Campaign 2021

The 1<sup>st</sup> blood donation campaign organized by the Department of Information and Communication Technology, Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna was held on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2021 at the department premises. The programme received the generous support of nearly a hundred blood donors including students and staff of the faculty to replenish the supply of blood during this challenging Covid-19 pandemic. The campaign was further accompanied by a program to register for organ donations where over hundred donors were registered there.





## **First Aid Team at the Convocation**

The university first aid team comprised of undergraduates of University of Ruhuna was established based on a concept proposed by Dr. Nandasiri Keembiyahetti, Director of the Career Guidance Unit. The purpose of establishing this team is to provide First Aid service for the events organized by University such as sports meet, faculty days, convocation etc. The First Aid Team played an invaluable role in this year, in 27<sup>th</sup> convocation, University of Ruhuna held at Rabindranath Tagore Memorial Auditorium on 26<sup>th</sup> March 2021.



## **Staff Achievements**

### **University President's Award, University of the Ryukyus, Okinawa, Japan : Mr WBMAC Bandara**

WBMAC Bandara, who is a Lecturer (Probationary) in the Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, completed his master's degree at the Graduate School of Agriculture, University of the Ryukyus, Japan in March 2021. He was awarded with the University President's Honorary Award in recognition of his scholarly achievement and contribution to the University of the Ryukyus at the Graduation ceremony held on 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2021.



### **President's Awards for Scientific Research – 2021**



Professor G.Y. Jayasinghe, Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture, Dr. Dananjali Mekhala Gamage, Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture and Dr. Sunethra Gunasena, Senior Lecturer in Microbiology, Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine received the “President's Awards for Scientific Research” which was held on 6<sup>th</sup> April 2021 at the Auditorium of Sri Lanka Institute of Architects. Awards were given for the best 100 papers published in prestigious journals in the year 2018 where a significant contribution had

been made by scientists working in Sri Lanka. The ceremony was held as an online event due to the pandemic situation.

Professor Jayasinghe and his research team have found that the mold growth and moss growth rate on different wall construction materials. His study was conducted to understand how moss grows and mold growth in tropical climatic conditions. His research article published in the Journal of Building and Environment is one of the high-ranking journals in the world. In addition to his research article, the research was highlighted in many other international scientific listings as a major finding. The conclusion of his research was that smoother walls are less prone to moss and fungus whereas rough walls exaggerate the growth of moss and molds.



The award-winning research publication of Dr. Dananjali Mekhala Gamage was published as a part of Dr. Gamage's Ph.D. research project which was carried out at the University of Southern Queensland, Australia. Dr. Gamage's research was focused on dissecting underlying cellular mechanisms of plant growth responses to rising carbon dioxide concentrations in the current atmosphere which is crucial for developing crop breeding strategies to improve crop productivity in a changing climate. Findings of her doctoral research reported putative genetic regions potentially associated with CO<sub>2</sub> responsiveness in wheat and in-depth analyses of interplay of different regulatory mechanisms involved in plant growth at elevated [CO<sub>2</sub>] at the transcript and proteomic level.

Dr Sunethra Gunasena was awarded the Presidential Award for the paper published in the Journal of Infectious Diseases under the title of "Boosting of mucosal immunity after fractional-dose inactivated polio vaccine"( Journal of Infectious Diseases, 2018; 218: 12: 1876 – 1882). The paper was co-authored by Deepa Gamage, Ondrej Mach, Paba Palihawadana, Yiting Zhang, William C. Weldon, M. Steven Oberste, Sunethra Gunasena, and Roland W. Sutter.



**Appointed as a Member to the Board of National Medicinal Regulatory Authority: Prof. Sudheera Jayasinghe**

The National Medicines Regulatory Authority (NMRA), plays a leading role in protecting and improving public health by ensuring medicinal products available in the country meet applicable standards of safety, quality and efficacy. The Authority regulates medicines, medical devices, borderline products, clinical trials and cosmetics.

Professor Sudheera Jayasinghe, Department of Pharmacology has been appointed as a Member to the Board of NMRA by the Minister of Health with effect from March 2021.



**Appointment of the Director, Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Commission: Senior Professor Tilak P D Gamage**



Senior Professor Tilak P D Gamage, Professor in Limnology and Water Technology commenced duties in the post of Director, Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Commission on 3<sup>rd</sup> May 2021. The QAC was established under the University Grants Commission to strengthen and enhance the quality of education provided by the state universities. He was the Director of the Center for Quality Assurance of the University of Ruhuna since 2014 to 2019, during which he took many efforts to inculcate the concepts of quality assurance among the community and create awareness of the benefits of it by introducing fundamental practices across the University.

**Appointment as The International Editor of Clinical Medicine by the Royal College of Physicians UK: Dr Arosha Dissanayake**



‘Clinical Medicine’ is the medical journal published by the Royal College of Physicians UK. Dr Arosha Dissanayake from the Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna has recently been appointed as the first ever International Editor of this prestigious medical journal.

The following is an extract from the RCP global newsletter announcing the appointment.

*We're delighted to welcome Dr Arosha Dissanayake to this key role on our board. Arosha, who is the RCP regional international adviser for Sri Lanka and president elect of the Ceylon College of Physicians, is a consultant physician at Karapitiya Teaching Hospital and teaches at University of Ruhuna.*

Arosha says: *‘My mission is to enhance the recognition, representation and relevance of Clin Med in the global medical community so that it will become a game changer in the quest for global medical excellence. The RCP is a truly iconic brand with a global outlook and influence and Clin Med will follow suit.’*

**"Excellence Achievement Award" by Human Rights Organization Sri Lanka: Dr. Chandana Wickramaratne**

Dr. Chandana Wickramaratne, Senior Lecturer and Head, Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, had been awarded "Excellence Achievement Award" on "Health Care Quality, Accreditation, Medical and Allied Health Sciences Education" by Human Rights Organization Sri Lanka in recognition of distinguished service performed with dignity and dedication to the humanitarian principles of human rights organization. The ceremony was held on 27<sup>th</sup> February 2021 at Taj Samudra Colombo. The chief guest was Hon Minister Susil





Premajayantha. Human Rights Organization is a registered NGO serving over 12 years in Sri Lanka and it was the first awards ceremony they held. There were 12 recipients of excellence achievement awards covering diverse areas including business, arts & music, innovations, social services, education & law.

**Registration as an Assessor for Australian Council on Health Care Standards, Australia: Dr. K.A.C.Wickramaratne**

For the consecutive second year, Dr. K.A.C.Wickramaratne, Senior Lecturer, Department of Pathology successfully obtained registered Assessor status for Hospital Accreditation from the Australian Council on Health Care Standards (ACHS). He had been involved with Hospital accreditation, health care quality and safety programs of the Ministry of Health since 2017. He was successful in the examination held at the end of comprehensive training and in the pilot audit performed by ACHS in Sri Lanka in the year 2019 and for the first time, he obtained registered Assessor status last year. Moreover, he is the only Specialist with Assessor status for both Hospital Accreditation (by ACHS) and Laboratory Accreditation (ISO15189 – by SLAB) in Sri Lanka. He participated in one of the international pilot audits performed by ACHS this year. In addition, in 2019, he conducted many “training of trainer sessions” as a resource person for the Ministry of Health in relation to Hospital Accreditation, Healthcare quality and safety.



**National Agricultural Research Plan [NARP] Awards - Sri Lanka Council for Agriculture Research Policy [SLCARP]: Prof. Ganganee Chandima Samaraweera**



The Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy (SLCARP) is the apex body of the National Agricultural Research System and charged with the major responsibility of advisory role along with aiding, promoting, coordinating, and monitoring research related to agriculture and allied areas in Sri Lanka. National Agricultural Research Plan of Sri Lanka (NARP) is a program to support agricultural research. Proposal evaluation, project monitoring, and terminal report evaluation related to NARP research grants are being carried out by SLCARP through the 12 National Committees on different disciplines. Annually selected projects are recommended for funding by the General Treasury through the Ministry of Agriculture, Sri Lanka. Professor Ganganee Chandima Samaraweera has been awarded with this competitive research grant (One million, six hundred and seventy-

five thousand Rupees under the vote number 425-02-03-005-2507 and the grant number NARP/21/UR/AG/01 for the proposal submitted on “Evaluation of Consumer Preference and purchase intention of Powdered Milk Products Marketed in Sri Lanka.”

### **Dr W. Bohingamuwa, Appointed as Co-Secretary**

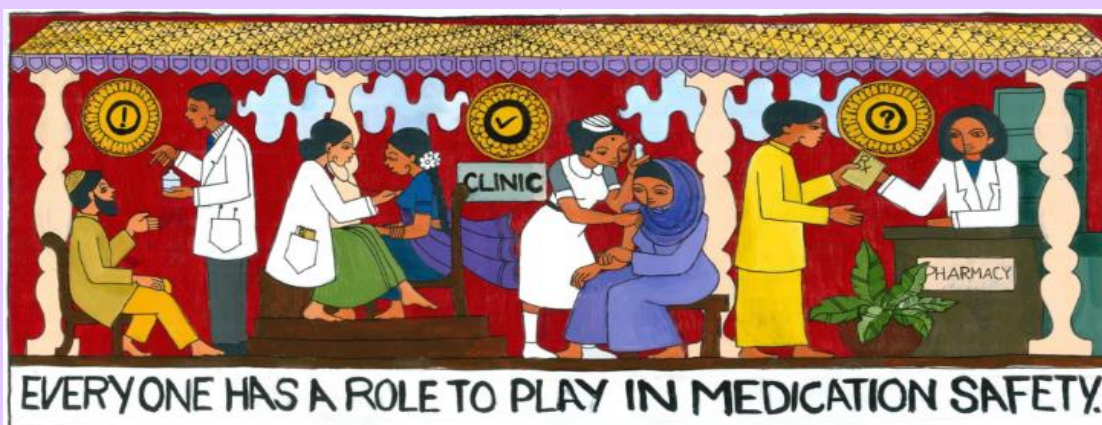
Dr. Wijeyeratne Bohingamuwa, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences was elected as the Co-Secretary of the Sri Lanka Council of Archaeologists on 26.3.2021.



## **Students' Achievements**

### **International Students' Poster Competition for World Smart Medication Day 2021**

The poster titled “Everyone has a role to play in medication safety” by Ms. Nimsis Hansani (37<sup>th</sup> batch) of the Faculty of Medicine was placed among the ten best posters in the international students’ poster competition for World Smart Medication Day 2021, organized by the International Union of Basic Pharmacology and Therapeutics. It was the only Sri Lankan entry among the top ten best posters.



### International University Sports Federation (FISU) Volunteer Leaders Academy (FVLA) 2021



Mevan Induruwa, a third year medical student of the University of Ruhuna, has been selected to represent Sri Lanka at the International University Sports Federation (FISU) Volunteer Leaders Academy (FVLA) 2021. FVLA is an annual event organized by the International University Sports Federation with over 100 university students from more than 100 countries. It is an educational event promoting sports values with dynamic and emerging leaders.

Mevan is an exceptional swimmer who has brought glory to Sri Lanka numerous times. Few of his achievements include participation in World University Games 2019, Fina World Marathon Swim Series- Abu Dhabi 2018, Asian Open Water Swimming championships- Malaysia 2017, Asian Schools Swimming championships- China 2013, South Asian Aquatic championships- Colombo 2016, National age group record holder in 1500m Free- 2018, Sri Lanka University Games 2019 new meet records (200m & 400m Free, 200m Fly, 4x 100m Free relay, 4x100m Medley relay), Best player in Inter-Faculty Swimming 2019, University Colours man Swimming 2019, Best player of the year 2019 and Special Awards for Swimming in University of Ruhuna.

## Retirements

### Academic Staff Members

#### Senior Professor Ven. Midigama Soratha Thero, Department of Pali & Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences



Senior Professor Most Venerable Midigama Soratha served to the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna for more than 30 years from 1988 and retired on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2021. He obtained Bachelor of Arts (BA) in Buddhist Culture from the University of Kelaniya in 1981. After obtaining his BA degree he served as a school teacher, in 1985 he joined the Education Collage of Akuressa as a lecturer and he was appointed to the University of Ruhuna in 1988 as a temporary lecturer attach to the Department of Sinhala. He received a Master of Arts (MA) from the Buddhist and Pali University in 1983, and a Master of Philosophy (MPhil) from the University of Ruhuna. He received his PhD in the field of Buddhist Management from the Postgraduate Institute of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Kelaniya.



At the outset, the Unit of Pali and Buddhist Culture was started under the Department of Sinhala. In 1992, it was established as a separate department and Ven. Midigama Soratha was one of the pioneers in that effort. He became a Professor in the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Ruhuna in 2004. He served as the Head of the Department from 2001-2005 and 2019-2020 and also served as the Acting Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University from 2005-2006. As a buddhist monk and university lecturer, he made a great contribution in the academic, social and religious fields. He was engaged in extensive studies in the fields of buddhist education philosophy, buddhist management, law and court in the buddhism, and buddhist health & hygiene and developed those fields as subjects of study in the field of pali and buddhist studies. For his PhD, he did the research in the field of buddhist management, which was accompanied by the introduction of new management principles and approaches incorporating buddhist teachings into modern management principles. He also holds a postgraduate degree in Education and introduced the subject of Buddhist education philosophy to the curriculum of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, University of Ruhuna. As a founder of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, he was instrumental in the advancement of the Department of Studies. Kindness and patience are his special human qualities and he has pioneered the acquisition of human and material resources for the future survival and development of pali and buddhist studies. Senior Professor Most Venerable Midigama Soratha rendered an admirable and irreplaceable service to the department, faculty and to the university for nearly four decades until his retirement. And his academic, national, religious, social, service is not over yet and we wish him all the best for a long time to come, working nationally and internationally.

**Senior Prof. (Mrs.) MV Weerasooriya, Department of Parasitology, Faculty of Medicine**



Dr Mirani Vasanthamala Weerasooriya started her career at the University of Ruhuna as a Junior Lecturer in the Sub-department of Parasitology in June 1987 on her return from Japan just after her doctoral degree. In October 1987, she was promoted to the post of Senior Lecturer and the Head of the Sub-department of Parasitology. She retired in 2021 after serving the University of Ruhuna for 34 years, in almost all capacities except being the Vice-Chancellor. On this occasion, the Department of Parasitology wishes to send a message to highlight her fruitful long career as a University Don and her immense contribution to the field of Parasitology.

In June 1991, then Dr Mirani Weerasooriya, as the sole academic in Parasitology within the Department of Pathology, met Dr W.A. Samarawickrema, WHO representative, to initiate a new project in filariasis. A few days later, she started a filariasis research project at the Faculty of Medicine. She carried out spot surveys in *Polhena*, *Madihe* and *Walgama* in Matara and obtained microfilaria rates of over 5.0% in these areas. Based on these results, she submitted a research proposal to the World Health Organization, and she was awarded a grant of

\$10,000/- to develop a project. This was the birth of the Filariasis Research, Training and Service Unit (FRTSU) now established in the faculty.

First, she investigated the epidemiological parameters and treatment of filariasis in Southern Sri Lanka. In addition, she carried out an experiment on the effect of permethrin insecticide-treated house curtains on the vector mosquito in a model village. She recruited several school leaving students and trained them in field and laboratory work to assist in different project activities. This proved to be a very successful move.

During the next couple of years, she had expanded the Sub-department to establish a separate Department of Parasitology by adding two new academic staff members and she was appointed as founder Professor of Parasitology. Two of her first studies, namely the insecticide-impregnated curtain trial and the comparison of microfilaria and vector biting periodicities earned her two awards at the annual sessions of the Sri Lanka Medical Association in successive years. This was the time she initiated her first international collaboration with Professor E. Kimura of Aichi Medical University in Japan. While the basic epidemiological parameters study was still in progress, she introduced a project on the immunology of filariasis together with Professor Kimura.

Starting with whole blood-soaked filter papers to measure filarial antigenaemia in human subjects, she moved on to urine anti-filarial antibody detection using ELISA which showed immediate success. She quickly got into stride with Professor Kimura and the team conducted several studies involving the application of urine ELISA. Confirming new areas of endemicity determined by Rapid Assessment Procedures (RAP) and urine ELISA was an important contribution to the National Program for the Elimination of Lymphatic Filariasis which was in full operation at the time. She also carried out treatment trials with annual single-dose DEC alone and in combination with albendazole and ivermectin.

She helped the national elimination programme with periodic evaluations and assessments in different areas and reporting areas of low drug delivery. Alongside the national programme, she conducted a separate elimination programme in Walgama, Matara, reaching a drug coverage of 96% and successfully reducing the infection rate to a very low level. Another area in which she excelled was morbidity management. In Matara, she established a Community Based Home Care programme to attend to patients with lymphoedema.

The quantum of her research could be judged by the eighteen grants she was awarded from different sources such as the WHO, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, Japanese Health Ministry, and the University of Ruhuna. She was at the height of her career from 2000 to 2008 when she won three major awards, viz. Sri Lanka Association for the Advancement of Science General Research Committee award for the Outstanding Scientist of the Year 2003, Fellowship of the National Academy of Science 2004, University of Ruhuna Vice Chancellor's Award for the Outstanding Scholar of the Year 2005.

She delivered three national level orations and won fifteen other awards which included Presidential Awards and awards for best research presentations. We believe she is the only academic among all universities in the country with the unique achievement of delivering orations in all three major Medical Societies, the Galle Medical Association Oration in 1997, Sri Lanka Medical Association Oration in 2003, Kandy Society of Medicine Oration in 2008. She had published profusely with some thirty published papers and ninety abstract presentations at

scientific sessions. She had attended over thirty seminars and workshops on teaching and research, mostly locally. She also attended seminars in Japan, the USA, UK, India, Malaysia, and Egypt.

These achievements make her arguably the most accomplished medical scientist in the country. Not only did she reach the summit, but many others were benefited along the way. At the latter part of her career, she served the University as one of the outstanding Deans administrating the Faculty of Graduates Studies. Her professional life wasn't always smooth; the path was rocky at times and she faced many challenges. The legal system in the country was not fair by her. But her integrity and truth won the day. We are indeed fortunate to pen these words about her and her legendary career. Finally, we wish her a long and happy retirement. May all her wishes be fulfilled.

## Non-Academic Staff Members

<b>Technical Officer</b>
Mr. H.W. Dharmasiri, Department of Zoology, Faculty of Science
Mrs. K.S.M. Weeraratne, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine
Mrs. B. Keembiyahetti, Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine
Mrs. L.M. Sandya, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine
<b>Management Assistant</b>
Mrs. T.K.D.L.P. Samarasinghe, Non Academic Establishment Branch
Mrs. K.G.S. Gunasekara, Department of Psychiatry, Faculty of Medicine
<b>Lab Attendant</b>
Mr. K.G. Rayaston, Department of Agric. Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture
Mr. Piyabandu Abeynayake, Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture
<b>Works Aide</b>
Mr. J. Pantis, Maintenance Unit, Faculty of Agriculture
Mr. K.H. Yasaratne Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine
Mr. M. Sirilal, General Administration Branch
Mr. H.W. Ariyapala, Supplies Branch
Mr. P.K. Piyasena, Department of Food Science & Technology, Faculty of Agriculture
<b>Health Service Labourer</b>
Mr. J. Kalansooriya, Maintenance Unit, Faculty of Medicine
<b>Postmortem Labourer</b>
Mr. N.K.L. Sarathlal, Department of Forensic Medicine, Faculty of Medicine



# Recruitments & Promotions

## Recruitments (Academic Staff)

### Senior Lecturer Grade I

Dr. Madunoraj BHT, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

### Lecturer(Un-Confirmed)

Mrs. Wagaarachchige YA, Department of Physiology, Faculty of Medicine

### Lecturer (Probationary)

Mr. Dilhani EVD, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Mr. Thilanka HRAC, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Mr. Arsakulasuriya CM, Department of English & Linguistics, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Ms. Maduwanthi MN, Department of Human Resources Management, Faculty of Management & Finance

Ms. Ruwani JMR, Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine

Mrs. Wimalasiri AKDVK, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine

Mrs. De Silva WND, Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine

Dr. (Mrs.) Silva De BVS, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine

Dr. (Mrs.) Jayawardena GDCH, Department of Community Medicine, Faculty of Medicine

Dr. (Mrs.) Wijeweera KDDS, Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine

Dr. (Mrs.) Liyanage DDS, Nuclear Medicine Unit, Faculty of Medicine

Mrs Pathirana PSR, Medical Education and Staff Development Unit, Faculty of Medicine

### Analytical Chemist Grade II

Ms. Warnasooriya SR, Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering, Faculty of Engineering

## Promotions (Academic Staff)

### Senior Professor

Professor (Mrs.) KKAS Yapa, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science

Professor KKIU Arunakumara, Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture

Professor PD Abeysinghe, Department of Botany, Faculty of Science

### Professor

Dr. Amila Buddhika Sirisena, Department of Marketing, Faculty of Management & Finance

Dr. (Mrs.) NP Ranathunga, Department of Agric.Biology, Faculty of Agriculture

### Senior Lecturer Grade I

Mr. KG Priyashantha, Department of Human Resource Management, Faculty of Management & Finance

Mr. KSGS Nishantha, Department of English Language Teaching, Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

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Dr. TS Ilayperuma, Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Science

Dr. (Mrs.) CT Wannige, Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Science

Dr. HADSD Perera, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science

#### **Senior Lecturer Grade II**

Dr. (Mrs.) WA Mohotti, Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Science

Dr. (Mrs.) KNN Silva, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture

Dr. (Mrs.) RHMPN Rathnayake, Department of Nursing, Faculty of Allied Health Sciences

Dr. (Mrs.) DWCP Kumari, Department of Computer Science, Faculty of Science

#### **Programmer Cum Systems Analyst Grade II**

Mr. DDJ Withana, Dean's Office, Faculty of Medicine

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### **Acknowledgement**

**Prof. K.L.Wasantha Kumara, Dr. Nandasiri Keembiyahetti, Dr. P.L.N. Lakshman, Dr (Mrs) Nilantha De Silva, Mrs. C. Senevirathne, P.M.S.P.Yapa and Mrs. H.G. Nilanthi Devika are greatly acknowledged for their support in providing information for the newsletter.**

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