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UoR Highlights

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Feature Article
Outreach an academic venture
by Professor Mahinda Wijeratne
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The 24th Convocation of UoR

The 24th Convocation of the University of Ruhuna was held on 26th and 27th of May 2017 at the Gymnasium of the University. This year 1955 graduates were conferred with degrees in the fields of Agriculture, Humanities & Social Sciences, Management & Finance, Medicine, Engineering, Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, Science, Graduate Studies and Allied Health Sciences. Each session commenced with the processions of Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Deans, Librarian, Registrar and academic staff. The Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, Senior Professor Gamini Senanayake conducted the convocation while the Deans announced their degree awardees.

At the first session held on 26th morning Professor Dongxiao Wang of the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology was awarded an honorary degree, Doctor of Science (honoris causa). Subsequently, 447 graduates were conferred with Postgraduate



main story



degrees, Bachelor of Computer Science degrees, Bachelor of Science degrees, Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Marine Sciences degrees, Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery degrees.





The second session was held in the afternoon of 26th conferring 576 graduates with Postgraduate and Bachelor of Arts Degrees. At the third session held on 27th morning, 404 graduates were conferred with Postgraduate degrees, Bachelor of the Science of Agriculture degrees and Bachelor of the Science of Engineering degrees.

Postgraduate Degrees, Bachelor of Business Administration, Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery degrees, Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Science degrees, Bachelor of Science in Nursing degrees were conferred on 497 graduates at the fourth session held on 27th Afternoon.

Convocation for the graduates of Distance and Continuing Education Unit (DCEU) was held on 28th of May. Two consecutive sessions, 488 graduates of the DCEU were conferred with degrees.

Every year the most outstanding students are selected for the Vice Chancellor's Gold Medals based on academic performances and achievements in extracurricular activities including sports. This year recipients of the Vice Chancellor's Gold Medals were S Roobini of the Faculty of Agriculture, WMM Weerabaddana of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology, DW Dharmarathna



Professor Dongxiao Wang, Professor Sunanda Mahendra, Professor Ananda Jayawardane and Professor P S M Gunarathna delivered Convocation addresses of the four sessions.

of the Faculty of Medicine, MSN Ranawaka of the Faculty of Science and TDP Liyanage of the Faculty of Postgraduate Studies.



Outreach : an academic venture

Professor Mahinda Wijeratne

*Senior Professor in Agric. Economics,
Faculty of Agriculture.*

Universities are well regarded as centres for knowledge/technology generation in addition to their main function; conducting academic programmes decided by the respective institutes. The state provides all the facilities to execute academic programmes to the beneficiaries, mainly for undergraduates. Academics involved in research programmes use financial resources from the state and external donor organizations. In the society there are different categories of clients such as farmers, businessmen, industrialists, service personnel, who can be addressed by the universities with the technological inventions and innovations to resolve their problems or identify the research needs to orient them in the research agenda.

In the global context, there are three main sub-systems in any sector of the economy, namely, knowledge or technology generation, dissemination, and utilization. Research institutions and universities play a vital and dominant role in the advancement of knowledge and technology with their research outcomes. Dissemination is basically a communication process which establishes a sound and strategic link between the centres of technology generation and the end users. It transmits the messages to and from the clients through the forward and backward linkages. The utilization is done by the end-users of the technologies to enhance their economic and social well-being, and also to satisfy the needs of the consumer market.

Many of the research organizations have institutionalized administrative framework, and moreover, provide financial and human resources to carryout dissemination programmes. Unfortunately, universities still have not established such framework. As a result, implementation of outreach activities by the academics is not prominent. In a nutshell, transfer of knowledge/technology to different sectors of the economy can be regarded as another prime responsibility of the academics but still not received an adequate attention.

Academics too, make a less effort to this aspect mainly because devotion for such endeavours bring only a marginally positive impact to their professional career development. The research outcomes are mostly transmitted horizontally or vertically among the peer groups in the context

of different scientific era. In fact, this will definitely contribute to enhance the world stock of knowledge. However, technology transmission to the grass-root level is very much limited even though this is a must for economic development of the country. However, utilization of knowledge/ technologies by the stakeholders has become a questionable issue. In many instances, criticisms are leveled on the dissemination programmes for their capability or coverage. In contrast, often it has been found that the technologies generated by the centres were inappropriate, and further not cost effective, when compared to the existing technologies. Therefore, it is worthwhile to investigate the validity of the research outcomes at the utiliser level. One way to overcome this drawback is to orient the research agenda after a careful process of need analysis and priority setting. As mentioned above, universities are encountered with several limitations pertaining to outreach activities. As the situation is such, the knowledge and technologies accumulated in universities stay at static stage with limited transfer to the needed clients. However, efforts can be made to address the issues of different clients with obtaining required resources, and granting adequate devotion. The intension of this article is to demonstrate outcomes of the dissemination efforts taken by a team of academics through an outreach programme.

The Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka implemented the Lifelong Learning for Farmers (L3F) programme as an outreach activity. The Commonwealth of Learning (COL) supported the programme since 2008. The programme was implemented in the Southern Province of Sri Lanka. As the mushroom cultivation is an alternative income generating enterprise, the programme focused on the mushroom farmers in the area. The main objective of this intervention is to uplift the living standards of the mushroom cultivators by integrating relevant professional manpower, production inputs, facilitating institutional arrangements, and integrating stakeholders of the value chain. The Department of Agricultural Economics is functioning as the focal point for the programme which coordinates expert human resources of the Faculty of Agriculture. In fact, this is one of the major outreach programme of the Faculty which transfers technologies to the community.

In order to enhance farmers' knowledge and skills,



several training programmes were conducted at the Faculty of Agriculture. Professionals of the faculty as well as experts from outside agencies served as resource persons for training workshops. It increased human capital and facilitated positive interaction to build effective social capital networks.

In 2011, a public-private partnership was established between the UoR and Mobitel (Pvt) Ltd and a voice mail intervention was introduced. This component facilitated the programme to increase the extension of coverage. Approximately there are 100 messages. Although it was designed to confine the voice mail programme only for the registered farmers, with the popular request the voice mail system was extended nation-wide (with Mobitel sim, dial 8820) with effect from September 2012. This intervention has been recognized as the use of ICT in outreach programmes. An evaluation demonstrates that the distribution of the clientele in the country is more than 5000.

The programme arranged training for food processing, and development of value added products. The faculty professionals served as the trainers and laboratories were used for the training. Farmers acquired knowledge and skills by hands-on training. They made mushroom moju, chillie paste, soup, bites, snacks, etc. Further, a rural processing unit was started at Makandura in Matara district.

Mushroom farmers have established links with the local market. In fact, at present, there are no barriers to market fresh mushrooms. Interestingly, the programme motivated adding more flavor to the marketing aspect by introducing a mobile unit, a tricycle. One farmer was given the responsibility to operate the unit, and the unit sells the products of other farmers, too. This is an effort made by the outreach programme to increase the social capital of the target community.

The programme established a link between the Southern Development Bank, the Peoples' Bank and the Bank of Ceylon with the members of the society. The banks granted loans up to Rs.100 000 per farmer especially, to expand the scale of production, with the recommendation of the programme. Next, the banks implemented a group loan scheme without requesting a collateral security. Furthermore, it implemented a programme on business plan development, and at the end farmers were capable of developing a plan for their own enterprises. This facilitated easy access to credit. So far, banks have granted credit facilities approximately to 100 farmers disbursing Rs. 5 mn to advance the financial capital. The mushroom producers encountered a limitation of obtaining

good quality mushroom spawns (seeds). The Faculty provided technology to farmers by training them at the laboratory. Now they produce mushroom spawns by establishing a mini laboratory at the Vidatha centre. This is a fine example for utilization of the technology by the end users, dissemination of technology for an identified need and a positive outcome of an outreach programme, starting from UoR knowledge base.

Prior to the implementation of the outreach programme, farmers cultivated mushrooms on ad-hoc basis and very few farmers had continuous production. Further, scale of operation was very small (limited to 200-500 cultivation bags). But, at present, on average, farmers have a scale of 2000 cultivation bags. According to the initial investigations a mushroom farmer was making a profit of Rs. 10 000 – 15 000 per month. Recent evaluation demonstrated that on average, farmer earns a profit, approximately Rs. 30 000 per month which is a significant share of the household income, and many farmers totally rest their livelihood on it. Next, in the context of Sri Lankan condition this earning facilitates to maintain a reasonable living standard for a rural family. In all, the activities geared through the programme benefit the community by guiding them to receive a substantial economic and social wellbeing.

As the L3F programme obtained successful results in Matara district, some of the activities were extended to Hambantota district in 2015. The L3F programme targets not only the farmer, but also women and children of the farm family. Very recently (February 2017) a computer laboratory was established with 20 lap-top computers and interactive multimedia at the University Unit, Hambantota.

Universities have a great potential to implement outreach programmes towards different target groups of the community with careful need analysis. However, there are limitations, especially finance and manpower to deal with outreach activities. Hence, remedial measures are warranted to build an environment feasible to serve the society with accumulated knowledge/technology and skills. The positive outcomes of outreach programmes will bring great recognition to the University, and the academics could enjoy great satisfaction. This programme provides a clear evidence as it won the award for the outreach-PR, Marketing, and Communication Award from the Association of Commonwealth Universities, placing UoR at the higher rank in the context.



14th Academic Sessions and 13th Vice Chancellor's Awards Ceremony



Annual Academic Sessions of the University of Ruhuna is an excellent platform to highlight the research findings of the academic community. In conjunction with the Academic Sessions, the University holds the 'Vice Chancellor's Awards Ceremony' to honor and recognize the outstanding academics and students of the university.

This year, the 14th Academic Sessions and 13th Vice Chancellor's Awards Ceremony' was successfully concluded on 01st March 2017 at the Faculty of Engineering under the theme of "Promoting Innovation through Research".

Thushara Wickramaarachchi, the Chairperson of the Organizing Committee.

Prof. Munidasa P. Ranaweera, Emeritus Professor of the Department of Civil Engineering, University of Peradeniya delivered the Keynote Speech on 'Innovations and Sustainable Developments in Ancient Sri Lanka'. The oration of the 14th Academic Sessions was delivered by Dr. Mayuri Tharanga Napagoda of the Department of Biochemistry, Faculty of Medicine on "Medicinal Plants in Sri Lanka: Ethnobotanical, Phytochemical and Pharmacological Investigations".

academic events



The Vice Chancellor, Senior Professor Gamini Senanayake graced the event as the Chief Guest. The Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr. Nayana Alagiyawanna, Deans and Department Heads of all the faculties, academics and other distinguished invitees participated in the event. The inaugural session of this grandeur event commenced with the welcome address delivered by Dr. (Mrs.)



Outstanding academics and students of the University were awarded with the 'Vice Chancellor's Awards'. At the end of the inauguration, Dr. Ruwan Appuhamy, the Secretary of the event delivered the Vote of thanks. The technical sessions continued for the rest of the day.



ACEPS 2017

The 5th International Symposium on Advances in Civil and Environmental Engineering Practices for Sustainable Development (ACEPS-2017) was successfully held on 16th March 2017 at the Faculty of Engineering, with the participation of more than 200 local and international delegates.

Academics, engineers and scientists in the field of Civil and Environmental Engineering and Environmental Sciences from Japan, Thailand, Indonesia, Vietnam, China and Sri Lanka took part in this symposium.

This International symposium created a venue to discuss advanced sustainable engineering practices that are adopted in developing countries. ACEPS-2017 mainly focused on Civil Engineering practices for sustainable development, emerging ecological and environmental engineering applications and infrastructure planning and development. ACEPS-2017 jointly organized by the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering of the University of Ruhuna, Saitama University and Toyama Prefectural University of Japan. At this ACEPS-2017, more than 60 original papers on Civil and Environmental Engineering were presented.

The Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, Senior Prof. Gamini Senanayake, participated as the Chief Guest of the inaugural ceremony. Prof. C. Vishvanathan from Asian Institute of Technology,



Thailand, Prof. Armi Susandi from Bandung Institute of Technology, Indonesia, and Dr. Takeshi Maki from Saitama University, Japan, delivered Keynote speeches.

Undergraduate Research Symposium on Recent Advances in Civil Engineering 2017

The 6th Undergraduate Research Symposium on 'Recent Advances in Civil Engineering' jointly organized by the Civil and Environmental Engineering Society of the Faculty of Engineering and Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering was successfully held on 6th January-2017 at the Faculty of Engineering.

The symposium showcased undergraduate creativity, achievements and research from all areas of study at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering. This year the symposium attracted more than 150 participants from Engineering faculties of University of Ruhuna,

University of Peradeniya, University of Moratuwa, University of Jaffna, South Eastern University and Sri Lanka Institute of Technology.

This year the symposium was graced by Prof. Rupa Purasinghe from the California State University of the USA as the Keynote speaker. Dr. A.M.N. Alagiyawanna, Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University, Dr. Chandana Perera, Dean of the Faculty of Engineering and Dr. H.H.J. Keerthisena, the Founder Dean of the Faculty and many senior academics and engineers from various industries participated in the symposium.



4th Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference “RISTCON 2017”



The 4th Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference “RISTCON 2017” organized by the Faculty of Science was successfully held at Prof. Alawaththagoda Pemadasa Auditorium on 26th January 2017.

The Vice Chancellor of the University, Senior Prof. Gamini Senanayake graced the event as the Chief Guest. Prof. Rajendra Rathore of Marquette University of the USA delivered the Keynote address and Associate Professor Nishantha Rajakaruna of Biological Sciences Department, California Polytechnic State University of the USA delivered the Guest speech.

academic events

Academic Inputs to Develop Southern

In response to a request made by the Southern Provincial Council, the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology provided necessary expert advice for the socioeconomic development of the region. A discussion was held on 21st April 2017 at the Faculty between the members of the Southern Provincial Council and the Academic Staff of the Faculty and three projects were decided that are cost benefit analyses on stocking of fingerlings in reservoirs in the Southern Province, utilization of fishery waste for production of value added products and introduction of small-scale industries on ready to cook fish products based on cultured freshwater fish and marine fish to be introduced to super markets. Academic staff of the Faculty made a field visit to the sites of the proposed fish processing project and proposed fish fry rearing project and give their inputs to the authorities.



Fully Automated and Remotely Operated Seawater Controlled Gate System

The first collaborative project between the Faculty of Engineering and Southern Provincial Council on "Fully Automated and Web-Based Remotely Operated Seawater Controlled Gate System at Unawatuna" was successfully completed by the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering recently.

This is the first seawater controlled gate system in Sri Lanka and it can be operated through web-based SCADA software with a mobile phone or a laptop computer. In the gate system, designing, fabrication, automation, software development and installations of mechanical and electrical devices were completely handled by the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering of the University. Financial assistance for the project was provided by the Southern Provincial Irrigation Department.

This project helps the irrigation officers to control and monitor the gate system at any time and to avoid sea water intrusion into freshwater systems and flooding of the agricultural lands during heavy rain situations. Technical Know-how for the project was provided by Dr. Sumith Baduge, Dr. Manjula Wickramasinghe, Mr. K.A.D. Darshana and graduated students, Mr. Chanaka Prasath, Mr. Buddika Weerasekara, Mr. Nuwan Yapa, Mr. Tharindu Jayawekrama and Mr. Ganesh Amal.



Opening Ceremony of the New Faculty Complex of the Faculty of Management and Finance

Opening ceremony of the new faculty complex of the Faculty of Management and Finance was held on 07th of June 2017. After obtaining the blessings of the noble triple gem, Senior Professor Gamini Senanayaka, the Vice-Chancellor of University of Ruhuna cut the ribbon and officially opened the new faculty complex.

This historical event was marked by inspiring speeches from Senior Professor Gamini Senanayaka, the Vice-Chancellor, Dr. A.M.N. Alagiyawanna, the Deputy Vice-Chancellor and Dr. T.S.L.W. Gunawardana, the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Finance.

This unified complex would create an exciting confluence of students, faculty and staff in the Faculty of Management and Finance. Moreover, after opening the

new faculty complex, an all-night Pirith chanting ceremony, followed by a morning alms giving were held to invoke blessings on staff and the new institution on 09th and 10th of June 2017.



Surveying “Bahirawa Irrigation Development Project”

by Faculty of Engineering

Engineering undergraduates of the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering (DCEE) successfully completed the surveying of the “Bahirawa Irrigation Development Project” proposed by the Mahaweli Authority (Walawe Special Area) of Sri Lanka. This surveying was conducted from 17th to 29th April 2017 at Bahirawa area of Sewanagala under the aegis of Walawa Special Area Office of the Mahaweli Authority of Sri Lanka. Engineering undergraduates, with the expertise guidance of the academic staff of the DCEE, surveyed an area of around 20 km² with a total canal length of 25km and produced all the survey information required for the construction of irrigation canal network in the area.

Owing to the funding constrains, Mahaweli Authority was in a difficulty to conduct the surveying works of the proposed project and the DCEE extended their assistance by undertaking all the engineering surveying works without accepting

any terms of financial remuneration. The project was completed as the Survey Works Camp for 3rd year Civil Engineering undergraduates, which is a mandatory requirement given in the Civil Engineering curriculum. The Professional Engineers of the Mahaweli Authority commended that the standard and quality of the submitted survey information stands in par with a professional surveyors’ work which would cost in millions.



RIIE 2017 Ruhuna Invention & Innovation Exhibition

The Ruhuna Invention & Innovation Exhibition, “RIIE 2017” was held on 17th and 18th of May 2017 at the University of Ruhuna. Main objective of the exhibition was to encourage young generation to think in extra dimensions and to enhance their creative and innovative skills.

This year exhibition was organized jointly with the Sri Lanka Inventors Commission to enhance the quality as well as to expand boundaries of the event. The exhibition provided a venue for the selection of exhibits from Southern Province for the National contest “Sahasak Nimavum -2017”. This year, 290 inventions were received for this

completion. All inventions and innovations were evaluated by an expert team appointed by the Sri Lanka Inventors Commission. Main partners of the exhibition were the Southern Provincial Council and Southern Province Education Department. Main sponsor was Ceylon Biscuits Limited. Other sponsors were Peoples Bank and NEDA.

Parallel to this event an educational exhibition was conducted by Faculty of Science, Faculty of Technology and Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science & Technology, Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture for school students in the Southern Province, especially for G.C.E (A/L) science students. The Faculty of Science demonstrated Advance Level practical sessions in subjects of chemistry, physics, zoology and botany. Exhibition was organized for the very first time.



Business Clinic 2017

The Faculty of Management and Finance together with the Southern Provincial Development Authority conducted the "Business Clinic 2017" on 13th and 14th March 2017 at the University Gymnasium with an immense of success. The inauguration ceremony was led by the Senior Professor Gamini Senanayake, the Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna and Mr. R.C. De Zoysa, Chief Secretary, Southern Province.

Business Clinic 2017 aimed at the business ventures with the ultimate intention of getting the businesses more structured and formalized in nature enabling business success. Forty seven public and private sector organizations such as Central Environment Authority, Sri Lanka Standards Institute, Export Development Board, Ceylon Chamber of Commerce, Small Enterprises Development Division, Consumer Protection Authority, Board of Investment, Central Bank, Private banks etc., actively engaged in educating entrepreneurs in the Southern Province on various aspects such as business registration, obtaining quality standards, tax issues, technology barriers, labor issues and business financing.



The exhibition stalls were organized focusing on basic physics of mechanical systems and a mechanical technology laboratory demonstrating automobile systems and cutting edge material testing methods.

Other institutes participated in the "RIIE 2017" were Sri Lanka Inventors Commission, Education

Department Southern Province, Sri Lanka Army (Research, Analysis, Projection & Development Branch), Arthur C Clarke Institute for Modern Technologies, National Intellectual Property Office of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka Planetarium and Sri Lanka Police (Traffic Police Headquarters).



University in progress

Guest Lecture by Prof Sena S De Silva on Aquaculture

Professor Sena S. De Silva, former Professor of Zoology and former Dean of the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna and Emeritus Professor of School of Life and Environmental Sciences, Deakin University Australia visited the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology recently.

During his visit, he delivered a very informative lecture on "Aquaculture - a newly emergent food sector and perceptions of its impacts on biodiversity and conservation" on 27th April 2017 at the auditorium of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology.



A Guest Lecture on "Digital 2.0"



Guest lecture on "Digital 2.0" organized by the Circle of Marketing was held on 19th of May 2017 at the Faculty of Management and Finance. The internet has transformed the way that brands engage with consumers and therefore, influencing the development of marketing. The rapid development in technology is enabling marketers to exploit the opportunities of marketing through the effective use of digital media channels. Hence, with the aim

of providing students with an understanding of the usage of internet by marketers in exploiting opportunities of marketing, the Guest Lecture was conducted. Mr. Michael Holsinger, Mr. Sandun Lakmal, Mr. Shashi de Silva and Mr. Seninda Bandara, resource persons of the event shed some light into the application of digital tools by the organizations in the real world scenarios as to stay competitive.

"Global Economy and Politics"

On 2nd of February 2017 the Department of Public Policy and the Public Policy Society jointly organized a talk and a discussion on "Global Economy and Politics." The objectives of this program were to distribute knowledge and to discuss about neo-liberal global economy that benefits only 1% of the world population and to investigate ways to build

Discussion on a human economy that benefits everyone, not just the privileged few. Mr. Kusal Perera, senior journalist and political analyst, was the Chief Guest of this event. Undergraduates and the academic staff of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences participated in this event.

New degree program on BSc in Marine and Freshwater Sciences



The Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology started a new degree programme named BSc in Marine and Freshwater Sciences. The inaugural ceremony of the recruitment of first batch of students for the programme was held on 28th February 2017 at the Faculty auditorium. Senior Professor Gamini Senanayake, the Vice Chancellor



of the University of Ruhuna graced this occasion as the Chief Guest while the Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr. A.M.N. Alagiyawanna, the Dean of the Faculty Dr. R.A. Maitthreepala and other academic and nonacademic staff members of the Faculty, newly enrolled students and their parents participated in this event.

Subhawitha Gee Miyasia 2017 A Programme on Music for Life



Subhawitha Gee Miyasia – 2017 was conducted for students, mainly focusing the 1st year students of the Faculty of Science for the 9th time with the theme “Music for Life” on 21st June 2017, at the Prof. Alawatthagoda Pemadasa Auditorium of the Faculty.



The objectives of the program were to make aware of the importance of classical music to human life, direct students towards classical music, good meaningful lyrics, melodies etc. and improve the soft skills of students. Altogether 20 classical songs from 60s, 70s and 80s were presented. In addition, a short instrumental performance was included in the program. About 400 students attended the programme together with academic and non-academic members of the Faculty. Assistance for this event was provided by the Faculty of Science under the “Student development initiative”.

Project to Monitor Air Quality with Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry

As a part of the collaborative research programme with Chinese Academy of Sciences, Professor Gan Zhang and Dr. Guangcai Zhong of Guangzhou Institute of Geochemistry of Chinese Academy of Sciences visited University of Ruhuna on 10th January 2017. The two academics met the Deputy Vice Chancellor Dr Nayana Alagiyawanna and discussed the possibility of installing air samplers to monitor sea aerosol and air pollution. This event was coordinated by the Center for International Affairs of the University.



Training Workshop and Discussion by **ASCENT** Advancing Skill Creation to Enhance Transformation



Capacity building on disaster resilience and integration of disaster resilience studies into the curricular of higher educational institutes in Bangladesh, Sri Lanka and Thailand is a part of ASCENT Project. ASCENT aims to address research and development capacity strengthening for the development of societal resilience to disasters - supporting training, skills, leadership development, international collaboration and university-industry partnerships.

It will strengthen the ability of partner higher educational institutes to respond to their research

needs in disaster resilience. The training session held at the faculty premises incorporated class room sessions, observation of simple experimental layouts in the field with the objective of exposing the trainees to understand and gain necessary skills in field experimentation by giving considerations to principles, methodologies, techniques and layout procedures in real world situations. It was also aimed at publicising the project progress, successes and outcomes as far as possible, and raising awareness across the field of higher education about capacity building for disaster resilience research.

Meeting with the High-level Delegation from Chinese Academy of SCIENCE

The University of Ruhuna and the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO) of Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) have established a joint centre, China-Sri Lanka Joint Centre for Research and Education (CSL-CER) at the University of Ruhuna enabling learners of both countries to engage in educational and research programmes. On 30th March 2017 a high-level of delegation from various institutions of the Chinese Academy of Sciences visited the Joint Centre located at the University of Ruhuna.

Official discussion was held in the University of Ruhuna with the participation of the Chinese delegation, the Vice Chancellor Professor Gamini Senanayake, Registrar of the University Mrs Senani Kalugma and Director of Centre for International Affairs and Co-director of CSL-CER, Professor Tilak P D Gamage and Deans of the Faculties.

Members of the CAS delegation were Academician Baorong Hou from the Institute of Oceanology, Prof Dongxiao Wang, Dr Gang Pan and Dr Yao Luo from the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Prof Shouyang Wang from the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences, Prof Bing Zhang, Prof Zongke Zhang and Ms. Han Zhou from the Institute of

Remote Sensing and Digital Earth, Prof Jianqiang Zhu from the Shanghai Institute of Optics and Fine Mechanics, Prof Yuehu Kang from the Institute of Geographic Sciences and Natural Resources Research, Prof Huasheng Qiu from the University of Science and Technology, Prof Longtan Sun from the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology, Prof Zhengxin Liu from the Shanghai Institute of Microsystem and Information Technology, Prof Dongru Qiu and Dr Dong Xu from the Institute of Hydrobiology and Dr Daoyang Yu from the Institute of Intelligent Machines.



Undergraduates from University of Agder to UoR

Under the Memorandum of Understanding between University of Agder, Norway and University of Ruhuna the Department of Economics organizes a short term study programme annually for the undergraduate students of the University of Agder. In January of this year a group of students visited

University of Ruhuna under the coordination of Dr B A Sumanarathna, Head of the Department of Economics and Prof Arn Olav Oyhus of University of Agder. The group of students met with the Vice Chancellor and Director of the Center for International Affairs.



international collaborations

New Year Festival organized by The Faculty of Engineering



Sinhala and Tamil New Year is celebrated every year with many traditional games. Students enjoy themselves by participating in the events while rest enjoy watching the events. It helps in developing team work, soft skills and cultural understanding.



students in action

Saraswathi Puja

This is another religious event organized to celebrate the birth of Hindu goddess Saraswati. It is believed that by pleasing Goddess Saraswathi, one can gain knowledge, wisdom and talents. Many students participated in this event to share the experience wishing all the best for the upcoming year.



Annual Thaipongal Festival

Annual Thaipongal event of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology was held on 14th January 2017 at the FMST premises. The Vice Chancellor, Senior Prof. Gamini Senanayake was the Chief Guest of the event.



“Swara Sarani 2016”

Annual music night by the Art Society, Faculty of Agriculture was successfully held at the new auditorium of the Faculty of Agriculture on 22nd October 2016. The Art Society organized the event with the collaboration of students, academic and non-academic staff of the Faculty. Dr Sudarshanee Geekiyanage, Senior Lecturer, Department of Agricultural Biology graced the event as the Chief Guest.



Dhamma Sermon

In conjunction with Vesak Festival of this year, students of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology organized a dhamma sermon programme at the faculty premises on 05th May 2017. Academic staff, non-academic staff and students of the Faculty participated in this event.

students in action

Thambarawila

Thambarawila is the biggest aesthetic event organized by the Faculty of Engineering, once in every two years. The event consists of many creative items including dramas, songs, dancing events etc. In this event students express their talents and skills, outside their academic life. Many famous artists in the country are invited to this glamorous event.



Awareness Programme by OCG Society

The University Student's Society for Oceanography and Marine Geology held a one-day workshop on 04th May 2017 for A/L students of Rahula Collage, Matara to popularize Oceanography and Marine Geology subject among school children.



students in action

Susred Award Winners of UoR

Dr. Kumudu R Gamage, Prof. Vajira P Bulugahapitiya and Prof. DHN Munasinghe

Support Scheme for Supervision of Research Degrees (SUSRED) is an award scheme to motivate, support and recognize scientists engaged in supervising students leading to postgraduate degrees.

Dr. Kumudu R Gamage and Prof. Vajira P Bulugahapitiya received SUSRED Award for successful supervision of MPhil Degree of Ms. Nilushi Paranamana who carried out a research leading to MPhil degree in evaluation of alternative feed ingredients for preparation of low-cost fish feed for sustainable aquaculture industry in Sri Lanka.

Prof DHN Munasinghe received SUSRED Award for the successful supervision of MPhil Degree of Ms.JDM Senavirathna Hemali on 'Investigation



of population genetic structure and the habitat characteristics of commercially important lobster species *Panulirus homarus* populations in southern coastal belt of Sri Lanka'.

“2014 SERDP Project of the Year” is awarded to Dr Nalaka and his Research Team



Award of 2014 SERDP Project-of-the-Year is jointly offered by the Department of Defense, Environmental Protection Agency and Department of Energy of the USA. A research project carried out by Dr. Pradeep Nalaka Ranasinghe of the Department Oceanography and Marine Geology together with a team of Scientists from the Woods Hole Oceanography Institution and University of Hawaii Manoa of the USA received the “Project of the Year Award 2014” recently.

Further to that Dr Nalaka has been awarded the Fellowship by the Chinese Academy of Sciences which he will commence at the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology in Guangzhou.

Eco friendly, Economical fish skin leather Production by Ms. R. D. N Wijesinghe



Ms R.D.N Wijesinghe of the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture has obtained a patent for environmental friendly and economically feasible fish leather preparation using Tilapia and eel skin. Her patent is titled “Eco friendly, economical fish skin production process”.

achievements by Staff

Mrs. Gayani Pathiraja received The best presentation award

Mrs. Gayani Pathiraja of the Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology received the best presentation award for her paper titled "Ti/IrO₂/SnO₂ anode for electrochemical degradation of chlorpyrifos in water: optimization and degradation performances" at the 7th International Conference on Key Engineering Materials, which was held in Penang, Malaysia.



Dr. Madurani Edussuriya received Endeavour Advanced Research Fellowship

Dr. Madurani Edussuriya of the Department of Chemistry was offered the Endeavour Advanced Research Fellowship by the Australian Government. She has conducted research on preparation of chemically activated carbon using sugar cane bagasse and production of metal ion-loaded catalysts using produced activated carbons as the support, for upgrading of bio oil, at the Queensland University of Technology, Brisbane.



Erasmus Mundus Scholarship Awardees of the Faculty of FMST

Ms. Silva Dunuhinge Amavi Nimesha and Ms. H.M. Udari Ayeshya graduated from the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology have been awarded with the Erasmus Mundus Scholarship to pursue their postgraduate studies.



New Record is set for the Highest Number of Gold Medals



Gold Medals established at the University resembles the academic excellence which are awarded to the students who have demonstrated the outstanding academic excellence in their respective academic programmes. At the 24th Convocation held in May

this year ten Gold Medals out of the Eleven Gold Medals established at the Faculty of Medicine were won by Dinusha W Dharmaratna setting a new record in the annals of the University. Following are titles of the Gold Medals won by her. The Vice Chancellor and Dean of the Faculty of Medicine appeared for a photograph together with Dinusha just after the convocation.

Vice Chancellor's Gold Medal for the most Outstanding Student, Professor Neil Fonseka Memorial Gold Medal, Dr. D. V. J. Harischandra Memorial Gold Medal, L. A. D. Sirisena Memorial Gold Medal, Caroline Mohotti Memorial Gold Medal, Neliya Mendis Memorial Gold Medal, Christie Dias Perera Memorial Gold Medal, Wijayawardhana Gold Medal, Dr. P. R. Anthonis Gold Medal and Miss Sadha Perera Memorial Gold Medal.

Gold Medal Winners of UoR

At the Convocation this year following students were awarded Gold Medals of the University for their academic excellence recorded during their respective study programmes.

Faculty of Agriculture

Prof. Y.D.A. Senanayake Gold Medal, Dr. S. K. Charles Memorial Gold Medal and Dr. P. S. J. W.Seresinhe Memorial Gold Medal were awarded to W .W. U. I. Wickramaarachchi. Mallika De Mel Memorial Gold Medal and Upali Wijewardhana Gold Medal for Agriculture were awarded to U. R. Chandimala. Mr.and Mrs. D. A. Rajapaksha Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to M. D. N. D. Perera. W.G.Don Kirigoris Appuhamy Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to R. H. G. B. Prabhashini. D.H.E.Mohotti Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to S. K. Perera.

Faculty of Engineering

S.D.Jayasundere Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to S.D.R.D.Samaraweera. Colombapatabandige Jinasena Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to D.M.W.Karandeniya. Mallika De Mel Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to D. W. Jayasekara. Dr.A.D.V.Premaratne Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to W. V. Kavisekara.

Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology

South China Sea Institute of Chinese Academy of Sciences Gold Medal and Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology Gold Medal were awarded to W. M. M. Weerabaddana.

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

Mallika De Mel Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to G. L. R. Madushani. Prof.R.M.Ranaweera

Banda Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to H.H.W.Vinodani. L.W.A.Weerasekara memorial Gold Medal was awarded to P.G.M.Thushani. Harischandra Gold Medal was awarded to R.T.T.Dilrukshi

Faculty of Management & Finance

Lucky Lanka Gold Medal was awarded to J.G.M. Kumari. Deshamanya Dr.Nihal Jinasena Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to H.B.T.D. Karunarathna.

Faculty of Medicine

Dr. D.V.J.Harischandra Memorial Gold Medal & Caroline Mohotti Memorial Gold Medal were awarded to R. D. S. Gunarathna. Mr. & Mrs. C. R. De Silva Memorial Gold Medal and Christie Dias Perera Memorial Gold Medal were awarded to W. F. N. Fereen. Neliya Mendis Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to B. M. A. D. Deshani. Mr. & Mrs. C. R. De Silva Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to U. D. P. Madushanka. Prof. Neil Fonseka Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to D. W. S. Y. Srikantha. Wijayawardhana Gold Medal was awarded to M. W. D. A. M. Gunasekara.

Faculty of Science

Mallika De Mel Memorial Gold Medal, Tissaweera Siriwardena Jinasena Memorial Gold Medal, L.C. De Silva Memorial Gold Medal and Prof. Alawaththagoda Pemadasa Memorial Gold Medal were awarded to B. L. E. Jayasinha. Prof.Isabelle Attali Memorial Gold Medal and Wasantha Mohotti Memorial Gold Medal were awarded to K. A. S. Nisansala. Dr. (Mrs.) Chandra Jayawardhana Memorial Gold Medal was awarded to D. L. N. K. Disanayake. Prof. R.H.Wijayanayake Gold Medal was awarded to K. D. M. M. Dissanayake. IFS Gold Medal was awarded to W.J.S.Rangana.



Senior Professor B. G. Nanayakkara, Department of Anatomy, Faculty of Medicine

Senior Professor B. G. Nanayakkara of the Department of Anatomy Faculty of Medicine retired on 03rd January 2017 after serving the University of Ruhuna more than 25 years. He is a distinguished academic, enthusiastic researcher, specialist in restorative and maxillo-facial prosthetic dentistry. His tireless commitment and hard work has immensely contributed to uplift the Department which it enjoys today. He was the founder of the Molecular Genetics Laboratory, the only such facility in the Southern Sri Lanka. He has authored 15 text books on various aspects of anatomy and has an extensive publication record in indexed and refereed journals to his credit. His contribution to undergraduate and postgraduate medical education in anatomy is enormous. He was the president of two national bodies: Sri Lanka Dental Association & Anatomical Society of Sri Lanka.



Senior Professor Ashoka Gunawardena, Department of Animal Science, Faculty of Agriculture

Senior Professor W. W. D. Asoka Gunawardena who served in the Department of Animal Science at the Faculty of Agriculture, retired on 31st January 2017, after rendering a noble service to the University of Ruhuna over 36 years. He joined the Faculty in 1980 as an Assistant Lecturer and obtained the PhD in 1991 from ETH, Zurich, Switzerland. Upon his return from foreign training, he was instrumental in designing number of undergraduate and postgraduate courses in Genetics and Animal Breeding at the University of Ruhuna and few other universities. He had been involved in many research and development activities at the faculty and the university as well. Further, he has served in advisory capacity for numerous local and international agencies. In addition, he actively involved in formulating national policies and action plans in the livestock sector.



Senior Professor Piyasiri Vithanage, Department of Economics, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences

Prof. Piyasiri Vithanage is a graduate, who had passed out from the University of Peradeniya in 1976. Following his graduation, young Vithanage had been selected to work as an Assistant Lecturer in the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya and had served there for two years. He had joined the Department of Economics, University of Ruhuna in November 1978. He has succeeded to secure the professorship in 2006. He has served as the Head of the Department of Economics for about twelve years. During this period he introduced many new courses such as social statistics, a MA program and a new degree program in Management. He was the first Head of the Department and one of the members who actively participated on establishing the Department of Management, which later developed to a separate faculty. Prof. Vithanage has held the respectful position of the Proctor in the University of Ruhuna for six years and he was a member of the Senate and the Council of the University of the Ruhuna. After forty years of a long service to the University of Ruhuna he retired on 17th April 2017.



Senior Professor Rohan Rajapakse, Department of Agriculture Biology, Faculty of Agriculture

Senior Prof. Rohan Rajapakse joined the University of Ruhuna in 1978 as a Probationary Lecturer of the Faculty of Agriculture. He has obtained his B.Sc. in Agriculture and M.Sc. in Agricultural Biology from the University of Peradeniya. He carried out his doctoral studies at the University of Florida Gainesville, USA from 1982 to 1985. Prof. Rajapakse has published more than 100 research papers in entomology and crop protection and has written and edited five 5 books. He is the most Senior Professor in entomology and crop protection in Sri Lanka. He was appointed as the first Professor of Agricultural Biology of the University of Ruhuna in 1997. Prof Rohan Rajapakse served as the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna for a period of two years, before being appointed as the Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna in November 1997. He has served in number of key national level positions related to higher education in Sri Lanka. Prof. Rajapakse then served as the Executive Director of the Sri Lanka Council for Agricultural Research Policy which is the apex body of agriculture research in Sri Lanka. In 2010 May, he was appointed as the Acting Vice Chairman of the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka and also from March 2006 to May 2011 he served as a member of the University Grants Commission. After nearly forty years of an excellent service he retired on 31st January 2017.

New appointments of UoR

Dr.NL De Silva has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Parasitology.

Dr.C Weerasakara has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Surgery.

Mr. MKKD Wimalasena has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Civil & Environmental Engineering.

Dr. WMK De Silva has been recruited as a Senior Lecturer Grade II in the Department of Physics.

Mr. Nuwan Laksiri PHP has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Information & Communication Technology.

Mrs. Adikaram KKNB has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Multidisciplinary.

Mr. Dinesh Kumara has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Engineering Technology.

Mrs. Samarawickrama D has been recruited as a Probationary Lecturer in the Department of Accounting & Finance.

Promotions of UoR

Dr. Devasiri VI of the Department of Pediatrics of Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade I

Dr. (Mrs) Liyanaarachchi ND of the Department of Pediatrics of Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade I

Dr. (Mrs) Jayawardena PP of the Department of Pediatrics of Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade I

Dr. KA Gunaratne KA of the Department of Obstetrics & Gynecology of Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade I

Dr. Yapa YMALW of the Department of Chemistry Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade II.

Prof. Jayantha UK of the Department of Pediatrics of Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Professor.

Prof. Amarasena TSD of the Department of Pediatrics of Faculty of Medicine has been promoted to Senior Professor

Mrs. Karunaratne LS of the Department of Sinhala of the Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade II

Dr. (Mrs) Jayasekara HD of the Department of Chemistry of Faculty of Science has been promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade II



ACEPS 2018

The 6th International Symposium on, Advances in Civil and Environmental Engineering Practices, for Sustainable Development (ACEPS 2018) has been scheduled to be held on 15th March 2018 at the Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna

ISAE 2018

This year the 7th International Symposium on Agriculture & Environment ISAE 2018 has been scheduled to take place on 17th January 2018 at Hotel Galadari, Colombo. Theme of the conference this year is "Sustainable Intensification of Agriculture towards Food Security"

RISTCON 2018

The 5th Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference, RISTCON 2018 organized by Faculty of Science will be held on 15th February 2018 at the Faculty of Science.

ICME 2017

The 6th International Conference on Management and Economics (ICME 2017) has been scheduled to take place on 9th and 10th November 2017 at the Faculty of Management & Finance. The theme of this year conference is "Confronting Development Challenges through Promoting Innovative Management Thinking"

UoR Highlights

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