



# UoR HIGHLIGHTS

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## Lifelong Learning and University Contribution

*By Dr. A.M.N. Alagiyawanna, Deputy Vice Chancellor*

We all have a natural desire to learn for adapting to change, enriching and fulfilling our lives. The interest in lifelong learning for individuals is of paramount importance today. Ongoing voluntary and self-motivated pursuit of knowledge due to personal or professional reasons can be interpreted as lifelong learning. Lifelong learning will enhance the competitiveness and employability of individuals. The first twenty-two years or so of our lives is dedicated to formal learning and bulk of the time is spent in classrooms acquiring new knowledge. Upon graduation, a majority may feel that the education phase of the life is over and it's time to go out into the world. But, some may look for continuous education while being engaged in their respective professions. In the 21st century, we all need to be lifelong learners. We need to continually keep our skills sharp and up to date so that we have an edge in all our activities.

The integration of lifelong learning strategies into the missions of universities or higher education institutions is still limited despite the important contribution of lifelong learning activities to social development. Lifelong learning in universities can be referred to in a range of different ways including part-time studies, continuing education, professional up-grading, adult education, and post-graduate studies. Approaches to delivering lifelong learning may vary from institution to institution within the same country and differ widely between countries.

Lifelong learning may vary in its purpose, its target audience, as well as the way it is presented in the university curriculum.

From its origin, lifelong learning had two main pillars: widening participation and learning throughout life. Therefore, the present focus on lifelong learning can be seen as an evolution of prior practice, even if it may seem today to revolutionise the self-understanding of higher education institutions and their perception of service to society. It is sometimes assumed that lifelong learning is in some ways different to the traditional mode of providing education to the students. In reality, institutions do not generally provide different educational services through the provision of lifelong learning. Rather, they make their usual range of educational offer available to different groups of learners mainly as part-time courses. The concept of lifelong learning from a university perspective should mean that universities have to provide services to target groups without losing sight of the importance of providing quality-assured, research-based education.

By facilitating quality-assured lifelong learning, university can widen the access to higher education for all learners with potential benefits to society as well as those participating in higher education. This means reaching out to an increasingly broad range of learners with different motivations and interests: not only offering programmes for professional development adapted to a fast-

**"The universities should act as role models in providing lifelong learning opportunities for the widest section of society."**

(Continued from page 1)

changing labour market, but also catering for the growing demand for personal development opportunities through the cultural enrichment that universities offer.

The key challenge is to find ways to open up a wider range of educational services to new learners and to returning learners, and to ensure continuing opportunities for learners throughout their lives. Expanding the range of learners becomes the key strategic issue, and the key ac-

tivities for universities to develop are the establishment of systems for fair assessment and validation of all forms of prior learning, and providing relevant, creative and innovative educational programmes. This is particularly important in the context of lifelong learning in a global era where knowledge is acquired in many different forms and places.

Universities need to grasp the opportunity to address lifelong learning centrally in their mission and strategy as part of a wider definition of excellence and contribute to the culture of lifelong learning. In this aspect, universities need to respond positively to the increasingly diverse demand from a broad spectrum of students including post-secondary students, adult learners, professionals who seek to up-grade skills for the workplace, senior citizens taking advantage of their increasing longevity to pursue cultural interests and others, for high quality and relevant

higher education throughout their life time. It is essential to make flexible and transparent the learning paths for all learners to access and succeed in higher education in all its different forms and ensure that this educational offer is always of high quality.

In addition, universities need to develop internal quality culture when facilitating lifelong learning. It should also be ensured that an appropriate range of targeted learner support services are provided for increasing numbers of diverse learners through relevant academic and professional guidance, as well as other psychological counselling similar to –those provisions for internal students. Further, research and innovations of universities can be strengthened through lifelong learning strategies, and universities' specific contribution to lifelong learning should be underpinned by research. Researchers can be recognised as a fine example of lifelong learners, whose

own educational needs are continually evolving, also taking account of the changing skills required by the labour market. Lifelong learning can also be a source of new research methodologies and topics. Sometimes, providing relevant educational provision in a lifelong learning context cannot be done by universities on their own. The need for partnerships with other organizations is essential if provision is to be responsive, flexible and innovative.

At present, many universities in the country have entered to facilitate lifelong learning needs of individuals considering mainly the market demand for specialised areas. The access for individuals to enter the universities for continuous learning based on their career experience and professional background is however limited. The universities should act as role models in providing lifelong learning opportunities for the widest section of society.

## The 11<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 10<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards

The 11<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 10<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards ceremony is scheduled to be held on 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014 at the Faculty of Management and Finance. The theme of the event is "Knowledge Sharing for Present and Future Needs" The purpose of the 11<sup>th</sup> Academic session is to promote and Foster the research culture.

Extended abstracts and full papers for the technical sessions can be submitted by all staff members of the University of Ruhuna till 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013. Orations at the inauguration of the event are also invited.



### 11<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 10<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards 2013

"Knowledge Sharing for Present and Future Needs"

Abstract Submission Due: 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013

Venue: Faculty of Management and Finance  
Date: 19<sup>th</sup> March 2014

## All Island gold medal to a graduate of Ruhuna



Mr. AADDK Amarasinghe, who obtained a first class honors degree specializing in Chemistry, won the all island Gold Medal of the Inter University Chemistry Competition 2012/2013 conducted by the Royal Society of Chemistry, Sri Lanka Section on 09 March 2013. Over thirty best performed Chemistry graduates from the six main Universities participated in the competition.

Mr. Amarasinghe presented his final year research project titled *"isolation of natural pigments with potential photosensitizing property"* conducted under the supervision of Dr. AS Disanayake. University of Ruhuna is the only university to win this completion twice since its inception in 2001. Two merit awards were also presented to Mr. KKDPD Godakumbura, and Ms. RD Rajapaksha. The Awards Ceremony was held on 26 July 2013 at the SLAAS Auditorium, Colombo 7

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## Achievements of the academics

Prof. Ruchira Cumararatunga, Senior Professor of Fisheries Biology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine sciences & Technology was appointed as a Member of the Governing Board of the National Science and Technology Commission for 3 years with effect from June 2013.

Further, she was inducted on the 16th September 2013 as a Fellow of the National Academy of Science with effect from 5th April 2013.



## New library building for Faculty of Engineering

Foundation-stone laying ceremony for the New Library Building for the Faculty of Engineering was held on 5<sup>th</sup> July, 2013 with the participation of Senior Prof. Gamini Senanayake – Vice Chancellor, Dr. A.M.N. Alagiyawanna – Deputy Vice Chancellor, Dr. P.D.C. Perera - Dean, Heads of the Departments, Academic Staff, Non-academic Staff and students of the Faculty.



## New hostel for Faculty of Agriculture

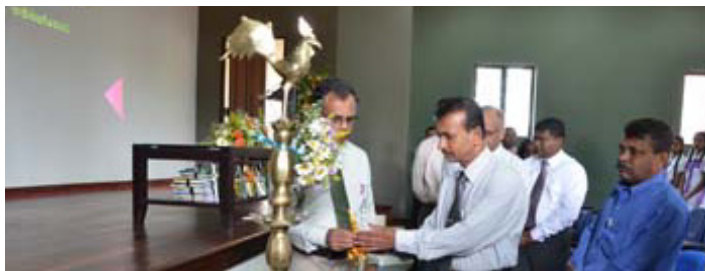
A new hostel building is to be constructed for the Faculty of Agriculture in year 2013. The land survey and the preparation had been completed by September 2013. The construction is to be started in early October 2013 and will have 100 rooms.



## Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies and Research at Hambanthota

Centre for Multidisciplinary Studies and Research has been established at the administration building complex in Hambanthota. The inauguration seminar was held on 21st June 2013 with the participation of a group of G.C.E. (A/L) students and teachers from the Hambanthota District. The Vice Chancellor was the Chief Guest of the inauguration seminar and the Deans of all Faculties participated in the event. Main objectives of this centre is to meet the future education and training needs of the farming, entrepreneurial, public and private sector work force and unemployed youths in the Southern area.

Programmes like Technical Writing and Presentation Skills, Optimization Techniques for Engineers, Engineering Survey in use of Total Stations, Research Methods and Basic Statistics, Computer Aided Project Planning, Diploma in Marketing Management, Short courses on IT and English for Employment etc. are to be started in the near future.





## Advanced tutorial workshop on thin film solar cells

Department of Physics of the Faculty of Science conducted a three day advanced workshop on Thin Film Solar Cells, their Science, Fabrication and Characterization during 19-21 March 2013 at the Department Mini Auditorium in collaboration with the

National Science Foundation (NSF), Sri Lanka, Sivananthan Laboratories, Inc., Bolingbrook, IL, USA and the Institute of Fundamental Studies (IFS), Kandy, Sri Lanka. This was the second in a series of tutorial workshops planned to be held in Sri

Lanka towards developing a trained workforce of scientists, engineers and technicians competent in alternative energy technologies in the country.

The workshop was conducted by Dr. Timothy J. Coutts, Dr. Ramesh G. Dhre, Dr. Timothy A.

Gessert and Dr. Mowafak Al-Jassim from USA for about 50 participants. The first workshop of this series was held at IFS, Kandy on 28th and 29th June 2012 and the third one is expected to be held at University of Jaffna in 2014.



## The 20<sup>th</sup> General Convocation of University of Ruhuna

The 20<sup>th</sup> general convocation of the University of Ruhuna was held eminently on 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup> May 2013 at the University Gymnasium. The summary of conferment of degrees is as follows:

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Honorary Degrees   | 01  |
| Postgraduate Degrees   | 150 |
| Degree of Bachelor of the Science of Agriculture               | 118 |
| Degree of Bachelor of Arts                                     | 507 |
| Degree of Bachelor of the Science of Engineering               | 188 |
| Degree of Bachelor of Business Administration                  | 277 |
| Degree of Bachelor of Medicine & Bachelor of Surgery           | 152 |
| Degree of Bachelor of Science                                  | 255 |
| Degree of Bachelor of Science in Fisheries and Marine Sciences | 22  |

Gold medals were awarded to overall best students and students with highest performance in different areas in various degree programmes. Ms. M.D.S. Apsara Dilrukshi from Faculty of Medicine won 7 Gold Medals. Honorary Degree was awarded to Professor (Mrs.) M.I. Thabrew appreciating her service to the University and the Nation. Convocation speeches were done by Professor (Mrs.) M.I. Thabrew, Professor Rohan Gaunaratna and Professor D. Atapattu for each session.





## Training of the Trainer - World Bank Workshop on Open Development

Development Resource Center (DRC) established in collaboration with the World Bank conducted a workshop on Open Development on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2013 at the University of Ruhuna. Members from the World Bank, Hambantota District Chamber of Commerce, and Matara District Chamber of Commerce & Industry participated in the event. Nine undergraduates

representing the Faculty of Management and Finance, and the Department of Economics also attended. Certificates for the participants were awarded by the Vice Chancellor. Event was sponsored by the World Bank and was organized by Dr. M.K. Wanniarachchige, Coordinator for DRC, under the guidance of the Vice Chancellor and the Deputy Vice Chancellor.



## International Tropical Agricultural Course

For the 3rd consecutive year, students from University of Ryukyus in Japan visited the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna from 26<sup>th</sup> August to 6<sup>th</sup> September 2013 and completed a four credit course of their Masters degree. Professor Shouji Inoue, Vice Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture,

University of the Ryukyus, Japan also visited the Faculty to discuss about the program and he expressed his gratitude to the University of Ruhuna. He asserted that University of the Ryukyus is willing to extend their research and academic exchange activities in coming years too.

## QIG WINDOW 4

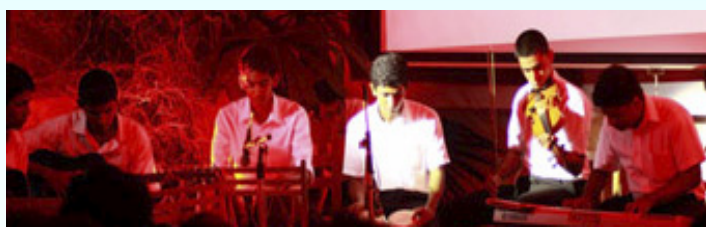
Department of Agriculture Engineering won the competitive QIG WINDOW 4 grants for a proposal on cinnamon commercialization receiving the highest aggregate marks among all universities.



## English Day 2013 at the Faculty of Engineering - A night of blooming talents

New addition to the student body of Faculty of Engineering was highly appreciated for their promising performance at the English day 2013 held on 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2013. The hard-working sessions were proved a success with their incredible performance at the event which was held under the theme "Green world". The grand event was brightened by the hid-

den talents of the students which were presented beautifully by performing dramas, songs, instrumentals and speeches. Chief Guest Dr. P. D. C. Perera, the Dean of the Faculty, inspired the students with his honorable presence. Lecturers, teachers and senior students attended the event to encourage the youngsters of the Faculty.



The 2<sup>nd</sup> International Symposium on Minor Fruits and Medicinal Plants is scheduled to be held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2013 at the Faculty of Agriculture.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> ISMF & MP will include an invited keynote speech, oral presentation sessions and a poster session. This symposium will provide an opportunity for eminent scientists, researchers, growers, traders, processors and policy makers in universities, research institutions, industry and nongovernmental organizations to present their cutting edge researches and to discuss various issues for the development of minor fruits and medicinal plants.



International Symposium on Agriculture & Environment (ISAE) 2013 will be held on 28<sup>th</sup> November 2013 at the Faculty of Agriculture, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya. ISAE 2013 program will include invited keynote speeches, oral presentation sessions and a poster session.

## MoU between University of Ruhuna and Biosphere Foundation, USA

Institutional collaboration agreement was signed between University of Ruhuna and the Biosphere Foundation, USA on 25th August 2013, through the coordination of Professor Tilak P. Gamage, Dean, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology. Under the proposed activities;

i) a blue whale identification database will be set up at the Indian Ocean Marine Mammal Research Center (IOMMRC).

ii) transects off the southern coast of Sri Lanka will be carried out to understand marine mammal distribution around the shipping lane.

iii) an "Emergency Response Team" based onboard the vessels will collect information from dead animals (strandings, ship-strikes, net entanglement) that will be stored at IOMMRC.



## High-level Delegation to University of Ruhuna

High level delegation from Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) visited University of Ruhuna on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013 in conjunction with the opening of 'Joint Observatory and Research Center' of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Science & Technology.

The delegation included Professor Yaping Zhang, The Vice President of CAS, Mr. Huasheng Qiu, Deputy Director, Bureau of International Cooperation of CAS, Professor Jin Chen, Director, Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of CAS, Professor Yonggang Yao, Deputy Director, Kunming Institute of Zoology, CAS, Professor Dongxiao Wang, Deputy Director, South China Sea Institute of Oceanology of CAS, Professor Youshao Wang, Deputy Director, State Key Laboratory of Tropical Oceanography, SCSIO of CAS, Professor Qinwei Qin, Director, Key Laboratory of Tropical Marine Bio-resources and Ecology, SCSIO of CAS, Ms. Liming LI, Senior Officer, Xishuangbanna Tropical Botanical Garden of CAS, Mr. Yiqi Jiang, Program Manager, Bureau of International Cooperation, CAS.

The delegation held a fruitful discussion with the Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna for expanding its relationship to the other subject disciplines in the University.

## Joint Observatory and Research Center at University of Ruhuna

Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology (FMST) under the Memorandum of Understand signed with the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO) of the Chinese Academy of Sciences (CAS) established the 'Joint Observatory and Research Centre' at the University. The Vice Chancellor University of Ruhuna, Professor Gamini Senanayaka and the Vice President of the Chinese Academy of Sciences Professor Yaping Zhang declared opened the center on 24<sup>th</sup> September 2013. The Centre is presently equipped with a fully automated weather station which measure rainfall, air temperature, wind speed, wind direction, humidity, atmospheric pressure, u-st speed and direction. Also, the tidal and wave gauge located nearly 400 m off in the sea from the station, measure tidal fluctuation and wave heights. It has been planed to establish a fully automated deep ocean observatory off Dondra with all kinds of modern multi-layered sensors to monitor deep sea status.

The data recoded at this station is presently used to tune-up the global weather forecasting model of the SCSIO of CAS. Those information can be obtained from the Dean of the Faculty on request. The Faculty expects to establish a weather forecasting station which will display reliable weather updates for the benefit of local community under the same project.





## University of Ruhuna supports to manage water resources in Hambantota

Two research projects are being conducted by the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology with the collaboration of Department of Civil Engineering, University of Moratuwa. The project on restoration potential of an-

cient tank system of Walawe River Basin for sustainable water resource management and livelihood development has been funded by Transforming University of Ruhuna to International Status (TURIS) project. This re-

search has been expanded for other three river basins in Ruhunu Rata with the financial support from National Research Council (NRC) of Sri Lanka.

A discussion on these two projects was held on 23rd September 2013 with

the participation of District Secretary and Planning, Irrigation, Agriculture and Fisheries officers of the Hambantota District to identify the water requirements and their issues needed to be addressed under these projects.

## Restoration and conservation of Sri Lankan lagoon ecosystems

As a part of the collaborative research programme between Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology (FMST), University of Ruhuna and Saitama University, Japan, Assistant Professor Echii Furusato visited University of Ruhuna from 20th - 26<sup>th</sup>

September 2013 to commence the project titled "the project is human altered hydrodynamics of coastal lagoons and its impact to other natural phenomena". This is a part of a long run project started by Professor Tilak P. Gamage of the Faculty of FMST

with Professor Norio Tanaka of Saitama University just after signing the Memorandum of Understanding between two institutes. Number of research papers have been published through the project. Presently, two students of University of Ruhuna, Mr. La-

sith Perera at Saitama University and Mr. Harsha Chathuranga at the University of Ruhuna are conducting the relevant research leading to their Masters Degrees.



## Services rendered to community

A/L students of several schools were given an opportunity to visit the Department of Zoology and study animal specimens. The students of MR/Mahinda Rajapaksha Vidyalaya, Dondra visited the laboratories and animal house on July 17, 2013 to become aware of the practical and research that are being carried out. A/L Biology students of H/Sri Lanka-Singapore Friendship College, MR/Weeraketiya and MR/ Yatiyana Maha Vidyalaya accompanied by their Biology teachers visited the laboratories of the department on July 19, 2013, and they were given the opportunity of studying selected animal specimens relevant to their syllabus.

## Institution of Mechanical Engineers (UK) visited the Faculty of Engineering

Delegates from the Institution of Mechanical Engineers (IMEchE) visited the Faculty of Engineering on 5<sup>th</sup> April, 2013 for a special meeting with the academic staff.

The meeting was held with the participation of the Dean of the Faculty, Heads of the Departments of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering,

Electrical and Information Engineering, and Interdisciplinary Studies, Professor Isobel Pollock, President of IMechE (UK), Mr. Robin Hulf, Advisor of IMechE (UK), Mr. Prabal Sharma, Consulting Director of IMechE (India), Mr. Lucien Perera, Regional Chair of IMechE (South Asian Region), Mr. Chanaka Wanniarachchi,

Head of Operation of Glasco Smithkline and Mr. Lolitha Wickramarachchi, Assistant General Manager of Engineering, Aitiken Spence. The participants

made expedient suggestions and constructive comments for the development of the Department of Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering.





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To:-

### About UoR Highlights

Welcome to Vol. 2 No. 2 of *UoR Highlights*, the official newsletter of the University of Ruhuna.

We publish *UoR Highlights* biannually with the aim of fostering a dialog among our key stakeholders.

More specifically, the *UoR Highlights* publishes information on recent developments, events, research publications, conferences and collaborative research projects at the University of Ruhuna. In addition, in each issue, we

publish feature articles which address current topics in education and higher education.

Together with other publications at the University of Ruhuna, we believe that *UoR Highlights* will generate interest among

our stakeholders by creating a platform for fostering an effective dialogue.

We welcome your comments and suggestions that will enhance the future directions of *UoR Highlights*.

### Science Faculty Day-2013

The Science Faculty Day - 2013 was held on 2nd October 2013. Objective of this event is to develop a friendly, harmonious and pleasant environment by collective activities among students and academic/non-academic staff and to build the unity of the Faculty. The event was organized by a committee of academic/non-academic staff and students chaired by Dr. Pushpa Abeysinghe. This event was first started in 2006.

The event was commemorated with the participation of Vice Chancellor as the Chief Guest. Along with the event, more than 100 valuable plants were planted throughout the university premises. The day continued with sport activities such as a mini-marathon, cricket and netball games, etc. To improve the soft-skills of the students, a talent show, an art competition and a number of other activities were also conducted.

The event was mainly funded through the HETC project and contributions from staff of the Faculty and several organizations in the area.



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