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# Biannual Newsletter

# UoR Highlights

UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA - SRI LANKA



## 17<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 16<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards – 2020

17<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 16<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards (ASVCA) - 2020 of University of Ruhuna was successfully held on the 4<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 under the theme 'Innovation and Creativity for Social Wellbeing.' ASVCA is the most prestigious annual academic event of the university calendar, which is attended by the academic community across the ten faculties. This year, ASVCA was hosted by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at Wallamadama premises, providing a platform for seventy five academics to disseminate new branches of knowledge through their respective research findings in technical and poster sessions, conducted under diverse disciplines: Humanities and Social Sciences, Mathematics, Engineering and Technology, Medicine and Allied Health Sciences, Agriculture and Environmental Sciences, Management and Entrepreneurship, Language, Religion and Literature, and Sciences, Fisheries and Aquatic Sciences.

The Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena graced the inaugural ceremony as the Chief Guest of 17<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 16<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards. Professor Kusuma Karunaratne, Professor Emeritus delivered the keynote address on "21<sup>st</sup> Century Education, Prospects and Challenges" and the invited oration was delivered by Professor Sarath Amarasinghe, Professor Emeritus on "Advanced Sociological Research to Address Social Issues in the Contemporary Sri Lankan Society" in the presence of the distinguished gathering, comprising Prof. Saman Chandana, Deputy Vice Chancellor, all Deans of the faculties, faculty coordinators and paper presenters. The abstract volume was launched by Dr. Wijerathne Bohingamuwa, Editor-in-Chief of the 17<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions. The conferment of Emeritus Professorships to Professor Sarath Amarasinghe and Professor S. Wawwage of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Professor P. R. T. Cumararatunga of the Faculty of Fisheries & Marine Sciences



and Technology and Professor B.G. Nanayakkara of the Faculty of Medicine was among the highlights of the morning's proceedings. The recipients of the 16<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards, Dr. Manjula Hettiarachchi of the Faculty of Medicine as the Most Outstanding Scholar, Dr. Sunanda Kodikara of the Faculty of Science as the Most Outstanding Young Researcher, K.T. Methdasun Sandamal of the Faculty of Technology as the Most Outstanding Student Inventor/Innovator, Prof. Channa Yahathugoda of the Faculty of Medicine as the Highest Recipients of Grants and Dr. Sunanda Kodikara of the Faculty of Science as the Most Outstanding Convener of International Conferences / Promoter of International Relations were awarded by Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna at the event. Moreover, Prof. W.T.S. Dammini Premachandra of the Faculty of Science, Ms. E.H.Silva of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences, Ms. Dulanjali Gamage of the Faculty of Agriculture, Dr. Amila Sirisena of the Faculty of Management and Finance, Dr. H.C.P. Karunasena of the Faculty of Engineering, Ms. H.P.A.T. Weerakoon of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology, Mr. E.P. Rohan of the Faculty of Engineering, Ms. A.P.H.I. Abey Suriya of the Faculty of Science and Ms. E.H. Silva of the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences were honored with the Best Presenter awards for their performance at the technical sessions of the 16<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions held in the year 2019.

The event was organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, led by Senior Professor P. Hewage, Chairperson, Dr. Nandasiri Keembiyahetti, Secretary, and Dr. Chandika Gunasinghe, Treasurer of 17<sup>th</sup> Academic Sessions and 16<sup>th</sup> Vice Chancellor's Awards at a cost of Rs. 1.4 million.



## Ruhuna Engineering Faculty at Galle is Enjoying 20 Years of Progress

**Dr. H.H.J. Keerthisena**

**Founder Dean, Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna**

My association with Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna began in February 1997 when I was invited to serve as the coordinator of the proposed Faculty of Engineering at Hapugala. University of Peradeniya granted me permission to accept this responsibility while continuing my teaching duties at Faculty of Engineering, University of Peradeniya. With the help of a committed group of academics we achieved a beautiful dream of creating an impressive infrastructure, acquiring laboratory and library facilities, and creating an ideal engineering curriculum in record time to admit the first batch of students in March 2000. Faculty of Engineering at Hapugala was a trendsetter in implementing a semester-based curriculum with innovative schemes of assessment and academic regulations.

On 27<sup>th</sup> March 2000 we admitted the first group of 100 students for the development program and commenced the academic work of the new faculty on 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2000. Recruitment of senior academics was a problem we faced even at Peradeniya as many Engineers with postgraduate qualifications preferred the cushy life in Colombo. I was granted permission by University of Peradeniya to accept the responsibility as acting Dean of Ruhuna Engineering Faculty from 9<sup>th</sup> May 2000. We had our first Faculty board meeting on 30<sup>th</sup> May 2000 where the Academic Calendar and the academic regulations were discussed and adopted. Five out of the ten members were newly recruited bright lecturers bubbling with enthusiasm. It was a memorable experience to give leadership to the Faculty during 2000-2002 with a committed group of young academics, overcoming all obstacles, and shortage of academic resources

If someone were to ask me to pick one word to best describe the initial success of Ruhuna Engineering Faculty, I would choose perseverance. There have been a lot of potholes, and roadblocks along the way but through perseverance, commitment and hard work we managed to succeed. I used to constantly remind my colleagues that perseverance creates winners. Perseverance is determination to keep going despite facing obstacles.

PERSEVERE stands for:

- Persist no matter what.
- Endure discomfort.
- Request help.
- Steadfastly hold on to your beliefs and values.
- Envision triumph.
- Very consistently keep at it.
- Embrace adversity as your teacher.
- Refuse to give up.
- Enjoy and celebrate every tiny bit of progress!

In passing I am happy to mention that three from the list of those present at the first faculty board meeting held on 30th May, 2000 are present today. Dr. Harsha Sooriyaarachchi is providing exemplary leadership as the Dean/Engineering and Dr. Mihirini Wagarachchi as the Head/Interdisciplinary studies while myself with “no arachchi” is serving as the accreditation consultant. I enjoy my stay with a happy bunch of staff and students at Hapugala and I am thankful to them for making use of me. I am indeed proud of the progress made over the past two decades. The proposed intake of 500 will stretch the resources to the limit but I have every confidence in Ruhuna Engineering Faculty’s perseverance to produce true engineering professionals with knowledge, skills and attitudes to play leadership roles in our society.

## International Symposium on Agriculture and Environment (ISAE) 2020

International Symposium on Agriculture and Environment (ISAE) 2020 held on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020 at the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna, Mapalana, Kamburupitiya. It is one of the major events organized by the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna where our staff and the students congregate with the professionals around the world, in view of securing the future of agriculture and environment. The Chief Guest of the main event was Mr. Eric LAVERTU, Ambassador of France to Sri Lanka. The main theme of ISAE 2020 was “Redefining Agricultural and Environmental policies: Emerging Challenges and New Horizons.” ISAE 2020 was able to accomplish its goals by providing a constructive platform for researchers around the world to share their valuable research findings (around 170 scholarly articles related to 12 research themes were presented and around 400 participants locally and internationally participated) and develop an intellectual discussion with the local and foreign researchers of respective fields of Agriculture and Environment.



His Excellency the Ambassador of France to Sri Lanka and Maldives Mr. Eric Lavertu met Vice Chancellor at the Faculty of Agriculture, during his visit to Mapalana to participate as the Chief Guest of the ISAE 2020 on 14<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

## Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference 2020 (RISTCON 2020)

The 7<sup>th</sup> Ruhuna International Science and Technology Conference 2020 was successfully held on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2020 at the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna. RISTCON is an excellent forum to share research findings on a wide range of areas in the fields of Science and Technology while opening doors for research interactions among peers across many disciplines. The event was enlightened by 250 participants. The program was lined up with Inauguration, Technical Sessions, Poster Session and



Award of Certificates for presenters. The inaugural session was graced by the attendance of Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna as the Chief Guest, Keynote Speaker, Guest Speaker, Deans of Faculties, Academics, Scientists and students. Prof. Ruey-an Doong was the Keynote speaker from the Institute of Analytical and Environmental Sciences, National Tsing Hua University, Taiwan. Prof. K.M. Nalin de Silva delivered the Guest Speech. The theme of the conference was “Sustainability through advancement in science and technology.” The theme had been decided to be broad in order to accommodate as many Science and Technology areas as possible, and to be able to share research findings in multidisciplinary areas of research. In total, 205 abstracts were received and all abstracts were reviewed by two reviewers and edited by a board of editors. The reviewing panel consisted of 192 reviewers covering all areas of Science and Technology. Hundred and forty eight abstracts of diverse disciplines from basic sciences to applied sciences and technology were presented in five parallel Technical Sessions and a Poster Session.



### Rohana - Bharati Hindi Prabodhini

The inaugural Ceremony of the Hindi Language Teaching Programme, "Rohana - Bharati Hindi Prabodhini" was held at the University premises on 17<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. Prem K.Nair, Consulate General of India, Hambanthota



graced the event as the Chief Guest and the guest speech was delivered by Senior Professor Upul Ranjith Hewawitanagamage from the Department of Hindi Studies, University of Kelaniya. The Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna, Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, Dr. Saman Udayakantha, Acting Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, Dr. Monika Sharma, Visiting Instructor in Hindi, Indian High Commission of Sri Lanka, Colombo and Mrs. R. Malawi Patirana, Coordinator of CMLC took part in the event, adding glamour to the academic endeavor.

### AdCon 2019

Over 300 skillful and energetic undergraduates with exceptional creative skills representing all State Universities in Sri Lanka participated in the initial round of the event which was held in the Unilever Sri Lanka main premises in Colombo. At the technical workshop which denoted the commencement of the first round, the contestants were given a client brief by the Closeup brand manager. Contestants were also provided with knowledge on how to successfully roll out a marketing campaign by the



specialist guest speaker Mr Nathasoruban Sivapatham, the Chief Creative Officer of TBWA Sri Lanka, a Global Advertising Agency. The contestants were expected to come up with creative integrated communication plans to sell the product to the final consumer. The effectiveness of the communication plans of all competing universities were evaluated based on criteria such as creativity, research insight and the potential for implementation. The integrated marketing communication plans were evaluated by several panels of judges who have excelled in their professional and academic fields. After a round of stringent evaluation, the judges managed to select the top 7 performing teams representing the University of Sri Jayewardenepura (Team “Sankalana”), University of Jaffna (Team “Dream Viewers”), Wayamba University of Sri Lanka (Team “X” and Team “Alter Ego”), Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (Team “Tycoons”), South Eastern University of Sri Lanka (Team “Marketroops”) and the University of Moratuwa (Team “Wave”) to compete for the Grand Prize in the final round.



The finalists of the “AdCon 2019” were expected to implement the developed communication plan to enhance the visibility of the consumer product. Before implementing their plans, teams were exposed to a face-to-face discussion with the Closeup Brand Manager, Mr Madusha Rajarathna in order to discuss the important matters relating to the campaign they proposed. These teams implemented their respective communications plans in digital media platforms; Facebook and YouTube for a period of 8 weeks and the effectiveness of the implementation was assessed by a panel of Judges headed by Dr T. S. L. W. Gunawardhana, the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Finance. Finally, the grand finale of the awarding ceremony was held on 06<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 in the presence of Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna. The team “Sankalana” from University of Sri Jayewardenepura became the champions of the competition.

### A Three-Day Workshop on Stimulating Undergraduates and Value Creation through Sharing Experiential Learning

A three-day workshop, organized by Dr. M.B.F Mafasiya, Mrs. Sandya Sriyani, and Mrs. Menaka Dilrukshi of the Department of Management and Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Management and Finance under the theme of “Stimulating Undergraduates and Value Creation through Sharing Experiential Learning” for the subjects of Social and Green Entrepreneurship, Venture Strategies, and Tourism and Entrepreneurship was held on 11<sup>th</sup>, 12<sup>th</sup>



and 13<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 at the University Guest House. The workshop basically aimed at providing 3000 level second semester undergraduates with practical exposure to entrepreneurship. Dr. Lalith Welmedage, Mrs. Dilrukshi Wijesekara, and Mr. Sumedha Kulathunga were the resource persons of the session, and they were able to make the environment more conducive. The students were keen in interacting with each other throughout the session, thus resulting in a great success with positive feedback.

## **Ruhuna Journal of Science is recognized by Master Journal List of Web of Science and World Catalogue of Scientific Journals**

Ruhuna Journal of Science (RJS) published by the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna has been recognized by Web of Science (WoS), enlisting it in the Master Journal list, and indexed in 'Zoological Records' under WoS collection. The Journal is also included in the World Catalogue of Scientific Journals (WCOSJ).

RJS commenced publishing its first Volume in 2006 as a printed multidisciplinary science journal with Prof. W.G.D. Dharmaratna as the Managing Editor and continued as an annual peer-reviewed journal until 2009. From 2014 onwards, RJS is published as an internationally recognized open access online journal with two issues published in June and December each year. Journal will reach its 11<sup>th</sup> annual Volume this year.

Since 2017, RJS has been registered as a contributor for the Open Archives Initiative (OAI), included in the Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), and included in Sri Lanka Journals Online (SLJOL) having TWO-STAR rating by the Journal Publishing Practices and Standards (JPPS). RJS is currently published by a renowned Editorial Board headed by the continuing founding Editor Prof. W.G.D. Dharmaratna as the Senior Editor-in-Chief and Dr. Janak J. Wedagedara (UK) and Prof. K.B. Suneetha Gunawickrama as two sectional Editors-in-Chief.

## **The DELT Commenced the Intensive English Programme for New Entrants**

The staff of the Department of English Language Teaching (DELT) commenced the Intensive English Programme for New Entrants on 1<sup>st</sup> January, 2020. The book "A Comprehensive Course of English for New Entrants" which was launched by the DELT with the objective of enhancing speaking, reading, listening and writing skills of undergraduates was distributed among the freshers and used as a textbook during the course. Alongside the aforementioned book, "A Resource Book for the ESL Classroom" which is a compilation of games and activities and the booklet namely, "Supplementary Reading" were utilized by the academic staff in making the process of language learning fun, interesting and enjoyable for new entrants. Freshers enthusiastically participated in the course which adopted a student-centered approach, allowing them to be responsible and autonomous learners sans being mere passive recipients of knowledge.

## Construction of the Professorial Ward Complex

Foundation stone was laid on 21.02.2020 for 10 storied Professorial Ward Complex, a jointly managed facility by Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna and Teaching Hospital, Karapitiya. Snr. Prof. Sujeewa Amarasena, Vice Chancellor, University of Ruhuna, Prof. Vasantha Devasiri, the Dean, Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Sampath Ranaweera, Director, Teaching Hospital, Galle were among the dignitaries present. The Complex harboring key clinical specialties will contain teaching facilities to accommodate a higher intake of students. It will also improve clinical care provision both qualitatively and quantitatively to patients of Southern Province. Addressing a long felt need for a dedicated and suitably equipped clinical facility for Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna, the Professorial Ward Complex is expected to be functioning by late 2022.



## COVID-19 PR-PCR Testing Established at the Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna

With the emergence of the COVID-19 pandemic, the Ministry of Health, Sri Lanka found it very difficult to cope with the increasing demand for the COVID-19 RT-PCR test for the patients and their contacts. The Department of Microbiology, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna expressed the willingness to support COVID-19 RT-PCR testing to the Ministry of Health in late April to support the national demand.

The Department of Microbiology hosts the only RT-PCR machine in the Southern Province apart for the one at the Teaching Hospital Karapitiya. This RT-PCR machine was donated in 2018 by the Duke University US, who is a research collaborator of the Faculty of Medicine since 2006.

Although the Department of Microbiology is conducting research and handling patient samples, the infrastructure was not ideal to handle highly infectious material such as COVID-19 virus. Therefore, we had to rearrange the laboratory in the department to suit the requirements. We have converted a



student tutorial room in the virology section of the Department into the sample extraction area. Only available Biosafety cabinet was more than 10 years old thus had to get down a technical engineer from the Local Agents in Colombo under special permission to cross district borders during the period of lockdown to service and to check the performance of the safety cabinet. We had to move that machine from the bacteriology diagnostic laboratory to the virology section. The Duke University kindly agreed to donate the PCR tubes, Extraction kits and most of the consumables which were already purchased for the ongoing studies in the Duke Ruhuna Research Collaboration to commence the COVID-19 testing process. They also immediately couriered CDC COVID-19 PCR kit from US at a time when even it was of high demand in the US. With these initial arrangements we completed the test validation process and were granted permission to do the testing on 14.05.2020.

Thereafter it took some time to arrange consumables from the Medical Supplies Division of the Ministry of Health and we have initiated testing patient samples since 19.06.2020. Now we are contributing to the COVID-19 control activities by testing OPD surveillance samples in the Southern Province.

All the administrative and technical support provided by Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor - University of Ruhuna, Professor Vasatha Devasiri, Dean - Faculty of Medicine, Dr. Hemantha Beneragama, Deputy Director General Laboratory Services and all the officials at the Ministry of Health, Colombo, Dr. Nayomi Danthanarayana, Consultant Virologist at the Teaching Hospital Karapitiya helped during the process of arranging the laboratory and establishing the test and all the members of the Department of Microbiology.

Dr. Sunethra Gunasena, Senior Lecturer in the Department specialized in Virology is supervising the testing process while Mr. Nishantha Gunasekara is the key technical officer involved in PCR testing. All the other technical officers and other staff members are committed to different components of this testing process. The Duke University, US provided the RT-PCR machine and consumables & the technical expertise provided by Dr. Brad Nicholson.

The University of Ruhuna can be proud of this commitment made by the Department of Microbiology in supporting the national COVID-19 diagnostic network.

## Achievements Technology Transfer Office. University of Ruhuna 2020

Technology Transfer office (TTO) successfully attained the phase I, II and III of the World Bank targets and ready for phase IV completion.

TTO was able to do licensing of six herbal products developed jointly by the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences and Faculty of Medicine and will be marketed under leading Tea exporters, Heritage Teas Private Limited.

Two robots prototypes from the Faculty of Engineering were funded and ready for commercialization.



University Technology Office is working collaboratively with Tech city project Homagama from the Ministry of Urban development to be as the partner in the project.

Formulae for instant nutritionally balanced breakfast meal from the Faculty of Medicine, Vegetable spread /pasta sauce and Beet Jam from Faculty of Agriculture were successfully negotiated with Cargills PLC for marketing. Most of the research projects were facilitated by patent data base supports.

## Workshop on Recruitment Interviews

A workshop on Recruitment Interviews under the theme of Assuring the Fairness in Selection and Recruitment was held on 17<sup>th</sup> June 2020 at Marriott Resort and Spa, Weligama. Around 100 members including Deans, Heads of the Departments and council members participated in this workshop. The keynote speech on Social Justice in the Recruitment Process was delivered by Mr. Mohan Peris, PC, Former Chief Justice.



This workshop was organized by the Office of Vice-Chancellor with the support of Deputy Registrar, Academic Establishment

Branch. This workshop aimed to provide a forum to all relevant stakeholders to discuss issues of the current recruitment procedure and mark scheme and to suggest the required modifications.



## Inauguration of the EU funded Capacity Building Project on “Developing Inclusive Education for students with disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities (IncEdu)”

The University of Ruhuna became a proud partner of the IncEdu international project which is coordinated by the University of Peradeniya. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences coordinates the said project for the university.

The IncEdu project addresses a significant issue in higher education in Sri Lanka that has not received adequate attention. It intends to develop a system of support for equalising opportunities for students with disabilities in Sri Lankan Universities. The main activities of the project during the period of 3 years (2020-2023), include, creating community awareness, developing competency of staff of the partner universities in Sri Lanka and establishing a model support centre with required equipment and assistive technology. It is believed that promoting and developing access to inclusive education should be given priority in order to treat those students without discrimination and to protect their rights.

The project partnership consists of 4 well renowned European Universities; Masaryk University, Czech Republic, Zagreb University of Croatia, Transylvania University of Brasov, Romania and Uppsala University of Sweden, and 4 universities from Sri Lanka: University of Peradeniya, University of Ruhuna, Eastern University and Sri Lanka Technological Campus.

The inaugural meeting that was hosted by the University of Peradeniya was held on 26th – 28th of February 2020 in Kandy.



## Award from the Indian High Commissioner

Faculty of Allied Health Sciences received an award from the Indian High Commissioner on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 to arrange three gold medals for the best performing Allied Health Science students of the B.Sc. Medical Laboratory Science, B.Sc. Nursing and B.Pharmacy degree courses annually.



## Establishment of Erasmus Mundas TROPIMUNDO Master programme



The Erasmus Mundus Joint Master Degree in Tropical Biodiversity and Ecosystems (TROPIMUNDO) is a highly competitive and rigorous programme carrying the European Commission's only educational excellence label (Erasmus Mundus) and is run jointly between Université libre de Bruxelles (Belgium), Vrije Universiteit Brussel (Belgium), Sorbonne Université (France), National Museum of Natural History (France), Università degli Studi di Firenze (Italy), Université de Guyane (French Guiana), Université des Antilles (Guadeloupe), Université de Dschang (Cameroon), Université d'Antananarivo (Madagascar), Université de

La Réunion (Reunion Island), Universiti Malaysia Terengganu (Malaysia) and University of Ruhuna (Sri Lanka). Accordingly, students who select University of Ruhuna as their destination in second semester come to the university to complete 30 credits. First batch of the students started their second semester on 18<sup>th</sup> of February, 2020 and successfully completed the semester by 2<sup>nd</sup> of July, 2020. This included field visits to different ecosystems. The programme was processed through CINTA, University of Ruhuna.

## Kick-off Meeting of the Building Resilience in Tropical Agro-ecosystems (BRITAE) Project

The proposal for the BRITAE project was developed by five Sri Lankan universities and four European Union (EU) universities and the team was able to secure a highly competitive and prestigious international research grant (Ref. No. 610012-EPP-1-2019-1-LK-EPPKA2-CBHE-JP) under the grant scheme of the Education, Audiovisual and Culture Executive Agency (Erasmus+: Higher Education - International Capacity Building – Joint Projects) of the European Union. The project duration is three years (15.01.2020 - 14.01.2023). The Sri Lankan partner universities are University of Ruhuna (UOR) (leading university), University of Colombo (UOC), University of Moratuwa (UOM), University of Sri Jayawardenepura (USJP), and Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL) whereas European partner universities include Huddersfield University, UK (HUD), University of Central Lancashire, UK (UCLan), Tallinn University of Technology, Estonia (TUT) and Vilnius Gediminas Technical University, Lithuania (VGTU). The project officially commenced with the kick-off meeting which was held on 25<sup>th</sup> - 28<sup>th</sup>

February, 2020 at Hotel Turyaa, Kalutara and all nine partner universities were represented at the event. Five Vice Chancellors from the local partner universities and Mr. N.M.S.I. Arambepola were invited to the inaugural session of the meeting. Considering the expertise knowledge on the tropical agro-ecosystems, Mr. N.N.S.I. Arambepola was invited as the keynote speaker of the inaugural session. Fruit Research and Development Institute, Horana, HDEES Extract (Pvt) Ltd and Madu ganga were the targeted destinations of the one-day field visit. The kick-off meeting was successfully closed after the first steering committee meeting of the project. The BRITAE team is in the process of organizing a progress review meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> June, 2020 using the Zoom conferencing facility.



## Meeting with the Canadian High Commissioner in Sri Lanka Master Programme

His Excellency David McKinnon, The Canadian High commissioner in Sri Lanka visited the University of Ruhuna on 11<sup>th</sup> February 2020. A brief meeting was held with the Deputy Vice Chancellor and Alumni of Canadian Universities currently employed in University of Ruhuna for future collaborations.



## Meeting with the Delegates from Agder University, Norway



A delegation from Agder University, Norway visited University of Ruhuna on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 and had a meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Director/CINTA and members of the academic staff of Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna. The visiting team consisted of Anne Halvorsen – Dean, Hanne Haaland - Head of the Department, Per Sigurd Sørensen - Faculty Director, Arne Olav Oyhus - Professor, Cecilie Mawdsley - PhD/research Adviser and Jann ik Timenes - International Coordinator where possibilities for strengthening existing collaborations was discussed.

## Meeting with Delegates from Okayama University, Japan

A four-member delegation from the Graduate School of Environmental and Life Sciences, Okayama University, Japan visited University of Ruhuna on 13<sup>th</sup> February 2020.

A meeting was held at the office of the Vice Chancellor to discuss further collaboration with the University of Ruhuna. The following members were present in the meeting representing the visiting team.

1. Prof. Hiroaki Funahashi, Dean
2. Prof. Morihiro Maeda
3. Prof. Hiroaki Somura
4. Ms. Yu Tsuha

Vice Chancellor, Deputy Vice Chancellor, Director/CINTA, and Prof. DAL Leelamanie/Faculty of Agriculture and AR/CINTA represented the University of Ruhuna for the meeting.



## Meeting with the Delegation from Norwegian College of Fishery Science, University of Tromso, Norway



Three visiting delegates from Norwegian College of Fishery Science, University of Tromso, Norway visited University of Ruhuna on 13<sup>th</sup> January 2020. Dr. Kathrine Tveiterås, the Dean and two professors Prof Jorge Santos, Prof. Sveine Ottar of the Norwegian College of Fishery Sciences participated in the meeting with the Vice Chancellor, Deans, Director/CINTA, Prof Suneetha Gunawickrama, Coordinator of the NOR-LANKA BLUE project, Dr. Nilantha de Silva, Faculty of Agriculture, and AR/CINTA.

## Meeting with Professor Ruey-an Doong from Taiwan

Professor Ruey-an Doong, Institute of Analytical and Environmental Science and Dean, Tsing Hua International College met Director/CINTA at the office of the Center for International Affairs along with Prof. R. A. Maithreepala, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology to discuss future collaborative opportunities with University of Ruhuna.



## Meeting with Professor Ragupathy Kannan from USA

Prof. Ragupathy Kannan from University of Arkansas, USA was awarded a full bright fellowship attached to the Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna from 01.02.2020 to 01.08.2020. He was awarded a Visiting Professor status by the senate of the University of Ruhuna. Prof. Kannan met Director/CINTA at his office along with Prof. Suneetha Gunawickrama of Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna.

## A meeting with the Duchess of Sussex

Mr. Kokuhenadige Hashan Niroshana of the Department of Oceanography and Marine Geology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology was invited for a meeting with the Patron of the Association of Commonwealth Universities (ACU), The Duchess of Sussex, on the 9<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, Commonwealth Day at Buckingham Palace, London, United Kingdom. At this royal event Mr. Niroshana represented the group of scholars included Commonwealth Scholars, Chevening Scholars and ACU Blue Charter Fellows, and he was able to share his research and its impact with the Duchess while leading the group of scholars who studying and researching on climate and environment.



# Students in Action

## Swara Dehehana

Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology (FMST), organized an aesthetic event "Swara Dehena" on 16<sup>th</sup> Jan 2020 at the Faculty auditorium. The program seeks the beauty of stage dramas, Sinhala films, folk songs, and Sinhala music etc., and this event was an opportunity for students to take the aesthetic enjoyment in the context of science based educational environment.



This three hour event was based on the reviews of drama songs from Nuurthi to modern stage drama. Mr. Ishara Pramudith Wickremasinghe, Assistant lecturer of the unit of Drama & Theatre and Image arts of the Faculty of Humanities, University of Kelaniya, who is a well-known stage drama



actor and a singer was the resource person of the event. The Dean of the faculty, academic staff, nonacademic staff, students of FMST and students from other faculties also participated in the program.

## මවුන්ට් බැටන් කාර්යාලය at the Inter Faculty Short Drama competition

In parallel with the Mahathma Gandhi 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary, the Cultural Center of the University of Ruhuna organized an inter faculty short drama competition and it was held on 05<sup>th</sup> March 2020. Drama group of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology won the championship for their outstanding performances for their drama "Mount Batton Karyalaya' (මවුන්ට් බැටන් කාර්යාලය). In addition to overall championship, FMST students have secured seven other awards out of the 10 total awards allocated for different other performances. Dr. S.S. Herath and Mrs. PAKN Dissanayake, were the faculty coordinators of the event this year.

Winners are as bellow.

Best Actor – Mr. S.A.D.M. Perera (FM/FS/2016/462)

Best Actress – Miss W.B.A.M. Perera (FM/FW/2016/007)

Best Supporting Actor – Mr. N.D. Gajanayaka  
(FM/FW/2016/006)

Best Script – Mr. S.A.D.M. Perera (FM/FS/2016/462)



### Best Make up

- Miss M.C.M. Rathnayake (FM/FS/2016/465)
- Miss W.M.S.J. Bandara (FM/FW/2016/032)

### Best Costume

- Miss M.C.M. Rathnayake (FM/FS/2016/465)
- Miss W.M.S.J. Bandara (FM/FW/2016/032)
- Miss P.E. Jayathilake (FM/FW/2016/017)

### Best Set Designing

- Miss W.D.M.H. Wijerathne (FM/FS/2016/497)
- Mr. L.P.L.S. Pathirana (FM/FS/2016/468)
- Mr. W.W.L. Sachintha (FM/FS/2016/494)
- Miss P.E. Jayathilake (FM/FW/2016/017)



## Interfaculty Drama Competition - 2020

The Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna emerged the second runner-up of the Interfaculty Drama Competition was organized by the Cultural Centre, University of Ruhuna to commemorate the 150<sup>th</sup> Birth Anniversary of the Late Mahatma Gandhi. The competition was held on the 06<sup>th</sup> of March 2020, at the Rabindranath Tagore Auditorium of the university. The chief guest of the event was Mr. Prem K. Nair, Consul General of India, Hambantota whereas the guest of honour was Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice-Chancellor of the university. It was an evening of absolute talent, as the Vice-Chancellor precisely remarked in his heart-touching and encouraging speech.



The drama titled, 'Punaragamanaya: The Return of Mahatma Gandhi', staged by the Faculty of Technology was well received by the audience and the panel of judges alike that the team was awarded the trophy for the second runner-up. The drama was admired by Mr. Prem K. Nair, Consul General of India, Hambantota for its creative concept of bringing Mahatma Gandhi to the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The students were more than happy to have Senior Professor W. G. D. Dharmaratna, their former Dean in the audience to witness their talents. The Faculty of Agriculture and the Faculty of Fisheries & Marine Technology emerged first runner-up and champion of the competition, respectively.



### Faculty of Technology Cricket Tournament - 2020

A cricket tournament organized by the students of the Faculty of Technology was held on the 15<sup>th</sup> of January 2020 with the participation of the faculty staff. Senior Professor W. G. D. Dharmararna, Dean of Faculty of Technology also participated in this event to encourage the students. The students and the members of the academic staff played together in the cricket matches.



## Faculty Day 2020 - Faculty of Management and Finance



The “Faculty Day”, organized by the Faculty of Management and Finance is an annual event which brings academics, non-academics and undergraduates at the faculty into a common platform to escape from the routine activities for a while. As such, the “Faculty Day 2020” was held on 26<sup>th</sup> of February at the university playground, and marked an absolute success. The event kicked off at 8.00 a.m. and continued till evening, providing participants

with an opportunity to showcase their skills in various sports and team-building activities while having entertained at the same time. There had been an active involvement of the participants throughout the day as the event provided them with an engaging platform to break the wheel of monotony. Accordingly, this glamorous and engaging event assisted everyone to strike a balance between classroom and extra-curricular activities. Notably, the “Faculty Day 2020” included a wide range of individual events such as, a marathon, Mr. & Miss talent competition, a cricket tournament, a netball tournament, athletics, a folk song competition and many more entertaining items. This event was graced at the higher level of university administration, with the participation of Senior Professor Sujeewa Amarasena, the Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna, Professor E. P. S. Chandana, the Deputy Vice Chancellor of University of Ruhuna and Dr. T.S.L.W. Gunawardhana, the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Finance.

## Miyuru Kalpana

The Circle of Accounting and Finance organized “Miyuru Kalpana”, in which a speaker presents a brief inquiry into each song after/during the staged performance. This was held on 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2020 at the faculty premises and Mr. Deepal Guruge, the speaker was relentlessly evoking fans in bringing his inquiries into each performance item. The event was graced by the presence of Deputy Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna, Professor E. P. S. Chandana and the Dean of the Faculty of Management and Finance, Dr. T.S.L.W. Gunawardhana. Moreover, the undergraduates, academic and non-academic staff of the faculty actively participated in this occasion, resulting in an absolute success.



## Valentines' day Programme “කොන්දේසි විරහිත ආදරය”

The Media- Net of the Career Guidance Unit in Media Collaboration with Neth FM (Asset Radio Broadcasting (Pvt) Ltd) hosted “Unconditional Love”, a Valentines' day Programme with a broad view to change students' attitudes towards love, care and affection. The progamme was entertained by popular artists and Ruhuna University Dancing Group amidst the visionary thought sharing by Mr. Wasantha Duggannarala, Mr. Sanath Gamage and Mr. Tissa Jananayaka. A massive crowd over 2000 who gathered at the Open Air Theater, including academic staff, non-academic staff and students enjoyed this event.



## A Home Garden Tree Plantation Challenge - “Magen Mihikathata”

The Circle of Human Resource Development (HRD) at the Faculty of Management and Finance organized a home garden tree plantation challenge, namely “Magen Mihikathata” to motivate the university community to add value to their spaces through planting a tree, which would ultimately act as a lifelong investment. Academic staff and undergraduates of the faculty, and undergraduates representing the other universities in Sri Lanka took part in this tree plantation drive through planting saplings at their home garden and sending a snapshot to publish in the official Facebook page of HRD circle at University of Ruhuna.



The winners of this tree plantation challenge were declared on 24<sup>th</sup> of April 2020 based on the engagement of the each snapshot on the official Facebook page of HRD circle. As such, S. Viduranga from Faculty of Management and Finance at University of Ruhuna, M. Iroshima from Faculty of Management and Finance at University of Ruhuna, and L. Weerasinghe from Faculty of Technology at University of Ruhuna won the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> places respectively.

## A Tree Planting Programme in Wilpattu National Forest

Gaweshakayo (Ruhuna Engineering Faculty, Nature Conservation and Mountaineering/Trekking Club), Faculty of Engineering, University of



Ruhuna had organized a tree planting program in Wilpattu National Forest on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2020 with the company of 54 Division, Sri Lanka Army, considering the rapid deforestation happenings in Sri Lanka. Many trees were planted in a block of one acre land which was named and granted to be supervised under Gaweshakayo Club, Univeristy of Ruhuna subsequently.



## Faculty Day - Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology

The “Faculty day” of the Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology which was organized by the staff together with students was held on 15<sup>th</sup> January 2020 as an annual event of the Student’s Union activity plan.



## Annual Inter-Batch Sports Meet, Faculty of Medicine

The Annual Inter-Batch Sports Meet of the Faculty of Medicine, University of Ruhuna was held from the 10<sup>th</sup> of February to the 8<sup>th</sup> of March 2020. The multi-sporting event was organized by the Faculty Sports Club together with the 39<sup>th</sup> batch of medical students. Dean of the Faculty Prof. Vasantha Devasiri, the sports advisors Dr. Gayani Liyanage and Dr. PGCL Nanayakkara played an instrumental role in making sure that this event was a success.

The Sports Meet comprised a wide variety of sports which attracted the participation of students of all the current



batches. There was a stiff competition between the batches in the points table for the overall Championship. At the end of Sports Meet it was the 41<sup>st</sup> batch that emerged victorious with the massive 1774 points. The freshers from the 42<sup>nd</sup> batch managed to secure the second place with 1341 points and the 39<sup>th</sup> batch came in 3<sup>rd</sup> place with 1064 points.

The closing ceremony was held at the Faculty Grounds where the winning teams of each sport received their awards. The Dean of the Faculty of Medicine together with the staff members graced the occasion. The Dean stressed on how important it is for a medical student to engage in sports activities to add some flavor to an otherwise stressful academic life. The Inter Batch Sports Meet serves as a steppingstone for up and coming University sportsmen and sportswomen to showcase their talents at Inter-Faculty level and finally Inter-University level. The Faculty Sports Club together with the Sports Advisory Board hope to yet again organize another successful Inter-Batch event next year.



## Programme for Preserving and Indexing Palm-Leaf Manuscripts

A programme for preserving and indexing palm-leaf manuscripts was organized by Senior Lecturer Dr. A.S. Bandara and Lecturer, Ven. O.U. Dhammadheera of the Department of Pali and Buddhist Studies, at Sri Gangarama Ancient Temple in Dewamulla, Bulathsinhala from 6<sup>th</sup> to 7<sup>th</sup> February, 2020. Both academic staff members and undergraduates of the particular department participated in the event and rendered their invaluable contribution to acquire the desired objectives of the programme.



## Staff Achievements

### Appointment as a member of the Board of Directors to the NARA

Prof. KHM Ashoka Deepananda, professor of Fisheries and Aquaculture has been appointed as a member of the Board of Directors of National Aquatic Resources Research and Development Agency (NARA), by Minister of Fisheries and Aquatic Resources with effect from 28<sup>th</sup> February 2020.



## Guangdong Province Science and Technology Cooperation Award 2019 was Presented to Prof. Tilak P.D. Gamage

Guangdong Province Science and Technology Cooperation Award 2019 was awarded to Prof. Tilak P.D. Gamage of the Department of Limnology and Water Technology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences and Technology. With him there are other three international scientists, from Germany, France, and India, who have also been presented the award this year.

The Guangdong Province Science and Technology Cooperation award has been initiated on 01<sup>st</sup> October 2000 by the Government of Guangdong Province, China with the intention of rewarding the citizens and organizations either in China or outside China for their contribution in promoting science and technology in Guangdong Province.



Prof. Tilak Gamage is the Co-director of the China-Sri Lanka Joint Centre for Education and Research (CSL CER). He was able to initiate the relationship with China in 2009, with the support of Prof Dongxiao Wang of the South China Sea Institute of Oceanology (SCSIO), Chinese Academy of Sciences. This award has been considered his commitment to China-Sri Lanka relationship through numerous academic activities with various organizations which includes signing an intergovernmental agreement between China and Sri Lanka for the cooperation in science and technology, resulting the birth of China Sri Lanka Joint Center for Education and Research (CSL CER), establishing the first oceanographic observation of Tropical Indian Ocean at the University of Ruhnu, congregating number of Sri Lankan universities and national intuitions making CSL CER a nationally importance center, joint workshops on “Monsoon Climate and Marine Environment”, training young Sri Lankan scientists with the University of Chinese Academy of Sciences and SCSIO through Doctoral and Master’s Degree programmes offered by UCAS.

## International Conference on Intangible Cultural Heritage: My Cultural Identity - My Sustainable Development - 2020

International conference on “Intangible Cultural Heritage: My Cultural Identity – My Sustainable Development – 2020” organized by the Indian Institute of Social Sciences and Folklore Research was held at Gandhi Bhavan in Kothrud, Pune, the cultural capital of Maharashtra from 21st to 24th February 2020. The Head of the Department of History and Archaeology, Dr. J.K.A. Kanthi, and Senior Lecturer Dr. Deva Michael De Silva of the same department obtained the opportunity to participate in the conference and present a paper with Dr. T. M. Geethanjali, Pushpa Ekanayake, Dr. Hemantha Kumara, Dhananjay Khandare and Ruchi Shete on “Socio-Cultural Issues, Different Folk Art and Festivals in Sri Lanka” in the respective session on the Intangible Cultural Heritage and Sustainable Development of Different Folk-Groups, Tribes and Peoples of India and Sri Lanka.

## Fulbright Fellowship Dr. Sudhira De Silva & Visiting Research Fellowship Dr. (Mrs.) Subashi De Silva

Dr. Sudhira De Silva received US-SL Fulbright Advanced Research and Lecturing Award by J. William Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board in USA 2019 to pursue his post-doctoral fellowship at the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Connecticut, Storrs, USA. Dr. De Silva attached to Structural Engineering & Applied Mechanics Group of the Department and carried out his research fellowship collaboratively with Prof. Ramesh B. Malla, a leading expert in the field of Structural Dynamics & Applied Mechanics, and also the Chair of Technical Committee on Space Engineering and Construction in Aerospace Division (ASD), USA. Dr. De Silva's research mainly focused on methodology to identify progressive collapse of masonry buildings due to earthquake.



Dr. Subashi De Silva received a Visiting Research Fellowship from the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, University of Connecticut, Storrs, USA in March 2019 and worked with Prof. Ramesh B. Malla. Dr. (Mrs.) De Silva focused on bridge health monitoring and vibration systems, for her research study. These research studies initiated the best opportunity for long term collaborative research with Structural Engineering & Applied Mechanics Group of University of Connecticut, USA.

## Felicitation to Senior Professor W. G. D. Dharmaratna, Founder Dean, Faculty of Technology

Senior Professor W. G. D. Dharmaratna, the Founding Dean of the Faculty of Technology retired from the office on his 65<sup>th</sup> birthday, the 12<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. He has been the instrumental figure in bringing the Faculty of Technology to its present status. He is an erudite scholar originally from the Department of Physics, Faculty of Science. A farewell party organized by the staff of the Faculty to felicitate the professor was held on 19<sup>th</sup> of February 2020. Dr. Harshadewa Gunawardena, the newly appointed Dean and all the members of the academic, academic support, and non-academic staffs took part in the occasion.



# Students' Achievements

## Guest Investigator at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute, USA

Ms. Sachini M. Ranasinghe, Research Student of the Department of Oceanography and Marine Geology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology was appointed as a Guest Investigator by the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute (WHOI) USA which is one of the world-leading oceanographic research institutes. As a Guest Investigator she engaged in 3-month laboratory work from November 2019 - January 2020 at WHOI Geochemistry Laboratory under the supervision of Senior Scientist Dr. Konrad Hughen. She was trained in elemental analysis in live and fossil coral samples using inductively coupled plasma-atomic emission spectrometry (ICP-AES).



Her trip was partly supported by the International Atomic Energy Agency funded project, "Radioanalytical and Isotopic Studies of Climate Trends and Variability in Marine Paleo-records". Atomic Energy Board of Sri Lanka and Dr. Pradeep Nalaka Ranasinghe from the University of Ruhuna serve as the major scientific resource parties of this project. This project is focused on constructing high-resolution sea surface temperature and rainfall records during the pre-instrumental period using fossil and live corals, to understand the long term variability of monsoon in Sri Lanka. During this trip, Sachini also participated in the American Geophysical Union (AGU) Fall Meeting held in San Francisco, USA in December 2019, which is the largest global scientific meeting for the Earth and space sciences community. At that conference, she presented some of the results of the above project by the poster titled "Recent vs Holocene Paleoceanographic Conditions in Northern and Southern Sri Lanka - Evidence from - Geochemical Proxies in Modern and Fossil Coral Drill Cores".

## Finalist of the 19<sup>th</sup> Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition

Ms. Rashini Kaushalya of the Department of Sinhala had been selected as a finalist of the 19<sup>th</sup> Chinese Bridge Chinese Proficiency Competition for Foreign College Students Overseas Preliminary rounds in Sri Lanka on 14<sup>th</sup> June, 2020. This is a global Chinese competition organized by Confucius Institutes at University of Colombo, University of Kelaniya and Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. She was the only contestant who participated in the competition, representing University of Ruhuna and it is noteworthy that she became a finalist, competing with seventy-nine contestants across the country.



## Versus COVID Competition – 2020

A group of undergraduates of the Faculty of Technology, University of Ruhuna, has won the third place in Versus COVID Competition organised by the IEEE Student Branch of healthcare at the University of Peradeniya. They have won this place for their project proposal for making a Modified Hazmat Suit with Controllable Inside Temperature. M. H. D. D. Jinasena, M. L. P. W. Dias, and H. W. S. Dhanujika are the members of the winning team.

A hazmat suit is the main personal protective equipment worn by all healthcare professionals including physicians, nurses, and attendants who treat COVID 19 patients. Since no specific treatment is available up to date for preventing COVID 19 infection, healthcare measures play a vital role in minimising its spread. However, the hazmat suit currently worn by professionals in Sri Lanka is not very comfortable. Wearing it all the daylong may lead to complete exhaustion seriously affecting the efficiency and quality of their job performance.

The Modified Hazmat Suit proposed by Ruhuna undergraduates has been designed to cater to this need. It contains an inbuilt cooling system which helps maintain the temperature inside the hazmat suit while preventing viral germs entering it. This is a comfortable, cost effective, and user-friendly product. Nonetheless, it is a little heavier than a usual hazmat suit and requires power supply for operation. Still, it is seen as a plausible solution for a current issue faced in combatting COVID 19.

The top ten teams of the Versus COVID Competition have been selected for a one-on-one mentorship programme with SLASSCOM to develop their ideas into start-ups. The Dean and the staff of the Faculty of Technology extend their heartiest congratulations to the Ruhuna undergraduates for the future endeavours regarding the project.

The graphic titled "versusCOVID RESULTS SUMMARY" lists the top 3 proposals and prize money. It also mentions that top 10 teams were selected for a mentorship program with SLASSCOM. Logos for SLASSCOM, ideamart, a6, London Stock Exchange Group, BarakatBank.Lk, README, VeracityAI, and IOI are shown at the bottom. Three team members are featured in circular portraits: Ms. M.H.D.D. Jinasena, Mr. M.L.P.W. Dias, and Ms. H.W.S. Dhanujika.

TOP 3 PROPOSALS	Prize Money
Footsie	25,000 LKR
Find Delivery	15,000 LKR
Modified Hazmat Suit	10,000 LKR

Top 10 teams were selected for an one-on-one mentorship program with SLASSCOM to develop their ideas into start-ups. Teams passed into the judging phase are entitled to a valuable e-certificate.

## A Silver Medal at the South Asian Games

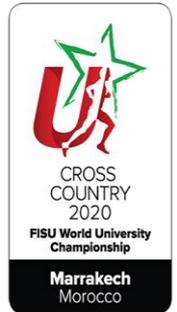
Ms. Sithumini Wijewickrama, a final year student of Faculty of Agriculture was felicitated at the senate meeting on 29<sup>th</sup> January 2020 for her achievement winning a silver medal at the South Asian Games representing Sri Lanka in "Taekwondo".



## World University Cross Country Championship - 2020

Mr. P.K. Sanath Chandana, Instructor in Physical Education was selected as the Head of Delegation cum Coach of Sri Lanka University Team. Mr. A.G. Saliya Jeewan Bandara (SC/2017/10205), Undergraduate of Faculty of Science was selected as a member of Sri Lanka University Cross Country Team. World University Cross Country Championship - 2020 was to be held on 07<sup>th</sup> of March 2020 in Marrakech, Morocco under the supervision of International University Sports Federation (FISU).

Due to COVID - 19 pandemic outbreaks International University Sports Federation (FISU) decided to cancel the above event.



## FISU Volunteer Leaders Academy – 2020

The FISU Volunteer Leaders Academy (FVLA) is an educational event that serves as a key part of the international sports and volunteering movement.

W.D.J. Ranoj Norbert (SC/2017/10196), Undergraduate of Faculty of Science has been selected to represent Sri Lanka at the above academy.

Considering safety reasons in the current challenging situation, FISU decided to run FISU Volunteer Leaders Academy 2020 online. The first session of this academy was held on 22<sup>nd</sup> and 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2020 and the second session will be held on 04<sup>th</sup>, 05<sup>th</sup> and 06<sup>th</sup> September 2020.



**VOLUNTEER  
LEADERS  
ACADEMY**

**KAZAN 2020**

## Inventions and Innovations

### MEDICUS+ : Robot for Remote Patient Monitoring and Real Time Communication

A team of engineers and scientists at Department of Electrical and Information Engineering, Faculty of Engineering at University of Ruhuna has developed a medical robot which will allow doctors to remotely diagnose patients.

COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted shortcomings in the manner in which healthcare workers interact with patients in infectious disease wards. With the shortage of medical personnel and personal protective equipment, these shortcomings have surfaced into posing threats to already overworked healthcare personnel. As such, they have developed a robot that is able to communicate with the patients without physically being in the same room. It can be manually navigated via Wi-Fi using a laptop or any other smart device to deliver drugs, foods and other necessities to the patients.



The uniqueness of this system is the two way audio and video communication which runs on a server which can be operated over any Wi-Fi network without the use of the internet. Further, doctors can access this device over the internet from home to view diagnosis data and also to communicate with the patient.

In addition, this medical robot stands out from the rest with its capability to take vital measurements such as body temperature, ECG, heart rate and blood oxygen levels in order for doctors to diagnose patients. The modular platform can be extended to include future needs that hospitals have. The possibilities of a medical robot to the healthcare sector are limitless. This was unveiled to the Teaching Hospital Karapitiya on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020.

The project was led by Eng. Chatum Sankalpa (Principal Investigator), Dr. (Eng) Subodha Gunawardena (Co-Investigator) and Dr. (Eng) Noeline Prins (Co-Investigator) in collaborations with Dr. Upul Hapuarachchi (Faculty of Medicine) and Dr. Janaka Ranaweera (Teaching Hospital Karapitiya). Team consisted of Eng. Keshawa Madhubhanu, Eng. Manuja Priyadharshana, Eng. Amila Nuwan Sanjeewa, Eng. Ruchira Lakshan Perera, Eng. Manikya Senarathne, Eng. Tharindu Gamage, Mr. Himal Dinuka (Student – Faculty of Technology) and Mr. Melakshan Jayarathne (Student – Faculty of Engineering). We wish to thank Dr. Sampath Ranaweera (Director) and staff at the Teaching Hospital Karapitiya for the assistance given to demonstrate this at the hospital, Biomedical Engineer Mr. Indika Yasan for liaising with the Health Services and Dr. Chandima Sirithunga (Provincial Director) for his approvals.

The project was funded by the World Bank via the Technology Transfer Office (TTO) of University of Ruhuna. The team is currently developing MEDICUS+ v2.0 with the feedback and comments given by the medical personnel.

## Autonomous temperature measuring unit

Covid-19 has changed our lives to new directions. It has redefined the personal protection and awareness. The simplest way to screen the threat is to minimize the inter-personal contact. Nowadays this has become responsibility of security personals. As a result, they have to put their own life on line. According to WHO the thermal scanners are effective in detecting people who have developed a fever (i.e. have a higher fever than normal body temperature) because of infection with the new coronavirus. This is regarded as the most effective preventive measure available in current state.



However, the main problem is current thermometers have to be operated by human hands and as a result the operator automatically could become infected. In order to prevent such situations, it is advantages to automate the process and develop safety measures to screen the people with high fever entering to important places and gatherings or even private and public offices or even schools.

The objective was to develop an autonomous temperature measuring unit which operates automatically, detects the height of the person and points the temperature sensing camera to the forehead and obtains the reading. Then transfer the value to a remotely installed receiver. This is a non-contact temperature measuring technique and suitable for crowded public and private institutions.

Expected outcomes

The main features expected;

- Can be remotely operated using a mobile app
- Fully autonomous operation to minimize human intervention
- Detection of threat and notification
- Wireless operation and monitoring

The main investigator is J.G.Varuna Priyanka (DMME, Faculty of Engineering, UOR) and a team of experts includes Dr. U.I.K.Galappaththi, (DMME, Faculty of Engineering, UOR), Dr. Nihal Hewage, (IHRC. University of Colombo), Mr. Gunathilake (SSP, Director Prime Ministers Security Division). The project was funded by Mr. Hemantha Perera (Chief Executive Officer, The Fab Restaurant).

## 'XbotiX 2019' – The Ruhuna Robotics Challenge Competition

'XbotiX 2019' was organized by the Electrical and Information Engineering Society (EIES) in collaboration with IEEE Students Branch, IET Ruhuna Chapter and Mechanical and Manufacturing Engineering Society (MMES) of Faculty of Engineering - University of Ruhuna was held on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019 at Engineering Faculty premises for the sixth consecutive time. This annual event is a head-to-head competition among best young minds representing both universities and schools in Sri Lanka to accomplish prescribed tasks using self-designed robots. 35 Undergraduate teams and 30 School teams participated in the event. The winner of the Undergraduate Category was a team represented by Department of Electrical & Information Engineering, Faculty of Engineering, University of Ruhuna.



## Retirements

### Senior Professor Ranjith Senaratne, Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture

Senior Professor Ranjith Senaratne who served for the Department of Crop Science, Faculty of Agriculture, retired after 40 years of his successful and dedicated service in higher education ranging from teaching, research and administration to community service. He has provided strategic, inspirational and operational leadership to higher educational institutions, and he is considered as a visionary leader and institution builder.

Prof. R. Senaratne obtained his Bachelor of Science in Agriculture special degree from the University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya in 1977 with second class honours. Soon after graduation, he became a graduate student at Post-Graduate Institute of Agriculture, University of Sri Lanka, Peradeniya and completed his M.Phil. (Agric.) degree in Crop Physiology and Biochemistry in



1980. With that achievement, Prof. R. Senaratne started his academic career as an assistant lecturer in Agronomy at the University of Ruhuna and continued to the Agricultural University in Vienna for his doctoral studies from 1982-1986, researching nitrogen carry-over effects of legumes in sequential cropping systems using nuclear techniques. Upon return to Sri Lanka in 1986, he conducted research in the field of nutrient cycling in multiple cropping systems, nutrient dynamics in agro-forestry systems and restoration of degraded land. He has over 100 publications to his credit. In 1992, he was adjudged the most outstanding young scientist in Biology in Sri Lanka by the Third World Academy of Sciences in Rome, Italy. Prof. Senaratne has been the recipient of several internationally competitive and prestigious research grants including a grant from the Board on Science and Technology for International Development (BOSTID) of the National Research Council of the USA and has held a number of coveted fellowships including the Andre Mayer Fellowship of the FAO and the Marie Curie Fellowship of the European community.

Since becoming a senior academic, he won a number of competitive national and international research grants over 100 million Sri Lankan rupees, some of which are CIDA worth US \$ 43,000.00 (from Canada in 1987), BOSTID in National Academy of Sciences USA value US \$ 110,000.00 in 1988, International Atomic Energy Agency in Vienna (US \$ 15,000.00), GTZ in West Germany (Budget DM 38,000.00), NORAD (Rs. 1.3 million), APN-Japan and many more. He took the leadership in developing the Department of Crop Science to gain international recognition and attracted grants through international collaborations.

He was appointed as a Professor of Crop Science at the University of Ruhuna in 1998 and served as the Dean of the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Ruhuna for nearly eight years before being appointed Vice Chancellor of the University of Ruhuna in March 2001, a post which he held with distinction for six years from March 2001 to March 2007. As the Vice Chancellor, he was strongly committed to promoting academic excellence, high impact research, creative enterprise, strategic partnership with industry, community development and international cooperation. Under his visionary leadership and mature guidance, the University of Ruhuna made great strides in the academic, research and outreach spheres, to emerge as a leader of higher education in Sri Lanka. Introduction of the CVCD Excellence Awards Scheme in 2006, Launching of the Vice Chancellor's Award Scheme at University of Ruhuna, Launching of the University Song at UoR during its Silver Jubilee celebrations in 2003, Signing an MoU with the President of the Matara District Chamber of Commerce and Industry in 2004 providing for establishment of a business incubator and signing number of MOUs with foreign universities can be mentioned as novel initiatives that Prof. R, Senaratne has established in University of Ruhuna as the Vice Chancellor. He has instrumental in securing several competitive grants with substantial funding from foreign institutions. They have contributed greatly to the postgraduate training of staff and capacity building of the University of Ruhuna and rebuilding of some tsunami-affected communities in the country.

Prof. Senaratne has over 20 years of experience in administration at senior executive level at higher educational institutions. He also served as the Vice Chairman University Grants Commission from May 2011-2015 and Chairman, Ocean University (National Institute of Fisheries and Nautical Engineering) from 2008-2015. He had been awarded "Ruhunu Puthra" in 2000 in appreciation and recognition of the services rendered for the regional and national development. And also he had been awarded the title "Sri Rohana Ranjana Vidya Nidhi" in 2005 by the Executive Committee of Rohana Sanga Sabha in recognition of the outstanding educational and community service rendered and most importantly conferred an honorary doctorate in Civil

Law (DCL) by the University of Durham in the UK in recognition of academic distinction, effective management and visionary development of an international strategy for the University of Ruhuna. Currently, Prof. Senaratne is serving as the chairman of National Science Foundation. He rendered an irreplaceable service to the Faculty of Agriculture as well as to the University of Ruhuna for nearly 4 decades until his retirement on the 25<sup>th</sup> March 2020.

## Recruitments & Promotions

### Recruitment (Academic staff)

#### Senior Lecturer Grade II

Dr. WBK Bandara, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Dr. (Ms.) VHP Vitharana, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Dr. (Mrs.) WKKD Siriwardana, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science  
Dr. CN Rathnaweera, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science  
Dr. (Mrs.) EEU Rathnathunga, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Mr. L S N S Lamahewage, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science

#### Lecturer (Probationary)

Ms. MS Jayathilaka, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. WHNY Hewage, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Mr. HAC Priyankara, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Mr. WAHM Karunaratne, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Mrs. PVVC Vithana, Department of Information & Communication Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. JKDBG Jayaneththi, Department of Information & Communication Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. RS Wickrama Arachchi, Department of Information & Communication Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Dr. KHT Karunaratne, Department of Biosystems Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. BBDS Abeykoon, Deans Office, Faculty of Management and Finance  
Mrs. RML Chamari, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Mr. M Niroshan, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. WGA Pabasara, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. MPP Mithila, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Mrs. DN Liyanage, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Ms. KY Gayashini, Department of Engineering Technology, Faculty of Technology  
Dr. (Mrs) AU Wijenayaka, Department of Oceanography & Marine Geology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology  
Mr. KAS Lakshan, Department of Physics, Faculty of Science  
Ms. PSD Punchihewa, Department of Management & Entrepreneurship, Faculty of Management and Finance  
Mr. YCY Sudusinghe, Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science

## Promotions (Academic)

### Senior Professor

Prof. LALW Jayasekara, Department of Mathematics, Faculty of Science  
Prof. SD Wanniarachchi, Department of Soil Science, Faculty of Agriculture  
Prof. VS Jayamanne, Department of Food Science & Technology, Faculty of Agriculture  
Prof. LM Abewickrama, Department of Agricultural Economics, Faculty of Agriculture  
Prof. PLAG Alwis, Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture  
Prof. (Mrs.) CM Nawaratne, Department of Agricultural Engineering, Faculty of Agriculture  
Prof. KL Wasantha Kumara, Department of Agricultural Biology, Faculty of Agriculture  
Prof. KD Pathirana, Department of Medicine, Faculty of Medicine  
Prof. TPD Gamage, Department of Limnology & Water Technology, Faculty of Fisheries and Marine Sciences & Technology

### Professor

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