

Newsletter

Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya

March 2024

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Prof. Pradeepa. Bandaranayake

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Dr Suranji Wijekoon

Website <https://site.pdn.ac.lk/alumni/>

Message from the President, Prof Rupika Rajakaruna



The Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya established in 1987 has played a significant role in encouraging, fostering and promoting close relations between the University and its alumni. Over the last 37 years, it has grown into a big family of four local chapters, seven overseas chapters, eight Faculty Associations and the Pera Alumni Sports Club, the most recent.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, ExCo held hybrid meetings, enabling participation of overseas chapters, and building closer connections, much to the benefit of students. Generous donations from overseas chapters, supported several projects including a stronger Needy Students' fund, funding for mental health counsellors, and various cash prizes for student competitions that help to raise awareness on issues critical to students. In all these, our commitment to accountability and transparency in handling and disbursing funds from alumni and well-wishers is our biggest strength.

My priority as President was to preserve our heritage and honour those who created a legacy. I pledged to revisit two university projects: renovation of the Sarachchandra Open-Air Theatre, the 'Wala', and the Art Gallery and Museum Project initiated in 2004 with the gift of a valuable art collection by Ian and Roselyn Goonetilleke and a few other renowned artists. I invite all alumni to pledge their loyalty, support, and allegiance to the alma mater and be part of the activities and opportunities that we offer.

**Choose to support the Alumni Association of the University of
Peradeniya.**

Inside this: AGM 2023 AAUP Activities Chapter and Faculty Association News Scholarships
University Development Projects Studentships Pera Concept Store Obituaries
Alumni Sports Club Establishment Awards & Competitions

34th AGM PHOTO GALLERY



34th AGM was held on March 26, 2023



Under the Presidency of Prof. Pradeepa Bandaranayake, the 34th AGM took place as a hybrid event at the Department of Chemistry in the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya. Mr. EMSB Ekanayake, the Secretary to the President of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, was the Chief guest. Also present were Prof. G.H. Peiris, the Chancellor and the Patron of AAUP and Prof. M.D. Lamawansa, the Vice-Chancellor and the Vice-Patron of the AAUP. Prof. Terrance Madujith, the Deputy-Vice Chancellor and Deans of faculties and Directors of postgraduate Institutes were present. The dignitaries took part in lighting the traditional oil lamp. The President of the AAUP welcomed the invitees and the membership. A key event of the AGM was the felicitation of Emeritus Prof. Malik Peiris, who joined the event via Zoom. General Secretary Dr Samanthika Jagoda proposed the vote of thanks. The next key event was the election of Office bearers for the coming year, after which the invitees and members dispersed for fellowship.



AWARDING OF SCHOLARSHIPS



Faculty	Name of the award	Name of the recipient
Management	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	H.A. Lochani Isurika Perera
Veterinary Science	Dr. S.K. Karunaratne Memorial Scholarship	W. U. Kumudumalee
	Sydney New South Wales (NSW) Scholarship	K.V. Keerthisinghe
Arts	Prof. Ashley Halpe Memorial Scholarship	Anne Amaya Silva
	Mr. Y.W. Gunawardana Memorial Scholarship	Mohamed Farook Isthul Janeesha
	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	A.A. Nadeesa Nalinee Athauda
	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	Anne Amaya Silva
Dental Sciences	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	H.A.W.H. Weerasinghe
Science	Prof. B.L.T. De Silva Memorial Scholarship	L. B. W. W. Wickramasooriya
	Sydney NSW Alumni Scholarship	L. B. W. W. Wickramasooriya
	Prof. I. Balasooriya Memorial Scholarship	E. M. Buddhini Nimesha Ekanayake
	Prof. H.W. Dias Scholarship	I. A. Tharindu Madushan
Agriculture	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	E. A. Miyuru Nimsara
Medicine	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	R.A.S.M.B. Ramanayake
AHS	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	R. A. Dilmi Erandika
Engineering	Sydney NSW Alumni Award for Excellence for 2023	B. Avishka Bandara Epakanda
		Deleepa Navanjana Liyanage
		D. M. Uvindu Praveen Sumanasekara

A key event of the AGM was the Felicitation of Prof. Malik Peiris, a distinguished alumnus, currently the Chair of Virology at the School of Public Health, University of Hong Kong



In her felicitation speech, Prof Faseeha Noordeen, Virologist and Chair Professor of Microbiology, at Peradeniya University, stressed on the outstanding contributions of Prof. Peiris to the global society through his pioneering research on emerging viral diseases, particularly the SARS virus. She elaborated on the many awards Prof. Peiris received in recognition of his achievements: the first Sri Lanka to be elected to the Royal Society of London, Mahathir Science Award of Malaysia, the Medal “100 Years of Virology” of the D.I. Ivanovsky Institute of Virology of the Russian Academy of Medical Sciences, the Legion d’Honneur of the Republic of France, John Dirks Canada Gairdner Global Health Award and the Chinese equivalent of the Nobel Prize. She concluded saying that Prof. Malik Peiris is admired most for his simple ways and lifelong quest to conquer elusive viral infections.



**PERA ALUMNI
SPORTS CLUB**

ESTABLISHMENT OF THE PERA ALUMNI SPORTS CLUB

A new hope for sportsmen and women



Sport is part of the fabric of the university community. Sports and recreational activities unite students of all faculties and promote inclusiveness, inspiring and motivating each other to bring pride to the university community. The Pera Alumni Sports Club, the first of its kind, was established on 12 November 2023 at the Alumni Office with the participation of the Acting Deputy Vice-Chancellor, Prof. R.H. Kuruppuge, the President of the Sports Council, Mr Tharika Liyanage, and AAUP ExCo members. Also invited were Alumni who were active in sports as undergraduates. Appointment of Office-bearers took place according to the Constitution of the Sports club. The newly established Alumni Sports Club would help networking with Alumni and strengthen connections to improve facilities at the gymnasium and for a better outcome in sports.



The First Executive Committee 2023/2024

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES



DONATION OF A PRINTER TO THE HEALTH CENTRE



We offer free English lessons for alumni and their families

Setting up a fully-fledged 'English Corner' at the Alumni Centre at Gatambe with an online facility, books on English Grammar, and IELTS Examination material is yet another laudable project initiated by Mrs. Gunawardena, under the guidance of the Committee led by Eng. Sarath Senevirathna.

Following an overwhelming response to a call to assist IELTS candidates, Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardena conducted a 2-tired program: a crash course to help gain confidence for those aspiring to sit the Examination shortly and a complete revision program for 10 weeks for 23 regular candidates.



MEMBERSHIP DRIVE



We depend on members to support and provide funding for programs, services and activities such as mentoring, professional development, awarding studentships, networking, young alumni engagement, student development programs and social opportunities.

Become a member today!

NEW STATUS FOR AAAUP AS A REGISTERED ORGANIZATION

We are glad to announce that the AAUP now is a registered Voluntary Social Service/ Non-Governmental Organization in the Kandy District of 'Gangawata Korala', thanks to the untiring efforts of the Exco member, Eng. Sarath Seneviratne.

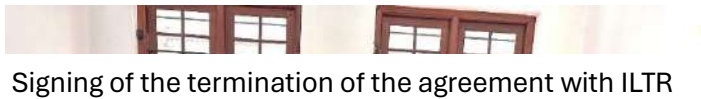


PERA CONCEPT STORE: LIVE THE BRAND



AAUP has been instrumental in producing and selling memorabilia related to the university for many years for the convenience of alumni. There were many drawbacks to this system. Sources of supply varied over the years without a regular supplier which affected the quality of products. Furthermore, EXCO members had to shoulder the responsibility of assuring timely supply and quality products. In 2022, to overcome these problems, the AAUP started discussions with organizations that could collaborate with the AAUP to provide a steady supply of quality products. ILTR was selected for the purpose and signed an agreement for a joint venture. AAUP agreed to fund 50% of the initial expenses of the venture, amounting to Rs. 1,850,000. ILTR was entrusted to provide their expertise to develop a logo, website, publicity, and design of a selected number of memorabilia mostly, clothing.

All the designs were to be approved by the Finance Committee on behalf of the AAUP. The agreed trademark was registered at NIPO by the AAUP, with the advice of ILTR. The initial management of the PERA store, newly located at Gatambe, on Peradeniya Road, was to be done by the ILTR. Once the AAUP gained experience and exposure in managing the store, the initial agreement was to terminate. Management of the store is now entirely in the hands of the AAUP. ILTR continues to be the supplier of most items due to the quality and reliability of their supplies.



Signing of the termination of the agreement with ILTR

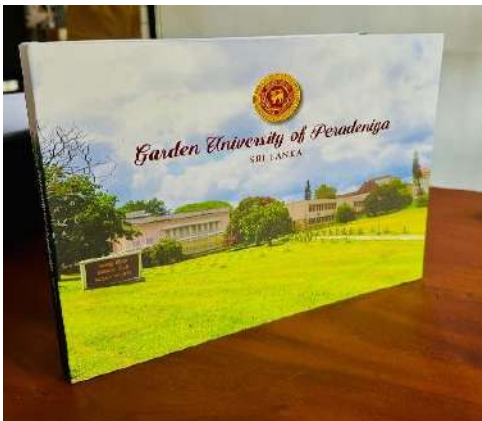


STORE VISITORS & POP-UP SALES



COFFEE TABLE BOOK

The second print of the elegantly presented and lavishly illustrated 135 paged Coffee Table book “Garden University of Peradeniya is now available. Get yourself a copy priced at Rs. 5000.00 from the Pera store at Gatambe. Ponder over it to bring back treasured memories of yonder years to be shared with three generations of alumni past, present and future.



GLOBAL FORUM

July 27, 2023

PRIMARY PREVENTION OF HEART DISEASE: AN UPDATE

SPEAKER: Dr Sunil Bowattege, Consultant Physician, National Hospital Kandy

At the Alumni Centre From 6 pm onwards as a Hybrid event



Dr. Sunil Bowattege, Consultant Physician at the Kandy General Hospital gave an update on **Primary Prevention of Heart Disease** at the Global Forum on held on 27 July 2023 at the Alumni Centre, Gatembe. Addressing the incidence of Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), he spoke of the drastic reduction in the life expectancy of Sri Lankans by the year 2045. He elaborated on the main causes of NCD; bad food habits, sedentary lifestyle, obesity, smoking etc. and stressed that 2/3 of NCD deaths are preventable by behavioural changes.

November 9, 2023

ECONOMIC CRISIS: RECOVERY AND WAY FORWARD

SPEAKER: Dr R.H.S. Samarathunga Senior Economic Advisor to the President Former Secretary to the Treasury

At the OPASL Colombo From 6 pm onwards



At the Global Forum held at OPA in Colombo on 09 November 2023, **Dr. R. H. S. Samarathunga**, Senior Economic Advisor to the President, and former Secretary to the Treasury spoke on the **Implementation of a debt-for-nature swap program by the government**, in the future, subject to the approval of the IMF. He stressed the necessity for a debt restructuring program to obtain the four-year economic adjustment package of 2.9 billion dollars proposed by the IMF and the need to *work on this program as soon as possible*.

FEBRUARY 26 2024

IMPACT OF FOREIGN POLICY ON THE FUTURE PROSPERITY OF SRI LANKA

SPEAKER: Ambassador Prasad Kariyawasam

At the IESL Colombo from 5.30 pm onwards

Addressing the 3rd AAUP Global Forum held on 26 February 2024 at the IESL auditorium, **Prasad Kariyawasm** Sri Lanka's Ambassador to the United States and High Commissioner to India, Bhutan, and Afghanistan spoke on the **Impact of foreign policy on the prosperity of Sri Lanka**.



ALUMNI TRIPS



TWO DAY TRIP TO NALLATHANNI

Travel Lovers Joined AAUP Trip Advisor Anura for an enjoyable Trip

This time, it was to Nallathanni, a very challenging destination due to the wet, misty weather and winding uphill roads. In a luxury coach, 42 took off for the 2-day trip on 10th and 11th June, 2023. Visits to important sites, Castlereagh reservoir, Warleigh historic church in Hatton, Norton Bridge and its catchment area, Wimalasurendra powerhouse, Seven Virgin Vista point (Martin air crash site), and Luxapana powerhouse added value to the trip. Overnight stay at 'Vasana Hotel' at the foothills of Sri Pada made the trip more special and challenging. Most who went, including a few 'kodo-karayo' (first timers) climbed Sri Pada up to the 'Sama Chaithya', Peace pagoda, baring the rain, wind, and the long uphill track. The trip, enjoyed by all, helped test the stamina of veterans.

ONE-DAY TRIP TO RIVERSTONE

Anura Fulfils the Request for Yet Another Trip

With much enthusiasm, 34 travel lovers gathered on March 3, 2024, and alighted the bus to travel to a destination not too far, Riverstone. Eating homemade goodies from the start left no room for the sumptuous breakfast and lunch waiting at the River Resort Rattota. On the way, a detour took us to the Bambarakiri Ella waterfall situated in the Knuckles Mountain range. The walk along the old suspension bridge spanning the waterfall was not a nightmare for any of the not-so-young participants! On arrival at the hotel, bathing in the fast-flowing, cold waters of the nearby river beset with rock pools took priority over lunch. After lunch, everyone enjoyed the sing-song led by new technologies for Karaoke until it was time for departure.



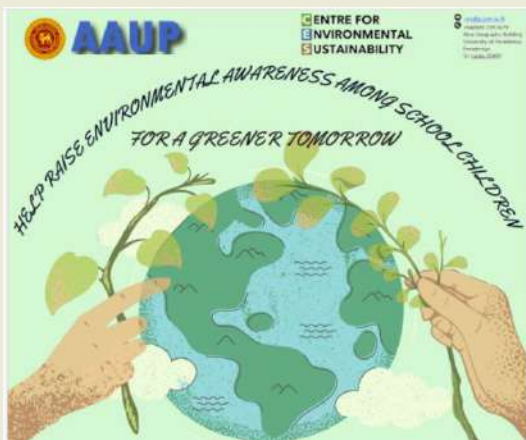


Ottawa Chapter Ignites Artistic Talents among Undergraduates

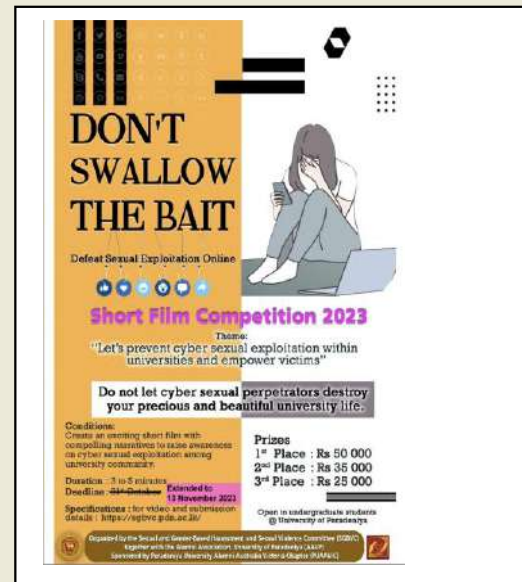
Thanks to the Ottawa Chapter, Five award-winning entrees in Poetry, Short Drama, Painting & Short film received a cash award of Rs 20,000/- each. Mr. Ashvin Wickramasooriya and Prof. Leena Seneheweera coordinated this event.

USA Chapter contribution to the Centre for Sustainability (CES) project on inter-school environment awareness competition

The competition aims to bring about an attitudinal change in the younger generation to conserve water and other natural resources, reduce energy consumption leading to minimizing greenhouse gas emissions, promote sustainable transportation and manage waste in an environmentally friendly way. USA Chapter donated Rs 225,000 to award three cash prizes to the winning schools that secured first, second, and third places in the competition.



Magnanimous Gestures of Our Overseas Chapters



Victoria Chapter helps to raise awareness among students on cyber sexual harassment

Currently, Cyber Sexual Harassment causes much distress to innocent students who fall prey to scrupulous callers. With a request from the Chairperson of the SGBV Committee, Prof. Carmen Wikramagamage, the Victoria Chapter came to the scene and set the stage to help raise awareness of this unseen culprit. Much was done behind the stage to have a video competition among students. A group led by Prof. Chantha Jayawardena planned the video competition open to all undergraduates. A panel of judges selected entries which were streamed on YouTube (with permission) for voting. Of the 12 entries, the best three received certificates at a special ceremony organized by the SGBV Committee. Cash prizes for the winners are sponsored by the Victoria Chapter. Three winning entries are on YouTube for all to view.

UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS

REVIVAL OF THE ART GALLERY AND MUSEUM PROJECT

The AAUP initiated a discussion on establishing an Art Gallery and a Museum to display the art collection of the late Ian Gunatilake on April 12, 2023. The idea of revisiting the long-proposed project was brought about at the last AGM of the AAUP Prof. Kapila Gunasekara, who happened to be the Vice-Chancellor when the art collection was handed over to the University. Some current and past members of the Board of Trustees, the Head of the Department of Fine Arts, and some members of the AAUP ExCo and Prof. Kapila Gunasekara attended the discussion.



Having their lives tightly knit to the University of Peradeniya where they spent almost their entire professional years, the Gunatilake family had decided to donate the art collection they had acquired over the years and in an act of great generosity, to the University of Peradeniya. They hoped thereby to inspire future generations of students with a similar love of art, architecture, and all that was beautiful. Thus, the focal point of the discussion was the importance of displaying these paintings in a gallery that is open to the public. The members of the Board of Trustees explained the background details related to the art collection and the previously proposed building.



The proposed structure, designed by Chartered Architect Ashley de Voss during the early 2000s, was discussed. Based on this design, the glass cubicle, which is meant to be the gallery's entrance, was built in 2014 on Upper Hantana Road and was supposed to be followed by a series of structures, starting from there to reach the University Lake extending as a deck. It was noted during the discussion that, while previously raised funds have been utilized for the construction of the glass cubicle, some remaining funds are available at the University.

Raising additional funds was a vital matter of the discussion, bringing several proposals together with the contact details of influential people, especially the alumni of the University of Peradeniya.

A FACELIFT TO 'THE WALA' GREENROOM



Wala, the most iconic *structure* in the University of Peradeniya, is the brainchild of Prof. Sarachchandra. Built in the 1950s, it was declared open in 1958 with the staging of the ground-breaking Sinhala play '*Maname*'. Over decades, the '*Wala*' has staged the best of the world's dramas witnessed by thousands of theatre lovers. The heart of the '*Wala*', the greenroom is in a dilapidated condition and can hardly be used with dignity. We started a project in 2019 to renovate the greenroom, however raising funds was difficult due to the COVID-19 pandemic and followed by the economic downfall of the country.

A Raffle draw to raise funds

As a part of the fundraiser, we launched a raffle draw on 03 January 2024 with many attractive prizes, all donated by the ExCo members and well-wishers. We invite all alumni to be a part of this laudable effort and help save this likely heritage site synonymous with the university. Your support at the fundraiser will be a great strength to us.



For more information on the project please visit:

<https://site.pdn.ac.lk/alumni/Renovation-of-the-Green-Room-at-the-Open-Air-Theatre>

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FACULTY ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

ARTS FACULTY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA (AFAAUP)

Contributions of the recently formed Arts Faculty Alumni Association

On the 72nd Anniversary of the Faculty of Arts, the newly formed Arts alumni undertook to help many lay students and bhikku students needing assistance. Several organization in Kandy; the District Secretary Kandy, Malwathu Chapter Temple and the YMBA Kandy joined hands with the Arts alumni to fulfill this worthy cause by providing financial assistance and dry rations for mid-day meals. The Arts Faculty Students Union too received financial assistance for its many programs. The highlight of the year was establishing the new cafeteria- ARTOS UNIFOOD CAFETERIA - managed by the students of the Faculty to provide congenial food to their fellow students, at an affordable price. The musical therapy program (*Hanthaana Ninnaadha 2023*) conducted by the senior alumni at the Arts Theatre where few of the veteran alumni were felicitated is yet another noteworthy activity.



VETERINARY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF PERADENIYA (VAAP)



CHEERS TO VAAP FOR THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE ALMA MATER!

The 4th Executive Committee of VAAP has been successful in securing funds to meet the educational and infrastructural needs of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science and the Veterinary Teaching Hospital. Through the collective efforts of their Chapters; Oceania, UK-EU, North American and individual alumni in Australia and UK a large number of studentships have been offered and equipment made available for teaching and research. . A UK alumna on behalf of VAAP independently raised funds for the establishment of a Moodle platform on the website of the Sri Lanka College of Veterinary Surgeons. This platform will exclusively facilitate continuing education programs for the veterinary and allied communities. The collective efforts of the VAAP community in supporting the financial and educational needs of students are laudable. We wish the membership and the Executive Committee of VAAP yet another successful year.

UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA SCIENCE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (UPSAA)



WELFARE ACTIVITIES AND FUNDRAISERS

This year, the science alumni focused on students' welfare and organised a musical program featuring Dr. Manoj Alawathukotuwa to enhance the mental well-being of first-year students. Several UPSAA members helped needy students in the Faculty financially. Providing an electrical wheelchair to a disabled student in the Faculty was yet another gesture. Also, members raised funds for the AAUP by setting up stalls and selling AAUP souvenirs on Convocation Day and Open Day.

CHAPTER NEWS

COLOMBO CHAPTER



This year's Management Council, headed by the President Priyath Cabral, the General Secretary Palitha Siyamabalapitiya and the Treasurer S. M. Ganarathna, organized a two-day trip and a family picnic filled with fun, adventure and cherished moments.

Hats off to this year's committee for enrolling 35 new members to the Chapter!

OUR SERVICES

The Chapter proudly announces its contribution of Rs. 1.9 million raised through fundraising towards a landmark project of the University, the "Working Student Assistantship Program" initiated by the Career Guidance Unit of the University of Peradeniya.

USA CHAPTER (UPAA-USA) CONTRIBUTES GENEROUSLY IN MULTIPLE WAYS

Donation of teaching equipment worth over \$10,000 to the Department of Physics to replace outdated and non-working equipment.

Conducted a Zoom workshop for those exploring Graduate Studies in the USA. Over 150 undergraduates from all nine faculties participated in this session led by Prof. Roshan Gunasekara, from Yale University and several other professors from different disciplines and Universities.



2023 ACTIVITIES

- ❖ ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
- ❖ WEBINAR ON PLANNING FOR HIGHER STUDIES IN THE USA
- ❖ ANNUAL GATHERING
- ❖ VARIOUS DONATIONS

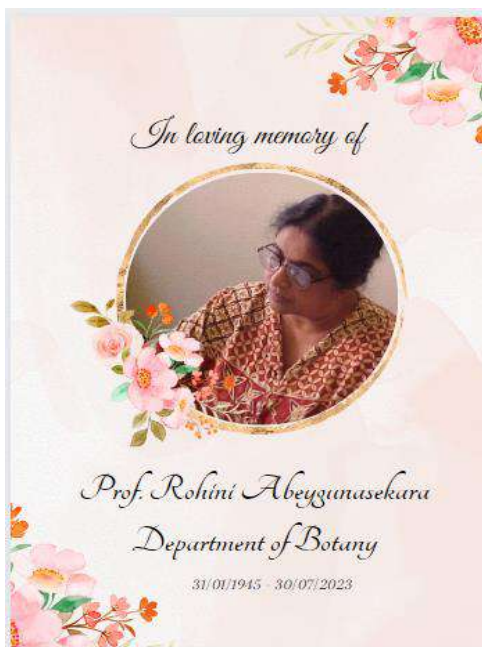
HELPING CAPSU - YET ANOTHER LAUDABLE GESTURE OF THE CANBERRA CHAPTER (AAUPCC)

CAPSU located at the Health Centre has made much progress by helping students in distress; attending to and diagnosing those with major mental health problems and directing them for treatment. Canberra Chapter has undertaken to make the monthly payment to two of the full-time counsellors for the entire year. A praiseworthy gesture!

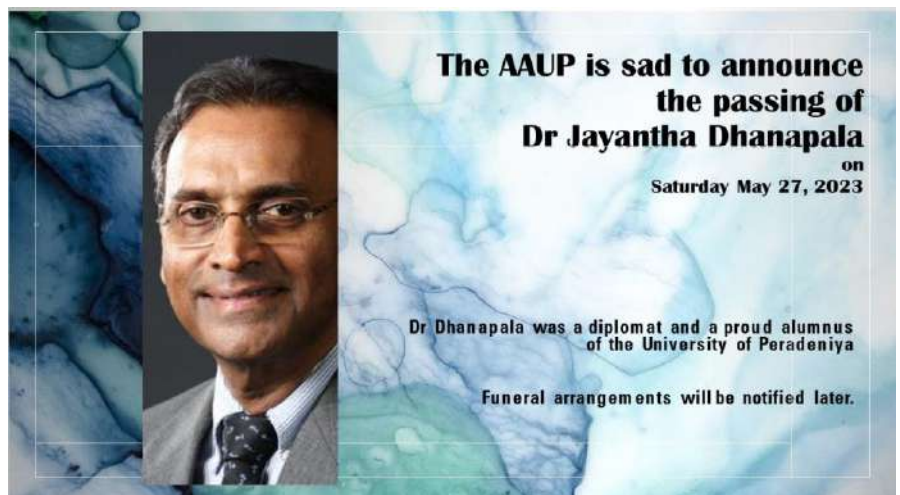


VICTORIA CHAPTER (PUAAViC) HAS MADE GENEROUS DONATIONS THIS YEAR TOO!

While organizing many social events such as the Australia-Day Sports Carnival, Annual family trip, Hantana Nite -2023 and Father's Day Event, PUAAViC has been very active raising funds for many worthy causes. The noteworthy are the award of 18 scholarships to needy students, funding the Waste Segregation Project initiated by the University Health Centre, providing laptops to the Faculty of Allied Health Sciences in support of their Laptop Lending Scheme and financial support to employ Mental Health Counsellors for CaPSU, a project that brings much relief to students in distress. Similarly, at the request of the SGBV committee, PUAAViC awarded cash prizes to the winners of the Short Film Competition organized to raise awareness on Cyber Sexual Exploitation and Harassment among students.



OBITUARIES



STANDING COMMITTEES

UNIVERSITY DEVELOPMENT

Vice President: Mr Hubert Kalugampitiya

Members: Prof. Rupika Rajakaruna, Prof. Pradeepa Bandaranayake, Prof. Kapila Gunasekara, Prof. Siril Wijesundara, Dr. Kanchuka Dharmasiri, Dr. Samanthika Jagoda, Ms. Ishini Dissanayake, Prof. Amalka Pinidiyarachchi, Prof. Rohitha Dasanayale, Dr. Sudesh Manthilake, Ms. Thamara Kumari Ekanayake, Mr. Mahesh Abeywickrama, Mr. RMPB Rathnayake.

STUDENTS WELFARE

Vice President: Prof Chantha Jayawardena

Members: Prof. Rupika Rajakaruna, Dr. Ashwin Wicramasooriya, Ms. Ms. Shagthi Yogendran, Mr. P.H. Abeysundera, Mr. Chaminda Rathnayaka, Prof Gamini Hitinayake, Prof. Shyama Bannehaka, Dr. Anushka Elangasinghe, Ms. Sherine Shiromy, Dr. Dilma Atapattu, Dr. Rajitha Ranasinghe, Prof. Aruna Jayasooriya, Prof. Pushpa Wijekoon, Eng. Chandrasiri Liyanage, Dr. Damayanthi Dasanayakae, Dr. Sunil Samaraweera, Mr. Bernard Silva, Dr. Gayani Nawaratna

FINANCE

Vice President: Prof. Amalka Pinidiyaarachchi

Members: Prof. Rupika Rajakaruna, Dr. Hemalika Abeysundara, Mr. Ashvin Wickramasooriya, Prof. Amalka Pinidiyaarachchi, Prof. Pradeepa Bandaranayake, Mr. Ravi Mulleriyawa, Prof. S.P Nissanka, Eng. Sarath Seneviratne, Dr. Asitha Bandaranayake, Dr. Samanthika Jagoda, Eng. Sisira Piyaratne, Ms. Pamoda Jayasundara

CONTINUING EDUCATION AND EXTENSION EDUCATION

Vice president: Eng. Sarath Seneviratne

Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardane, Prof. Jayanthi Edirisinghe, Eng Sarath Seneviratne, Dr. Kapila Wijyaratne, Mr. Nalin Jayatissa, Dr. Ashwini Amarasinghe

PUBLIC RELATIONS AND ALUMNI WELFARE

Vice President: Dr Jagath Gunatilake

ELECTIONS AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

Chairperson: Ms Pamoda Jayawardena

ALUMNI CLUBS & REUNIONS:

Chairperson: Prof. Kithsiri Liyanage