



# AAUP NEWSLETTER

News update of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya

Web Site: [www.pdn.ac.lk/alumni](http://www.pdn.ac.lk/alumni)

e-mail: [aaupslk@gmail.com](mailto:aaupslk@gmail.com)

March 2016/2017

## Message from the President of the AAUP Professor Rupika Rajakaruna



This year while the AAUP celebrates its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary the University celebrates the 75<sup>th</sup> anniversary of its founding. This occasion is a moment to reflect upon our values and upon our history; it is a moment to renew these values and consider how to integrate them into plans for the future.

This special occasion offers Alumni an opportunity to renew their connections with the Peradeniya University community. The AAUP is aware of alumni who have held or are holding, positions of responsibility in the public or private sectors, alumni working in a wide range of fields including academia, law and order, politics, business, the media, science and technology and are therefore in a position to help the university financially or otherwise. We have invited these alumni to form a special Forum.

The objective of this Forum is to undertake and to fund the upgrading of existing facilities, and to formulate and fund projects intended for the future development of the University community. The inaugural meeting of the Forum was held on 18 March 2017, from 6.00 p.m. onwards, at the Lodge.

The Forum will have regular meetings. If you wish to join the Forum, and contribute towards the future development of the University; please contact the AAUP.

One of our major goals in 2016-2017 was to expand our membership by offering a range of benefits to would-be members. These benefits include; the use of the main library, gymnasium, swimming pool and grounds; discounts and benefits at hotels, grocery stores, restaurants, diners, spas, etc.

In September 2016, we launched an e-Newsletter, which we have continued to update, biannually, with current and future information on members and the activities of the association. We intend to start a blog soon, to provide members with an opportunity to share their thoughts and ideas with others.

Our Association has had a successful and a vibrant year with many activities recorded in the Secretary's Report for the year. The Executive Committee has acted as a responsible, enthusiastic and motivated team, always ready to help me to take the AAUP to the next level.

I thank all the members of the Executive Committee for the support they have given to me during my tenure as President.

I wish the new committee a very successful year ahead.



## 27<sup>th</sup> AGM - 27 March 2016

### Address by the Chief Guest

Excerpts from the talk given by Eng. Nihal Rupasinghe, Chief Guest at the 27<sup>th</sup> Annual General Meeting of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya (AAUP).



Eng. Nihal Rupasinghe, Civil Engineer by profession & Secretary to the Ministry of Megapolis and Western Development, began his address reflecting on what it was to be a student at the University of Peradeniya.

He appreciated the scenic beauty of the campus, the knowledge imparted and the role played by the alumni, nationally and internationally. Thereafter, he moved on to a more serious topic, the Megapolis, or the big town, concept that he is involved with. He highlighted the fact that 29% of the population live in Colombo and adjacent areas, occupying 6% of the total land area of the country. The Megapolis concept, therefore, has taken into account the problems and demands associated with the high population of the Western Province. The developmental plans encompass urban planning, zoning, and creating a planned Megapolis in the Western Province.

Mr. Rupasinghe said that, the intention is to create a Megacity similar to the big cities in the Asian region. The plan is intended to solve problems of traffic congestion, solid waste disposal, eradication of slums, and environmental pollution through infrastructure development. The plan would ensure economic growth through development of tourism and micro, small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). Mr. Rupasinghe concluded his talk with details of the Kandy

modernization project. The project, includes plans for the proposed Colombo – Kandy Expressway, relocation of the Central bus stand, upgrading the railway system, and improve the drainage system.

### EXCO of the AAUP 2016/2017

**PRESIDENT:** Prof. Rupika Rajakaruna,  
**IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT:** Dr. Jayalath Edirisinghe, **GENERAL SECRETARY:** Dr. Pradeepa Bandaranayake,  
**TREASURER:** Dr. Amalka Pinidiyaarachchi,  
**VICE PRESIDENTS:** Dr. Anura P. Dantanarayana, Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardana, Prof. Siril Wijesundara, Mr. Sarath Senevirathne, Prof. Swarna Wimalasiri,  
**EDITOR:** Prof. Jayanthi Edirisinghe,  
**ASST. SECRETARY:** Prof. Chanthi Jayawardena, Prof. Terrence Madhujith,  
**ASST. TREASURER:** Dr. Hemalie Nandalal

### COMMITTEE MEMBERS:

Dr. Shyama Banneheka, Mr. Ashvin Wickramasooriya, Dr. Ayesh Jayasinghe, Ms. Kamani Sylva, Mr. Niluka Amarasinghe, Prof. Savitri Kumar, Mrs. Asoka Dissanayake, Mrs. Chandra Weerawardana, Prof. Chandani Perera, Dr. Anoja Wanigasekara, Mr. Sisira Priyarathna, Mr. Ravi Mulleriyawa, Dr. Leena Seneheweera

### Activities of the AAUP 2016/2017

#### Workshop on 'What makes a graduate employable?'

This year, the Subcommittee on Continuing Education and Extension Education concentrated on educational activities of relevance to the University community; undergraduates and junior academic staff.

In collaboration with the Career Guidance Unit of the University, a one day workshop intended for 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduates and those who graduated in 2016, was held on Saturday 18 June 2016 in the auditorium of the Career Guidance Unit.



The two resource persons; Mr. Lionel Fernando (a former Civil servant, Diplomat and Provincial Governor) and Mr. Ananda Hettiarachchy (formally of Haycarb and currently at SLINTEC) volunteered their time to explain to the participants the qualities



expected by employers and how graduates should prepare themselves for employment in the public and private sectors.

The workshop was attended by 52 undergraduates from the Faculties of Arts, Science and Engineering. The discussion focused on matters related to the Letter of Application, the Curriculum Vitae (CV) and the Interview. The workshop concluded successfully with the participants requesting further programs of this nature. Refreshments were provided by the Sri Lanka Federation of University Women (SLFUW) Kandy.

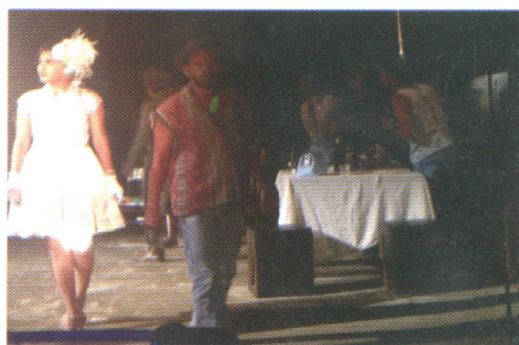
#### Fund raising activity Staging of "Dutu Thena Allanu"



Kawshalya Fernando's latest theater production "Dutu Thena Allanu" was staged

on 12 July 2016, at the "Wala", as a fund raising event in aid of the Needy Student Fund of the AAUP.

"Dutu Thena Allanu" is a musical adaptation of 'Opera Wonyosi' by the Nobel-Prize winning artist and poet Wole Soyinka. The play is based on the translation by a proud product of the University of Peradeniya, Kalasoori, Kalakeerthi, Somalatha Subasinghe.



The event was organized by the Finance Committee of the AAUP. The souvenir printed for the occasion, which carried advertisements from well-wishers, banks, industries and suppliers of scientific equipment, added to the income that accrued from the event.

#### Thursday Forum

The Thursday Forum, a program initiated by the Alumni Clubs and Reunions Committee of the AAUP, successfully held a series of four fora during 2016.

These events are held in the Chemistry Auditorium of the Faculty of Science. The evening begins at 6.00 pm. to provide an opportunity for tea and a chat before the talk.



The talk by the guest lecturer is usually followed by a lively discussion. After the talk, the guest speaker and the spouse are entertained to dinner at the Peradeniya Rest house and are joined by members of the AAUP and their guests.

The first Forum for the year was held on 17 March 2016. The guest speaker, Professor Gananath Obeyesekere, Emeritus Professor of Anthropology at Princeton University, U.S.A., spoke on "A Note on the Fate of the Kandy Lake Complex Circa 1808-1815 and thereafter". The lecture was attended by alumni and members of the academic staff interested in Anthropology and Archaeology.

The second Forum was held on 16 June 2016. The guest speaker, Professor S.N. Arsecularatne, Emeritus Professor of Microbiology of the University of Peradeniya, spoke on "Knowledge - its scope and its acquisition". The lecture attended by members of the medical profession, alumni and members of the academic staff, led to a lively discussion.

Emeritus Professor Gerald H. Pieris, delivered the third lecture in the series, 'Thursday Forum' on 24 November 2016. Professor Pieris spoke on "Planning for the future of Kandy".

Emeritus Professor M. P. Ranaweera delivered the fourth lecture on 24 November 2016. Professor Ranaweera spoke on the 'Technology of our ancient Stupas', highlighting the unique architecture of the ancient stupas of Sri Lanka, that date back to the 3<sup>rd</sup> century BC.

### The Annual Trip

#### Overnight Excursion to the Mannar District - 10 and 11 September 2016

The annual AAUP trip was to the island of Mannar, a destination not visited by many. Forty three participants; AAUP members, their families & friends set off on 10 September at 6.15 am from the Faculty of Science. Breakfast was on board the bus,

followed by a hot cup of tea at Gimhana Rest in Dambulla.

The very first stop on reaching Mannar was the Madhu Church, the holiest Catholic shrine in Sri Lanka. We were able to witness a service conducted in Tamil and Sinhala in the Madhu Church.



The next stop was at the 'Doric' bungalow in Arippe. Built in 1804, in the Greek tradition with Doric columns, it was the residence of Sir Fredric North, the 1st British governor of Sri Lanka. Arippe, was the site of the lucrative pearl fishery during the colonial period and in later years the 'Doric' bungalow had been used for supervising the pearl fishery.

After a delicious lunch with sea food at Hotel Asha, the group headed for the Thirukeshwaran Hindu temple, a massive structure undergoing reconstruction. The next visit was to the famous Dutch Fort. First built by the Portuguese in 1560, it fell to the Dutch in 1658, and was occupied by the British in 1795.

On the following morning, the first stop was at the famous Baobab tree, where participants impressed by its large girth, posed for photographs. Thereafter, we headed for Thalaimannar, where we walked up to the pier, where a ferry service had been in operation in the past, ferrying passengers across the 17 km long Palk Strait, between Thalaimannar and Dhanushkody. In Thalaimannar we were entertained to tea by



### **Request to supplement Mahapola Scholarship**

A member of the Executive Committee provided financial assistance to a Medical student to supplement her Mahapola scholarship, especially in the months of November and December, as the Mahapola is limited to 10 months of the year.

### **Request from a member of the academic staff**

Financial assistance was requested by a member of the academic staff of the Faculty of Arts who had suffered eye damage following an accident. A sum of Rs.75,000.00 was collected and handed over to the member concerned to be used for travel expenses and medical consultations in India.

### **Membership Drive**

A strong membership drive was launched this year in all the Faculties and Postgraduate Institutes. Executive Committee members were encouraged to recruit new members. Dr. Jayalath Edirisinghe and Prof. Chantha Jayawardena who recruited over 25 members each, within a period of 6 months are to be rewarded at the AGM. The AAUP is happy to state that during the last 6 months, a record number of 184 new members have joined the AAUP.

### **Road Safety Photo Exhibition "Awareness Before Danger"**

An exhibition of photographs on "Road Safety" was organized by Dr. Jayalath Edirisinghe, connected with the National Road Safety Week. The exhibition was held in the WUS "Wala" on 22 & 23 February 2017. A total of 160 photographs were on display. The photographs depicted scenes of different types of traffic accidents as well as reasons for traffic accidents and traffic congestion. The exhibition attracted a large number of school children, university students, staff, members of the University community and outsiders.



### **Benefits for AAUP Membership Card Holders**

The AAUP has been able to negotiate with the University authorities to provide its membership card holders the use of several facilities within the University at a nominal fee. These include: use of the University Swimming pool, Gymnasium and Play grounds. Use of the Main library.

The members of the Executive Committee have been able to negotiate with private banks, leading hotels, diners and supermarkets Discounts and attractive packages. Further details on these offers are given in the AAUP website.

### **In Memorium**

It is with deep regret that the AAUP records the death of two eminent Alumni; Emeritus Prof. Ashley Halpe and Mr. Priyal Dias, a former President of the Colombo Chapter. Prof. Halpe passed away on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The Late Prof. Halpe will be posthumously felicitated at the AGM held on 19 March 2016, in appreciation of his service to the University community.