



AAUP Newsletter

News update of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya

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March 2012/2013

President's Message



Message from the President of the AAUP Prof. Savitri Kumar

The past year, 2012-2013, has been an eventful one for the Alumni Association, University of Peradeniya. The most encouraging development has been the interaction with a number of AAUP Clubs based in Australia. These include the Peradeniya University Alumni Association (AAUP) New South Wales, AAUP Western Australia Chapter, and the AAUP Victoria Chapter. These AAUP Clubs have actively supported our initiatives for student welfare projects including the establishment of a number of need based and merit based studentships and scholarships. The AAUP Colombo Chapter has continued to contribute to various student welfare projects. The AAUP Ottawa Chapter in Canada has recently contacted us expressing their interest in establishing studentships.

In January 2013, the AAUP organized the first ever PeraAlumni-Reunion 2013, with the cooperation of Prof. Atula Senaratne, (Vice Chancellor University of Peradeniya). The Reunion, was held at the Lodge and was a resounding success. It was well attended with alumni from overseas and different parts of Sri Lanka enjoying the event. Music, dancing, singing, games (including a Treasure Hunt and an animated session of Tombola), the opportunity for fellowship, a delicious lunch and a plentiful supply of draft beer, were appreciated by all!

The dedicated background work carried out by the AAUP ExCo members was, no doubt, the major reason for the success of the event.

Even the gusty winds which blew down all three tents in the garden of the Lodge during the previous night, did not dampen the enthusiasm of the organizers. The tents were constructed again the next morning and the occasion was enjoyed by all.

Addressed by Chief Guest AGM 2012



The Chief Guest, Kala Keerthi, Ms. Somalatha Subasingha, opened her address by saying how happy she was to be back at the Arts Theatre – a venue which brought back many nostalgic memories of her undergraduate past. She recalled her debut as a stage actress when the drama 'Rattaran' was performed at the 'Wala'. When she appeared on stage, the students tried very hard to boo her out but she carried on regardless and finally received much applause.

Ms. Subasinghe said that a majority of the present day undergraduates were from villages where the parents made huge financial sacrifices for their education. The family, and the whole village, expected the student to qualify and thereafter be capable of achieving much. The culture still prevalent in the villages expected the graduate to look after the family from there onwards. However, faced with unemployment, inadequate salaries, etc. she/he is unable to fulfill those expectations and is sometimes compelled to resort to other ways of making money. She observed that lying and cheating started very early, even before school entry. At a very early age, children were trained to lie at the 'school interview'. Once admitted to a school, they were force fed with knowledge which had no relevance to their future.

Ms. Subasinghe said that young students were busy attending tuition classes. They were forced to participate in many recreational activities merely to obtain 'points' and not as 'fun' activities. The children of today were not allowed to have a normal childhood and were virtually murdered alive! In contrast, she recalled her own school days – the fun and games as well as the activities that taught her the merits of fair play, healthy competition, efficient leadership, all of which have contributed to make her what she is today.

Ms. Subasinghe also spoke of the history of drama in Sri Lanka. She said that most modern productions focused on social problems attempting to make a change for the better, in society. She made an eloquent appeal to the alumni of the University of Peradeniya to fight the present education system and help make a radical change in order to give our children a normal childhood.

Activities of the AAUP 2012/13

Despite the intermittent disruptions of the University Calendar (2012) the AAUP successfully completed several activities intended to promote the well being of the University, its inmates, as well as its Alumni. Most of these activities would not have got off the ground without the commitment and dedication of the members of the parent body as well as its Chapters. In this context, the AAUP would like to take this opportunity to say a special “thank you” to the Colombo Chapter and Three Australian Chapters (the New South Wales Chapter, the Western Australia Chapter and the Victoria Chapter) for their generous contributions that helped to make these activities financially viable.

Student welfare program

AAUP Studentships/ Scholarships 2012

This year, 55 studentships were awarded by the AAUP at a function held in the Career Guidance Unit at 4.00 pm on 19th November 2012. In addition to the normal AAUP studentships, 15 new studentships were given this year to students in all eight Faculties and the Special Needs Resources Centre, with the help of the Victoria and the New South Wales Chapters of Australia.

- A\$ 400 donated by the New South Wales Australia Chapter was used to award 5 studentships
- Rs. 60,000/= donated by the Victoria Australia Chapter was used to grant 10 studentships.

Following scholarships will be awarded at the AGM on 24th March 2013.

- The Prof. Ashley Halpe Scholarship
- The Prof. B.L.T. de Silva Memorial Prize
- The Sydney NSW Alumni Scholarship
- The Y.W. Gunawardena Scholarship
- The Prof. H.W. Dias Scholarship

Donation of Furniture to the Faculty of Agriculture

Furniture to the value of A\$ 1000 donated by the Western Australia Chapter, was given to the Faculty of Agriculture for the use of students at the Mahailuppallama Campus.



Donation of Game Boards

At a small function held in the Career Guidance Unit on 19th November 2012 Carrom Boards and Game Boards were donated to the eight Faculties to be used by students in their common rooms. This project was funded by the New South Wales Australia Chapter.



Donation of equipment to the SNRC



The generous donation of A\$ 1000 by the Western Australia Chapter enabled the parent body to improve the facilities available at the Special Needs Resource Centre (SNRC).

Eight Digital recorders with rechargeable batteries, one 24" LCD/LED monitor, and three uninterrupted power supply units (UPS) were handed over to Prof. Athula Senarathne, Vice Chancellor – University of Peradeniya, by Prof. Savitri Kumar, President/ AAUP, at a simple ceremony held on 23rd Tuesday October 2012 at the Seminar Room of the Faculty of Arts. The donation from the Western Australia Chapter also included a stand-by fund for servicing and repairing equipment at the SNRC.

Donation of Mosquito nets & Spectacles

With generous support from the AAUP – Colombo Chapter, 100 mosquito nets were donated to the resident students of Ramanathan Hall.



The Colombo Chapter also provided spectacles for 51 students. The presentation was made at a small ceremony held at 1.00 pm on 21 January 2013 at Ramanathan Hall with the participation of Prof. Savitri Kumar (President – AAUP) Mr. Chandralal Sooriyarachchi (President – AAUP- Colombo Chapter), Mr. Dharmarathne, Mrs. Fareeza Ghazzali (Chairman, Student Welfare – AAUP – Colombo Chapter), Dr. Rupika Rajakaruna (Warden - Ramanathan hall), members of the Executive Committee of the AAUP and students.

English Language Program

Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardana was present in the AAUP office on Monday mornings in order to help students improve their communication skills in English.

Regular classes were held on Mondays and Thursdays (July – October, 2012) for the benefit of students who requested remedial classes in English. About 25 Students participated in this programme.

Donation of Textbooks

Five students of the Department of Management, Faculty of Arts were presented with textbooks on Management using the generous grant of Rs.25,000/= made by the Colombo Chapter. Each student received textbooks to the value of Rs. 5000/=.

Support for Book launch

A cash donation of Rs.9000/= was made to Mr. R.T. Karunasena, student of the Faculty of Arts to help him to launch his book '*Satan Kala Saha Satan Kreedda*'.



AGM 2012



Annual Trip to Reverston 2012



Donation of equipment to the SNRC from Western Australia Chapter



Addressed by President-AAUP and Vice Chancellor at Pera Reunion 6th January 2013



"Tombola" at Reunion



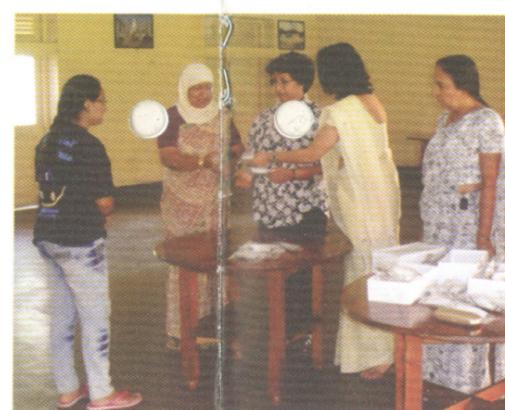
Entertainment from Senanayake Kala Academy at Reunion



Reunion



Treasure Hunt at Reunion



Donation of spectacles from Colombo Chapter



Book launch "Satan Kalawa Saha Satan Kreedha"



'Nupura Ranga' of Mr. Diddeniya



Performance of Wayamba Chapter at Reunion



Balloon Game at Reunion



Lining every road and by-lane
 Shady arcades abloom in clusters
 Flame topped branches
 Spanning the sky in proud flamboyance
 Setting the heavens ablaze
 While spent blossoms
 Like scarlet butterflies
 Break free, float down, to settle softly
 Over lovers seeking shelter below
 Lost in their own world of flame and fire

-Malini Epa-

The Special Needs Resources Centre University of Peradeniya

In a modern state, every citizen- disabled or otherwise- has an inalienable right to education. The UN Convention on the rights of persons with disabilities states clearly that persons with disabilities should receive the support required within the general education system in an environment that maximizes academic and social development consistent with the goal of full inclusion.

In our part of the world, however, facilities provided for students with physical disabilities have always been far from adequate. Traditionally, the disabled have been looked upon as “unlucky” or “unfortunate” and have been, with the best of intentions, virtually incarcerated in special institutes funded by benevolent individuals. Society is slowly but surely changing and differently able students are now active participants in the main stream of education. Several have successfully cleared the hurdles of the GCE examinations and are knocking on doors of the institutes of higher learning. It is, therefore, imperative that a Special Needs Resources Centre be an integral part of all institutes of learning.

The Special Needs Resources Centre (SNRC) of the University of Peradeniya is, for all intents and purposes, the brain child of the Emeritus Professor of Western Classics, Prof. Wimal Weerakkody. Prof. Weerakkody being visually impaired himself understood the needs and the desires of the disabled. It is said that Prof. Weerakkody informally approached a representative of the World Bank and secured, 50,000 US dollars which helped him to setup the SNRC Peradeniya in November 2004.

SNRC, housed in a small building in the Faculty of Arts now caters for the special needs of about 30 differently able students. The original funds, as well as, funding sources have now dried up and the University finds it difficult to provide adequate facilities to the SNRC. The AAUP with generous support from its Chapters has launched a programme to upgrade the Centre and provide state of the art facilities for the students. We would like to invite you to join us in our efforts and ensure that differently able students enjoy all fundamental rights on equal terms with others in society.

-Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardena-

Beautiful Campus

“Hilly and green Peradeniya was scenic beautiful
 Walking, down hill under a rainforest-like canopy of
 branches

With the sound of water trickling in a rivulet
 Seemed to create magical atmosphere for fun & frolic”

-Shantha Kekulawala-

+69 E-Society- University of Peradeniya.

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IELTS program



Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardena continued to conduct programmes in preparation for IELTS for the benefit of academic and administrative staff members on Mondays. This was a service project offered to AAUP members on payment of a nominal fee.

This year the AAUP continued the partnership agreement with the British Council Kandy for the preparation of candidates for the IELTS during the period July – November 2012. Sixteen participants - mainly medical officers from the General Hospital Kandy and the Academic Staff of the University of Peradeniya- attended sessions every Monday at the AAUP office. A nominal fee - Rs: 3000 from members and Rs: 4000 from non members - was charged to cover the running costs.

In addition to providing a service to members, the program also benefited the association- 5 new members and a profit of Rs 44,900.00.

Nupura Ranga

The AAUP presented the "Nupura Ranga" of Mr. Nissanka Diddeniya under the patronage of the Norwegian Embassy of Sri Lanka on 25th May 2012 at the Auditorium of Bishop's College, Colombo. With the hope of preserving the roots of Sri Lankan art, the senior artiste Nissanka Diddeniya, along with other veterans in the local arts-field, launched an aesthetic musical and theater campaign which showcased the richness of local "Nuurthi nadagam" and theater art. Mr. Diddeniya donated several copies of "Purathana Nadagame Adyathana Swaroopaya" written by him to the library of the University of Peradeniya.

Annual Trip



More than 35 members joined the one day trip to Rattota, Matale on 7th October 2012. While providing the participants with an opportunity to enjoy the mesmerising scenic beauty of the area around Riverston, the trip also enabled them to relax and enjoy the congenial company of friends. Lunch was organized by Mr. N.S. Karunathilake at the circuit bungalow of the Forest Department at Rattota. The AAUP would like to thank Mr. Karunathilake for the excellent organization of the trip.

Updating Membership Database

Hereafter, the mode of communication with the membership will be through e-mails. We are now in the process of updating the AAUP membership database and would appreciate your kind cooperation on this. For details please see our website <http://www.pdn.ac.lk/alumni/> or contact aaupslk@gmail.com or call 0714429918.

The following benefits would accrue to members who maintain contact with the AAUP via e mail.

- Receive all alumni communication from the General Secretary of the AAUP promptly
- Receive latest news regarding AAUP activities and be invited to alumni events
- Receive latest information regarding the Alma Mater
- Receive information of events at the UoP (Public talks, entertainment events such as drama & film festivals, musical shows, & recreation etc)
- Get the chance to join with alumni chapters, professional networks, to search members and to update your career news and contact details through member login facilities.

Pera-Alumni Reunion 2013



"The Pera-Alumni Reunion 2013" was held, on a grand scale, on January 6th 2013 at "The Lodge", the residence of the Vice Chancellor.

The event was organized by the parent body of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya (AAUP). Members of the AAUP have a common bond - a sense of pride in their Alma Mater as well as fond memories of their undergraduate days in the salubrious environment of Peradeniya. The Reunion was, therefore, organized to provide an opportunity for local and overseas Alumni to re-visit the University of Peradeniya, renew old friendships and recollect and recall the contribution made by the University to their lives, as well as education and research in the country. The intention was to provide fun and fellowship as well as an opportunity for Alumni to re-iterate their belief in their Alma Mater and focus on ways and means to contribute to its future development.

The Vice Chancellor and more than 200 local and overseas alumni and their families joined together to make the Pera-Alumni Reunion 2013 a truly unforgettable event. We thank all the participants for their presence and the organizers for their efforts to make this event a resounding success.

EXCO of the AAUP 2012-2013

Executive committee of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya for the year 2012/13

President: Prof. Savitri Kumar,

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General Secretary: Dr. Chantha Jayawardena

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Editor: Mrs. Lalitha Gunawardena,

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Asst. Treasurer: Prof. Swarna Wimalasiri,

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