

NEWSLETTER

Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya

March, 2025

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MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT, PROF SIRIL WIJESUNDARA



As we convene for the Annual General Meeting of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya (AAUP) on March 23, 2025, it is a moment to reflect on our journey, celebrate our achievements, and chart the path ahead. Our alma mater has shaped us in countless ways, and as alumni, we carry the responsibility of upholding its rich legacy while contributing to its continued progress.

Over the past year, AAUP has actively engaged in strengthening our alumni network, supporting students, and fostering meaningful collaborations that benefit both the university and the wider community. Whether through mentorship programs, scholarships, or initiatives that promote academic and professional excellence, our collective efforts have reinforced the values that define the University of Peradeniya.

However, our mission does not end here. As we step into another year, let us continue to work together to expand our reach, nurture the next generation of leaders, and uphold the standards of excellence that our university is known for. I encourage each of you to stay connected, contribute in whatever capacity possible, and take pride in being a part of this remarkable community.

I extend my sincere appreciation to all alumni who have supported AAUP's initiatives, contributing to the growth and vibrancy of our association.



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VERITAS

35th AGM of AAUP- March 24, 2024

Under the Presidency of Prof. Rupika Rajakaruna, the 35th AGM took place as a hybrid event at the Diamond Jubilee Auditorium in the Faculty of Agriculture, University of Peradeniya. Prof. Siva Sivananthan, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois at Chicago, USA Founder of Sivananthan Laboratories, 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 Prof. Ranjini Obeyesekere and Prof. Lakshman Samaranayake. After the election of Office bearers for the coming year, the invitees and members dispersed for fellowship.



AAUP Annual Trips

The first annual trip to Minneriya was successfully held on 24th and 25th of August, 2024. Forty-five members participated and the two days were enjoyable with several interesting activities such as elephant watching, BBQ party and historical site visits.

The second trip was to Wilpatthu National Park on 7th and 8th December 2024. There were forty-five participants. This trip Included a safari tour as well and the members had the opportunity to see many wild animals



AWARD OF SCHOLARSHIPS

Scholarships/ Merit Awards awarded at the AGM 24 th March 2024		
	Student Name	Award
1	Rumeshika Jayasinghe	Prof. I Balasooriya Memorial Scholarship– Best Performance in Botany at the 300 Level examination (Special degree in Botany)
2	Jayanka Hewagampalage	Prof. H.W. Dias Scholarship– Best Performance in chemistry at the 3rd year examination (Special degree in Chemistry)
3	Thihansa Ranaweera	Prof. B.L.T. De Silva Memorial Scholarship– Best performance in Biology I at the first examination
4	Weerasinghe Mudalige Thisandi Uvini Kumarie Weerasinghe	Prof. Ashley Halpe Memorial Scholarship– Best performance in English at the first examination
5	Rahubaddha Kankanamge Umesha Dinukshi	Mr. Y.W.Gunawardana Memorial Scholarship Best performance in Geography at the first examination
6	Dewaraja Pathirannehelage Varuni Rasangika	Mr. Y.W. Gunawardana Memorial Scholarship Best performance in Geography at the first examination

ALUMNI ACTIVITIES



"How to become a Startup Entrepreneur"

The Alumni Association of University of Peradeniya (AUP) together with the Career Guidance Unit organized a session for Undergraduate students on "How to become a Startup Entrepreneur". The session was conducted by Prof. Roshan Yapa, Director, BLITTO and it was followed by a session by BoC on their new Youth Loan Scheme for supporting young entrepreneurs.

SPECIAL AWARDS

Short Film Competition: “Let’s prevent cyber sexual exploitation within universities and empower victims”

1	Dayanjith Premalal, Dahami Bandara, Divya Perera, Nisala Jayasundara, Suwathijah Thiyagarajah, Aseniya Rathnayake, Chamuditha Galkaduwa; Film title “Niruwatha”	First Place in Short video competition on Cyber Sexual Exploitation Awareness among university students; Theme: “Let’s prevent cyber sexual exploitation within universities and empower victims”
2	K.G. Pawan Anjana, T.K. Sarathchandra, D.W. Hashani Dilushika, M.D. Dilshani Piyumika, D.V. Pevindya Rashmi, J.M. Nalinda Sampath, K.P. Chathuri Jayanethri Perera, R.M. Sandakelum Viduranga, Anju Nethmini; Film Title “The Fake Frame”	Second Place in Short video competition on Cyber Sexual Exploitation Awareness among university students; Theme: “Let’s prevent cyber sexual exploitation within universities and empower victims”
3	R. Anudi Nilma Wijayapriya, P.K.S. Vidubhashini Jayarathna, R.M.T.N.B. Karunarathne, R.G.P.D. Senevirathna, K.K.C. Jayasekara, T.H. Hasala Kareendra Karunadasa; Film Title : “The Strangers”	Third Place in Short video competition on Cyber Sexual Exploitation Awareness among university students; Theme: “Let’s prevent cyber sexual exploitation within universities and empower victims”

Artistic Awards

1	A. Silva	First Place in English Poetry Competition in the Undergraduate Award of Artistic Excellence, Theme: “Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka”
2	M.N.F. Mubassara	First Place in Tamil Poetry Competition in the Undergraduate Award of Artistic Excellence, Theme: “Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka”
3	Dileepa Thathsara	First Place in Short Drama script Competition in the Undergraduate Award of Artistic Excellence, Theme: “Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka”
4	K.N. Madushanka	First Place in Painting Competition in the Undergraduate Award of Artistic Excellence, Theme: “Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka”
5	H.H.A.S.C. Hettiarachchi	First Place in Short Film Competition in the Undergraduate Award of Artistic Excellence, Theme: “Economic Crisis in Sri Lanka”

PERA CONCEPT STORE

EVOLVING THE BRAND – EMBRACING THE LEGACY



The PERA Concept Store, launched in August 2022 by the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya (AAUP), provides a platform for alumni and students to connect through exclusive university merchandise. Offering a range of apparel, accessories, and memorabilia, the store fosters a sense of pride and community among the university's global network.



With products designed to represent the university's heritage and values, the store supports various welfare activities and initiatives that enhance student life. Items are available both on-campus and online, ensuring easy access for alumni and students worldwide.

Managed by the Standing Committee on Finance of AAUP, the PERA Concept Store is a testament to the collaboration between alumni and students, strengthening the bond within the University of Peradeniya community while promoting the Institution's professional brand.



Ongoing Registration Process of the "PERA" Logo

The PERA logo is currently in the process of being registered as a trademark, further solidifying its identity and legacy

Website: <https://mypera.lk/>



Store Location



Magnanimous Gestures of Our Overseas Chapters

Peradeniya University Alumni Association of NSW (PUAAN)

The year began with the summer walk at Bobbin Head, Ku-ring-gai Chase National Park, on Saturday, February 24, 2024. Three walks of different grades were offered, with the 4.2 km, Grade 3 Birrawana track being the most popular. After the walk, members enjoyed a BBQ lunch and a sing-along before leaving in the early afternoon.

Next up, PUAAN participated in the Clean Up Australia Day, a community event on Sunday, 3rd March 2024 at the Bungarribee Park, Arndell Park. The autumn Hunter Valley weekend outing was held from Friday, April 19 to Sunday 21, 2024.



Summer walk at Bobbin Head



Saturday at the Hunter Valley outing

The Sri Lankan Inter-University Six-a-Side Cricket Carnival was held on May 19, 2024, with teams from Peradeniya, Colombo, Jayewardenepura, Kelaniya, Moratuwa, Ruhuna, and Sabaragamuwa universities. PUAAN men's team emerged as champions.

The Association's annual winter event took place on August 24, 2024, featuring two presentations by experts in their professions.

Hantana Night, the Association's fund raiser and signature annual social event in spring took place on Friday, 27th of September 2024 at the Castle Grande. A popular Sydney band provided the music. The attendees were treated to a sumptuous buffet dinner, and the evening was enriched by exciting raffle and door prizes.



Hantana Night 2024

A PUAAN team joined over twelve thousand walkers at the 7 Bridges Walk in Sydney on Sunday, 20th October 2024, to raise funds for the Cancer Council.

During the year, the Association organized BBQs to raise funds for NSW and Australia-wide charities, and to support the Association's studentship program operated through AAUP.

PUAAN contributed Rs 100,000 to establish a Gold Medal in Mathematics. Further, the Association enabled the shipping of books on mathematics donated by two Alumni, Dr Kanapathipillai Sriskandarajah (USA) and Prof Shelton Peiris (Australia).



Books received at the Department of Mathematics



Ceremonial opening of the Center for Psychological Assessment and Wellbeing

The Association supported the refurbishment of the Center for Psychological Assessment and Wellbeing at the Department of Psychology, Faculty of Arts; the fifth such faculty-based project in the campus. The center was opened on 4th March 2025.

Annual Events of the Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya, Ottawa Chapter (AAUPOC)

The Alumni Association of the University of Peradeniya, Ottawa Chapter (AAUPOC), was established in 2012 to strengthen the bond between alumni of the University of Peradeniya (UOP) residing in Ottawa, Canada. Since its founding, the association has grown to around 105 members, united by their shared commitment to supporting their alma mater, promoting cultural exchanges, and contributing to charitable initiatives. Through its annual events, AAUPOC has successfully upheld these values, benefiting both alumni and the broader community.

One of the association's most impactful initiatives is its **contribution to the Alumni Association of the UOP's (AAUP's) studentship program**, to provide financial support to needy students at the UOP. In 2024, AAUPOC contributed LKR 1.9 million, and in 2025, the contribution was LKR 1.84 million bringing the total contributions over the past two years to approximately LKR 3.74 million. This fund provides LKR 5,000 per month to 30 undergraduate students for a year, easing financial burdens and allowing students to focus on their academic growth.

In addition to the AAUPOC's contribution to the studentship program, AAUPOC launched the **Entrepreneurship Development Project** in 2024 to nurture business skills among UOP's undergraduates. The project was initiated in collaboration with UOP's Career Guidance Unit, the Vice Chancellor's office and the EVOKE Society of the Faculty of Agriculture and the AAUPOC, which provides funding up to LKR 600,000.00. It includes a competition for the best business proposals, with seed funding for the winning proposals. AAUPOC in collaboration with project partners will also organize workshops to help students refine their business proposals and connect with market opportunities, guided by successful Sri Lankan-Canadian entrepreneurs.

On November 9th, the annual flagship event of AAUPOC **Hanthana Night** was held at the Ukrainian Conventional and Banquet Center, Ottawa. The theme of the event, "*Sawariya*" (a tour), was designed to introduce the younger generation to Sri Lanka's rich cultural heritage. A standout feature of the evening was the first-ever *Rookada* (Sri Lankan puppet) show in Canada, performed by veteran puppeteer Supun Ganwari, a UOP alumnus. The event also showcased traditional Sri Lankan music, dance, and cuisine, providing a memorable cultural experience for attendees.

AAUPOC kicked off its 2024–2025 events with "**Gee Padura**" on June 1st. This musical event celebrated the legacy of legendary Sri Lankan singers Amara Ranathunga, Mohideen Baig, and Dharmadasa Walpola. The event provided members with an opportunity to come together and enjoy Sri Lankan music, sing along, and reflect on the influence of these iconic artists. It also strengthened the sense of community within the AAUPOC membership.

AAUPOC also organized its **Summer Picnic 2024** on July 20th, at Fitzroy Provincial Park. The picnic brought together the families of members for a day of fun and relaxation, offering a chance to strengthen family bonds and foster community spirit. This informal gathering highlighted the importance of family connections and social interaction within AAUPOC.

On August 17th, AAUPOC competed in its **Annual Cricket Match** against the Ottawa Cricket Club (OCC), which was celebrating its 175th anniversary. The match, known for its friendly yet competitive spirit, saw AAUPOC emerge victorious. This annual event has become a hallmark occasion, not only fostering camaraderie but also raising significant funds for the scholarship program. The funds generated will directly benefit UOP students, showcasing how sports can bring people together for a meaningful cause.

The **Walkathon Challenge 2024**, held from September 23rd to October 2nd, aimed to promote health and wellness among AAUPOC members. It concluded with a group health walk at Andrew Haydon Provincial Park on October 6th. This initiative encouraged participants to stay active and contribute to a good cause. Participants received prizes from the event's main sponsors, motivating engagement while promoting a healthy lifestyle.

As part of its efforts to encourage the creative talents of AAUPOC members' families, the association launched the **Calendar Project**. For 2025, the calendar features pencil sketches created by a 9-year-old Nathan Herath, a child of two AAUPOC members. This initiative not only celebrates the artistic abilities of younger members but also provides them with a platform to showcase their creativity. Additionally, the profit from the calendar project will be directed toward supporting the scholarship program, furthering AAUPOC's commitment to empowering the next generation.

AAUPOC continues to thrive as a dynamic and engaged community of UOP alumni. Through a variety of events, including cultural celebrations, sports, fundraising efforts, and educational initiatives, the association strengthens bonds among its members while positively impacting the lives of current UOP students. Looking forward, AAUPOC remains committed to supporting UOP and its future generations, promoting the values that unite the community.

HIGHLIGHTS OF THE FACULTY ALUMNI ASSOCIATIONS

ARTS FACULTY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF THE UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA

The first Annual General Meeting of the Peradeniya University Arts Faculty Alumni Association was ceremonially held on 28th September 2024, with the participation of the Vice Chancellor Prof. Terrence Madhujith (The Chief Guest), Prof. Ranjith Pallegama, (Guest of Honour), Dr. Prabath Ekanayake (Patron / Dean, Faculty of Arts), Mr. R. Maheshwaran (Chief Librarian), Prof. Rohitha Dasanayaka (Coordinator - Arts Faculty Alumni Association), Prof. Premachandra Athukorala (Invited Guest) of the Australian National University and a large gathering of the members of the Faculty Alumni including the members of the Executive and the Standing Committees of the Association.

The following were a few of the major accomplishments of the Association that took place during the year 2024/25: (i). Providing studentships with a monthly basis, stipend for 56 needy students of the Faculty of Arts. (ii). Providing financial assistance, with a monthly basis stipend, and dry ration for free midday meals for needy students of the Faculty of Arts in collaboration with the District Secretariat and the YMBA Kandy. (iii). Providing studentships, with a monthly basis stipend commencing in January 2024 for 37 needy students of the Faculty of Arts, through the YMBA Colombo. (iv). Providing needed requirements for the bedrooms of the 22 Bhikku Students residing in the AQ40 University Bhikku Hostel, in collaboration with the Chief Incumbent Maha Naayake Thero of the Malwathu Chapter Temple of Kandy. (v). Conducting a musical therapy programme, (Muthu Ahurak) in collaboration with the PAFAA Canadian Chapter Coordinator Mr. Dushyantha Rodrigo, on 08.05.2024. "Hanthaana Cinema Festival 2025" was organized by the "Pera Arts Batch 83/84" of the Arts Faculty Alumni Association and screened at the Main Arts Theatre of the University in February 2025.



VETERINARY ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF PERADENIYA (VAAP)

Veterinary Education: VAAP's Milestones in 2024

In 2024, VAAP strengthened its commitment to veterinary education, student welfare, and faculty development through impactful initiatives. By fostering alumni engagement, it has significantly contributed to the advancement of the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science at the University of Peradeniya.



5th Executive committee of VAAP

Strengthening Bonds and Advancing

Formal Recognition and Expansion of Alumni Network

A key milestone this year was VAAP's official registration as a recognized society, providing a solid foundation for future initiatives.

Supporting Veterinary Students

Recognizing the financial challenges faced by many students, VAAP launched a **studentship program** that awarded **twenty scholarships** to undergraduate students at the Faculty of Veterinary Medicine and Animal Science.

Enhancing Faculty Infrastructure In 2024, VAAP made a significant contribution to the faculty's ambulatory unit, supported by international alumni chapters, especially the North American Chapter. This funding enabled the establishment of an Intensive Care Unit, a Recumbent Animal Care Unit, and a Neonatal Care Unit. Additionally, VAAP launched a project to upgrade the Veterinary Teaching Hospital (VTH) into a "Cat Friendly Hospital" following ISFM standards, with support from an alumni-owned company, aiming to enhance feline medical care.

Wildlife Conservation and Support

VAAP prioritized wildlife conservation by initiating the donation of a specialized transport vehicle for injured wild animals to the Wild Animal Treatment Unit of VTH. Now in its final stages.

Fostering Alumni Engagement

VAAP focused on alumni engagement by organizing a Family Night, where alumni and their families reunited to share experiences and strengthen connections. Additionally, several interactive sessions were held throughout the year, promoting discussions on faculty development, career advancement, and alumni contributions to veterinary education at the University of Peradeniya.



Looking ahead

VAAP had a successful year, strengthening veterinary education, supporting students, and enhancing alumni relations. Committed to collaboration, innovation, and service, the association aims to ensure a brighter future for veterinary professionals. Looking ahead to 2025, VAAP will focus on expanding its impact, improving veterinary education, and building a stronger global alumni network.

SCIENCE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION OF UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA (UPSAA)

In the year 2024, the University of Peradeniya Science Alumni Association conducted several activities for the university undergraduate students and for both academic and non-academic staff of the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya. To enhance the mental well-being of the first-year students (1000-level) of the Faculty of Science, a musical programme was conducted with the participation of Dr. Manoj Alawathukotuwa as the resource person. The academic and non-academic staff of the Faculty of Science participated in the event as well.

UPSAA carried out a few charity events including the donation of a wheel chair to a student, donation of first aid boxes to nine departments of the Faculty of Science, and installation of exhaust fans in the Department of Chemistry. Dr. Buddhika Dassanayake memorial scholarships were offered to four students of the four undergraduate years on merit basis. Along with the donations, UPSAA carried out fundraising activities as well, which included selling memorabilia on the day of the convocation and a membership drive which was conducted with the participation of demonstrators of the Faculty of Science and alumni who are PhD candidates and Post-Doctoral associates in US and Australia. Parallel to the event a session on 'Introduction to Higher Studies and Universities Abroad' was successfully conducted by five alumni who are postdoctoral associates and PhD candidates residing overseas.

The annual trip to Arangala forest lodge, organized by UPSAA was a memorable event where the members had the opportunity to meet each other and be together with nature as well. The activities in the year 2024 were carried out under the leadership of the president UPSAA Prof. Kalinga Bandara, the Secretary UPSAA Dr. Lahiru Narangamma and Treasurer UPSAA Dr. Manjula Wijesinghe.



Performance during Dr. Manoj Alawathukotuwa Musical Programme



UPSAA committee with the organizing committee

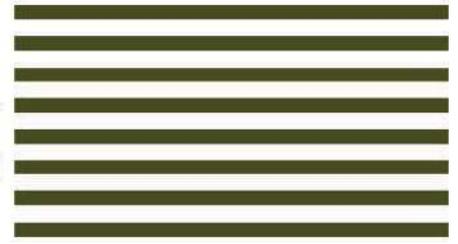


The annual trip to Arangala forest lodge, organized by UPSAA



Donation of walking aid

CHAPTER NEWS



COLOMBO CHAPTER

Main Activities and Achievements (2024 / 25)

- **Commemoration of Late Members:** A meritorious event was held on 19th July 2024 at Paramitha Elder's Home, Kelaniya. Lunch was provided for 50 inmates, followed by a Dharmadeshana to invoke merits for all departed members.
- **CSR Project on World Children's Day:** AAUPCC marked World Children's Day with a donation to Katumuluwa Junior School, Kanathewewa, providing over 400 textbooks for the school library, Essential stationery and two gymnastic mattresses for the Island School Gymnastics Competition 2024
- **List of Key Office Bearers Since Inception:** The list of key office bearers since inception has been uploaded to the official website of the association.
- **Felicitation of Mr. Nissanka Diddeniya:** In recognition of his contributions to Sri Lankan drama over 55 years, AAUPCC organized a felicitation ceremony for veteran artist and alumnus Mr. Nissanka Diddeniya.
- **Fundraising Event:** As a fundraising initiative for 2025, AAUPCC staged Prof. Mangala Senanayake's Sinhala drama "Sindukara Kavinalkuwa", featuring Mr. Diddeniya in a key role. It was decided that 10% of the profits would be donated to the Special Needs Resource Centre (SNRC) of the University of Peradeniya for the benefit of students.
- **Diary for Members:** A diary for the year 2025 was printed and distributed to Management Council members and general members at the Family Get-Together on 1st February 2025.
- **Membership Drive:** A remarkable milestone was achieved with the enrollment of 35 new members this year.
- **Membership Directory:** Work is in progress on developing a Membership Directory, identified as a key initiative to maintain up-to-date membership records.
- **Student Welfare:** This year, 12 studentships will be awarded at the AAUP AGM.
- **ID Cards for Members:** Work is in progress to issue printed ID cards for Colombo Chapter members.
- **Alumni Forum:** A special lecture on "Artificial Intelligence" was delivered by Mr. Upula Amarasinghe of the UN Food and Agriculture Organization on 24th July 2024.
- **Annual Trip:** The two-day Annual Members and Family Picnic to Grand Udawalawe Safari Resort was an awesome success, providing an enjoyable experience for all attendees.
- **Members' Day and Paduru Party:** Held at Nom Nom Thai Restaurant (Cer Noor), Colombo 10, on 1st February 2025, this event was attended by 82 members and their families, comprising both young and senior members. The evening featured a live band and entertainment, making it a memorable occasion.
- **AAUP AGM:** Transportation will be provided for members attending the AGM in Peradeniya on 23rd March 2025.
- **34th AAUPCC AGM:** Arrangements have been made to hold the 34th AGM at the SLIDA Auditorium on 30th March 2025.
- **Newsletter:** The e-version of the biannual newsletter was published on 9th September 2024.
- **Publicity:** Extensive media coverage was secured in print media across three languages, contributing significantly to the success of AAUPCC-organized events.
- **Demised Members:** With deep regret, we announce the passing of 14 Life Members of AAUPCC during the term. May they rest in peace.



35TH AGM PHOTO

GALLERY



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