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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA

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40TH ANNIVERSARY

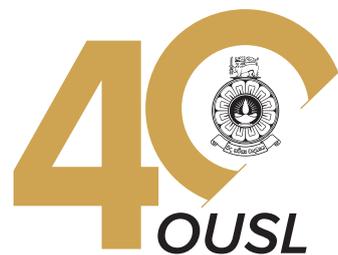
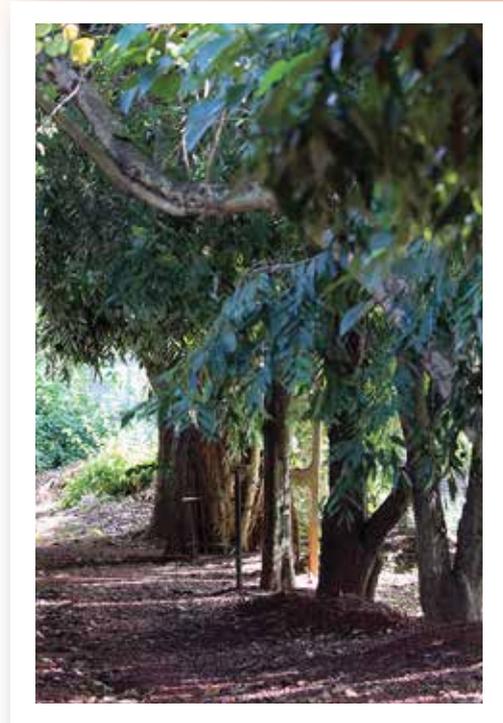
SPECIAL ISSUE

2020



Open unto the fields, and to the sky...

If the Romantic poets infused rustic simplicity and natural exquisiteness to the art of the poem, then OUSL added the natural luster back into learning and teaching. Flouting the fixed conventions of edification, the University freed learning from time and space, teaching from peculiar altitudes, and creating knowledge from subterranean caves. Freed from the constraints learners and teachers engaged in dialectics from parallel spaces. Erudition was built rather than unearthed. Scholarship was invented and not exhumed. Learnedness was punctuated with commas, not full stops. A world was born that was opaque and overwhelming - yet egalitarian, simple, beautiful...and of course, Open...





Learner Engagement through Enhanced Learner Support is the Key to the Future

Special Message from the Vice Chancellor, OUSL, Senior Professor. S. A. Ariadurai

It is with great satisfaction that I write this note to the special issue of The Open Quarterly to commemorate forty years of existence of The Open University of Sri Lanka. There is no doubt that OUSL has made significant inroads into the higher education sector of our beloved nation by providing alternative pathways for education to working adults and young adults who had chosen the opportunity we have provided. It is also noteworthy to mention that OUSL is the only university in the country that provides learning opportunities to all its students almost at their doorsteps, through the network of Regional and Study Centres spread throughout the country.

The university has number of unique features that are not found in any other university in the country. These include: possibility to study while employed thus providing opportunities for lifelong learning and career advancement, possibility to study at one's own pace, non-requirement of prior qualification for entry at Foundation level enabling anyone above 18 years to pursue higher studies, recognition of prior qualifications through credit exemptions and credit transfers, multiple entry and exit levels thus providing ladders of opportunities, and flexibility in curriculum requiring only a minimum 50% to be offered at OUSL.

The OUSL being a dynamic university has adopted many initiatives to enhance the learning experiences of our students. Keeping par with the technological developments that are taking place in the education sector, we are always looking at avenues to provide our students with increased learning possibilities through modern day technology, including providing online support through our Learner Management System, Video Conferencing by linking the main campus to number of Regional and Study Centres, state-of-the-art library facilities with modern technology and e-services with access to numerous journals online and other world class e-resources, including Open Educational Resources.

One of the main contributors to the success of a distance education course is learner engagement through appropriate and adequate learner support.

Before, I conclude let me take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all the individuals who have been associated with this esteemed organization over the last forty years and immensely contributed to make it what it is today.

During the last two years, we have started many initiatives to facilitate adoption of high quality Open Educational Resources as learning resources to our students. We now have our own web-based video channels, through which our students have access to many educational videos in their relevant fields of study. Currently, we are taking action to commence a web-based radio to provide additional learner support for students in their studies.

It is also necessary that we look at the possibility of using as much as possible electronic tools to conduct our administrative activities. We believe the upgraded HRM module will simplify the work involved in the Establishment and Finance Divisions and make them more proficient. We are in the process of introducing a workflow solution software that will tremendously reduce paperwork and will

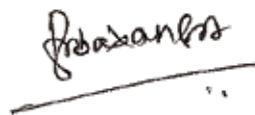
improve the effectiveness of all administrative operations. A few years ago, the University implemented online application system for all its programmes and as the next step, we are now in the process making the entire registration process online.

One of the main contributors to the success of a distance education course is learner engagement through appropriate and adequate learner support. I believe this is one area where we at OUSL have much room for further improvement. Unless we formally recognize and adequately address the aspect of learner support, we as a university will not be able to expand and be effective among our students. I believe, as we plan to expand our services to cater to the increased educational needs of our citizenry, we will make a concerted effort to strengthen and expand the learner support we provide to our students, to make their learning experiences at our university truly meaningful and enriching.

Before, I conclude let me take this opportunity to extend my gratitude to all the individuals who have been associated with this esteemed organization over the last forty years and immensely contributed to make it what it is today.

As we look forward to the future, let me wish the institute and every individual connected to it all the very best. May God bless you all.

***“Progress means not just changing, but changing for the better” - C. S. Lewis,
A British theologian and author***



Senior Professor. S. A. Ariadurai
Vice Chancellor



OUSL's 40-year Service to the Nation

The Open University of Sri Lanka, which was established on 22nd July, 1980 under the powers vested with the then Minister of Education, Junius Richard Jayawardene to facilitate higher education for persons who are not students of other universities / campuses and university colleges.

The University quickly expanded its services to 09 Regional Centres and 19 Study Centres representing each district and used its revolutionary Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode to reach potential students in all parts of the nation during its 40-year existence.

During my tenure as the Registrar of OUSL from 2011, I witnessed some extraordinary development projects, some of which are: the opening of the Staff Development Centre (SDC), welfare room for staff, examination halls, the new Temporary Residential Facility and the Colombo Regional Centre building at Nawala, infrastructure developments at the Kandy Regional Centre with an examination hall for 1,000 students, a registration block and an administration block, a new Library building at the Matara Regional Centre, establishment of Killinochchi and Matale Study Centres, infrastructure developments at the Anuradhapura Regional Centre and a

temporary exam hall at the Kurunegala Regional Center and etc. In addition, the university purchased new lands in Batticaloa and Ratnapura, allocated government lands for Trincomalee, Mannar, Killinochchi and Matale Study Centers and the Badulla Regional Center-all in order to expand its island-wide reach.

Presently, 02 major capital projects for the Faculty of Health Sciences and Jaffna Regional Centre are under construction. In addition, the University has decided to de-centralize of administrative functions by establishing a Branch of Administration at Kandy Regional Centre in near future.



W L V Jayasena
Registrar



OUSL Opened Up New Horizons for Me

I am always proud to say that The Open University of Sri Lanka is my 'alma mater'- a 'nourishing mother', for the university has had that kind of influence on me, my life and career.

At this moment, when OUSL is celebrating her 40th anniversary, reflecting on my close association with the University for over 37 years gives me a pleasant, nostalgic feeling, particularly as to how she has nurtured me to become who I am today. My long journey at OUSL, first as a student and then as an academic, has been quite challenging, yet very productive and satisfying. OUSL has not only paved the way for me so I could fulfill my childhood dream of becoming a graduate, but also offered me access to a plethora of opportunities for my professional growth.

Looking back through an academic lens, let me share some of my experiences, with a focus on how the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode of OUSL has enabled and supported me in this journey.

The significance of ODL is its ability to offer open and flexible access to learning opportunities to anyone, anywhere, and at any time, which is especially suitable for working adult learners, as well as life-long learners. For me, who nurtured a dream of becoming a Science graduate, but missed the chance to enter a traditional university, the opportunity offered by OUSL to study as a 'distance learner', while being employed as a school teacher, was extremely valuable. This provided me access to higher studies, as well as flexibility and affordability to engage in my studies as a working adult. Enrolling as a 'non-traditional' student in the first batch of the BSc Degree Programme of OUSL in 1983, and finally graduating in 1990, with a gold medal for the best performance, was indeed a great academic achievement for me.

The unique ODL experience that compelled self-directed learning, sharpened many other skills such as time management, work scheduling, and multitasking, which were essential to organize my learning around work and home life, and to maintain a

healthy work-study balance. This great sense of autonomy and responsibility for my own learning motivated and empowered me, and supported a rigorous self-regulated learning journey towards successfully achieving my goal.

The physical separation of teachers and learners from each other that is typical in the distance mode was amply bridged with loads of learner-friendly self-study modules, the occasional face-to-face sessions including day schools and laboratory classes where we enjoyed the peer interactions. The learner support thus extended, especially by the friendly, helpful and caring staff – both academic and non-academic, was much appreciated by us, the students. I still remember the limited exposure to computer technology provided even under constrained facilities at that time, which motivated me to proceed with further studies along these lines and even to purchase my own desktop computer. Especially, the English language support classes were very welcome, since it was daunting to suddenly study in the English medium, having studied in Sinhala throughout school days. I should also mention that the completion of the Certificate in Professional English course of OUSL in 1984 was an additional achievement, which helped me develop English language competencies.

The very challenging, yet the enjoyable and successful learning journey at OUSL tremendously motivated me to pursue further studies, and also to contribute as a visiting academic in the Foundation Science Programme. My strong interest and desire to join the OUSL staff finally resulted in taking a risky decision to resign from my permanent school teacher position and take up a temporary demonstrator position at the Department of Zoology at the Faculty of Natural Sciences in 1991. The two years I spent there, provided me with a good

opportunity to gain valuable training and an initial experience of functioning as a teacher in the same ODL system where I was a learner before.

In 1993, I was extremely fortunate to be appointed to a permanent position as an Educational Assistant at OUSL. When I joined the then Department of Education, as a trained graduate teacher with a decade of teaching experience, and especially as a graduate of OUSL itself, I was well-prepared to face the challenges of efficiently functioning as a permanent academic staff in this ODL system. This position opened up many more doors for me, and which saw the beginning of my steady rise as an academic at OUSL. Little did I know at that time that I would eventually become the first doctorate in Sri Lanka specialized in ICT in Education and e-Learning, as well as becoming the first Professor in Educational Technology in Sri Lanka, with a focus on open, flexible and distance learning, the very mode of study that led me on to this path.

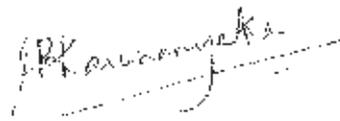
I firmly believe that I was able to achieve all these great things due to the strong foundation, people, and the multitude of opportunities to which I was exposed to at OUSL.

The opportunity to undertake my doctoral studies at the University of Wollongong in Australia (1998-2001), with the award of a scholarship under the Teacher Education and Teacher Deployment Project of the Ministry of Education, and receiving a Doctor of Education specializing in ICT in 2001, was a significant watershed in my professional life. The other key milestones in my journey at OUSL are, becoming a Senior Lecturer in 2001, Head of the Department during 2006-2012, and Dean of the Faculty of Education during 2012-2015 and again in 2018, as well as earning my Professorship in Educational Technology in 2013.

I firmly believe that I was able to achieve all these great things due to the strong foundation, people, and the multitude of opportunities to which I was exposed to at OUSL. These opportunities equipped me with the necessary competencies for lifelong learning, and enabled the development of my capacity, capabilities, self-endurance and self-confidence in both, personal and professional life. The extensive training and experience I have received in open, distance, flexible and online learning has also inspired me to pursue research along these areas, and led to the creation of several capacity building programmes for

OUSL staff and other practitioners nationally and internationally. Especially notable is my interest in and current work around Open Educational Resources (OER) and Open Educational Practices (OEP).

I am truly grateful for the unique opportunity OUSL has provided me with, to be actively engaged in open education as a learner, teacher, as well as a researcher, for almost four decades. As a proud alumna of OUSL, I sincerely hope my university grows and prospers in the years to come, further widening educational access, enhancing equity and opening-up new horizons to the next generation of learners.



Shironica Priyanthi Karunanayaka
Professor in Educational Technology
OUSL Alumna,
Dean, Faculty of Education



Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences: Fostering Diversity



The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) is one of the largest faculties in Social Sciences within the national university system. The faculty is dedicated to employing the Open Distance Learning mode, which is the specialty of OUSL, to provide quality educational opportunities for adult learners for professional and personal advancement. The Faculty is also committed to foster excellence in scholarship and researching in contemporary disciplines in Humanities and Social Science.

HSS serves a student population of over 10,000 through its four departments in the disciplines of Social Sciences, Law and Languages. Thus, the Department of Social Studies, Department of Legal Studies, Department of Language Studies and Department of English Language Teaching offer a wide array of programs not only aimed for the employment generation, but for appreciating and cultivating knowledge further. In fact it is this second objective that would make the faculty unique. It aims to create citizens who cultivate deep respect for diversity, plurality and multi-cultural values, which are not only national concerns

but those that belong to the swiftly globalizing world. The commitment to such values are reflected not only in the study programs of the Faculty, but in its internal cultural values of acknowledging and respecting heterogeneity.

The HSS faculty offers study programs from certificate to postgraduate levels, enabling students to realize their full potential both locally and globally.

The faculty offers inter-disciplinary opportunities to foster diversity and understanding.



The HSS faculty offers study programs from certificate to postgraduate levels, enabling students to realize their full potential both locally and globally. This is in line with the main philosophy of the university, which is 'education for all'. It is important to highlight that many students enter this faculty with different career backgrounds bringing rich experiences into their learning. This diversity makes learning extremely productive for both the students and the faculty. Students who already possess conventional

qualifications can gain direct entry to Certificate, Diploma, Degree and Postgraduate Degree Programs. The Faculty offers Certificate level programs for students who do not possess conventional qualifications. Successful completion of the Certificate programs entitles the students to enter higher level study programs.

The Faculty members bring with them extensive training and expertise in a variety of fields, making it a robust and a diverse center of learning. The Faculty has been able to attract highly qualified individuals representing greatly sought-after areas of study and specialisation. This will certainly help broaden the scope of learning for the students. The staff members are committed to create an environment where all the students can reach their full potential through dynamic participation in the related learning processes.

As OUSL passes its 40th anniversary milestone, the Faculty of HSS is well geared to face the future with its seamless and flexible modes of ODL-inspired learning. It is already absorbing the new trends of technology-driven teaching and learning into its folds; the faculty offers inter-disciplinary opportunities to foster diversity and understanding—most of all, it continues to expand the horizons of deep respect for cultural diversity and plurality to nurture a nation that offers equity and individuality to its citizens.

We foster respect for cultural diversity and plurality to nurture a nation that offers equity and individuality to its citizens.

Faculty of Engineering Technology: Moving Towards a Digital Future

Bachelor of Technology was the first professional degree programme in Engineering offered by an Open and Distance Learning institution anywhere in the world. Today, the Faculty of Engineering Technology (FET) of OUSL offers numerous degree programs recognized locally and globally.



Laying the foundation stone for the buildings of the Faculty of Engineering Technology at Nawala by the Technology Director Prof. H. Sriyananda

The Faculty was established in 1987 by reorganising the Board of Study of Management, Science and Technology (MST) of OUSL. Prof. A. Thurairajah was appointed as the first Dean of the FET. Pioneering contributions were made to the

Faculty by Prof. H.D. Sriyananda and Prof. D.S. Wijeyesekera.

OUSL inherited a number of certificate programmes from the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education (SLIDE) all of which were directed towards meeting the requirements of particular government establishments, such as the Ceylon Electricity Board, the Department of Highways and the Department of Telecommunication. The Faculty commenced its first engineering degree Programme in 1988 as an extension to the Diploma in Technology which was initiated in 1983, under the Board of Study of MST. The faculty received support from international agencies such as UNESCO, UNDP, and Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) and Overseas Development Agency (ODA) UK.

OUSL established Technology laboratories at Ceylon Technical College in Maradana. As student numbers increased, laboratory facilities were set up at the Main Campus in Nawala and later at selected Regional Centres.



Celebration the 10th Anniversary of OUSL : late President R Premadasa observing the engineering laboratory facilities along with the Vice Chancellor Prof. Dayantha Wijesekera and Eng. P. D Sarathchandra.

FET started the Certificate in Textile Technology Programme in 1988 in three different specializations: yarn manufacture, weaving and chemical processing. In 1989, the Department of Agricultural and Plantation Engineering began to offer a Postgraduate Diploma in Agricultural Engineering with the initiative of eminent engineers such as Dr. Ray Wijewardena. By 1989, the engineering specialisations offered by OUSL had to be changed as per the request of the UGC to standardize all engineering degrees in Sri Lanka. The fields offered thus became Civil Engineering, Mechanical Engineering and Electrical/ Electronics/ Computer Engineering. Later expansions saw the addition of Agricultural & Plantation Engineering in 1995, Textile Engineering in 2002 and more recently, Mechatronics Engineering in 2005. The Public Administration Circular No.16/92 issued in 1992 by the Government of Sri Lanka decreed that the degrees offered by OUSL has the same status of a degrees awarded by the other state universities in Sri Lanka.

Automobile Engineering was recognized as a growing field in engineering in Sri Lanka and in recognition of that the Faculty received a donation from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA) to set up an automobile laboratory. This serves both as a training facility and a workshop for the fleet of vehicles of the University.



FET moved to the Science and Technology Complex which facilitated modern laboratories for advanced research

In 2002, the Faculty introduced a curriculum with significant revisions for its all study programmes, including the Bachelor of Technology (Engineering) Programme. The main feature of this curriculum was the flexibility offered to the students to choose courses depending on individual requirements. In recognition of the standard of the degree, the Bachelor of Technology (Engineering) Programme received the recognition of the Institution of Engineers Sri Lanka (IESL). In 2014, the Faculty also renamed the Textile Engineering specialisation to Textile and Clothing Engineering.

Considering the ample job opportunities in the apparel sector both in Sri Lanka and abroad, in 2002, the Faculty offered two new study programmes, Diploma in Industrial Studies and Bachelor of Industrial Studies in two specialisations; Apparel Production and Management and Textile Manufacture. In year 2004, the Department of Agricultural and Plantation Engineering introduced the specialisation of Agriculture under the Industrial Studies programme to offer Bachelor of Industrial Studies in Agriculture, which provides an avenue for diploma holders in Agriculture from other educational institutions get Honours Degrees. In 2011, the Faculty offered a new specialisation, Fashion Design and Product Development through the Department of Textiles and Apparel Technology.

In 2009, the Faculty launched the first Bachelor of Software Engineering Honours Degree (BSE) program to be offered by any state university in collaboration with the software industry in Sri Lanka. The same year, the Faculty moved to the Science and Technology building which had advanced research laboratories.

The Faculty expanded their study Programmes by launching three Master's

Study programs : Master Technology in Construction Management in 1991, Master of Technology in Industrial Engineering in 1994, and Master of Technology in Apparel Production and Management in 2009.

The Faculty managed to progress in different fronts from 2013 after winning the competitive Quality and Innovation Grants (QIG) of the Higher Education for the Twenty First Century (HETC) Project of the Ministry of Higher Education in Sri Lanka. As one project of this grant, the Faculty conducted the first ever student academic conference at OUSL, this was later emulated by the other faculties. Among other initiatives under this project are: a student square: to facilitate students peer learning; WIFI facility: to promote learning online; and Industry Liaison Centre: to liaise with the industry.



In order to enrich the research culture, in 2013, the Faculty launched the Journal of Engineering Technology (JET-OUSL) which is dedicated to disseminating Engineering and Technology research. JET-is the first Journal to be published by any Faculty in OUSL.

In 2011, widening the postgraduate study programs in the Faculty, the Department of Mechanical Engineering initiated collaborative study program with KTH – Royal Institute of Technology, Sweden by facilitating the Sustainable Energy Engineering Worldwide MSc Degree programme.



Historical moment of Signing of MOU in between FET, OUSL and Graduate School of Engineering Okayama University, Japan

In 2014, the Faculty restructured the curriculums of study programmes to make the minimum period of completion of degree programmes to four years. After this revision the degree titles were revised and the new titles are as follows: Bachelor of Technology Honours in Engineering, Bachelor of Industrial Studies Honours and Bachelor of Software Engineering Honours.

In 2020, the Faculty launched two Master's programs: Master of Energy Management (Department of Mechanical Engineering) and Master of Science programme in Structural Engineering (Department of Civil Engineering). The Faculty also expanded its global collaborations by signing MoUs with reputed Universities in the world such as the Okayama University, Japan. The Faculty was able to secure a European Union funded, ERASMUS+ grant for the project titled, *Europe Sri Lanka Capacity Building in Energy Circular Economy (EUSL-Energy)*.

The Faculty has undergone tremendous transformations over 40 years and reached commendable heights thanks to visionary leaders and the dedicated workforce. Currently, the Faculty is moving towards digital era with novel pedagogical techniques to realise bright future for higher education in Sri Lanka.

Faculty of Natural Sciences: Ensuring Quality, Transparency and Consistency



The Faculty of Natural Sciences of OUSL is considered to be the first Open University faculty in the world to offer a Bachelor of Science degree programme through the ODL mode. In recent years, Distance Education systems and Open Education have become a feasible and viable alternative to those who have been denied opportunities for higher education due to various reasons. In Sri Lanka, access to higher education is limited due to restricted placement facilities in the conventional university system. In this context, the BSc degree programme of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, plays a major role in providing opportunities for such secondary school

leavers and also to other qualified persons who wish to obtain a science-based degree irrespective of age, geographic location, social, cultural or employment circumstances. The BSc awards a 90-credit Bachelor's qualification at SLQF Level 5. The study programme aims to mould a graduate who is: knowledgeable in the chosen fields of science, competent in applying knowledge and skills, a creative thinker, skilled in ICT, a professional commuter and an ardent team player, an independent, self-directed life-long learner and finally, an active citizen, with leadership skills.

The Faculty of Natural Sciences consists of six Departments: Botany, Chemistry, Computer Science, Mathematics, Physics and Zoology. In keeping with the mission and the objectives of the Faculty, in addition to the BSc degree programme, it currently offers 14 programmes of study from Certificate to Postgraduate level, as well as stand-alone courses and short courses. Currently, the Faculty has a total of 93 permanent academics and 47 non-academic staff in the central campus and other Regional Centres, plus there are temporary/contract staff and visiting staff who contribute to the teaching-learning process.

The Faculty acknowledges the difficulties faced by new entrants while moving into ODL and has an extensive system of student support which include Open Days, pre-orientation, academic counselling and compulsory activities such as Empowerment for Independent Learning (EfIL) and non-compulsory support services such as Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) which is a support service unique to the Faculty. Further, the Faculty engages two student representatives at its monthly Faculty Board

meeting to lend an ear to and resolve student issues. The quality and standards of the courses of the Faculty are maintained by regular revisions which involve external subject matter experts, and the quality of delivery is monitored through the Quality Assurance Cell of the Faculty. The Faculty has taken every effort to ensure the quality, transparency, consistency and impartiality in all academic activities abiding by University rules, regulations and involving external experts where necessary. In addition to the well-structured lesson material, the Faculty also has over 60% of its courses online through supplementary mode in keeping with the latest ODL methodologies. The Faculty also utilises the services of the Industrial Liaisons Centre (ILC) to facilitate its learning process further. In addition to its academic commitment, the Faculty contributes to the society at large through its Departmental Societies. These societies regularly conduct A/L related and other academic workshops and also engage in numerous social service activities.

The Faculty has taken every effort to ensure the quality, transparency, consistency and impartiality in all academic activities.



The Faculty of Education: the Pioneering Spirit Continues

The Department of Education was an essential part of OUSL since the inception of the university in 1980 before it became a formidable faculty. Initially, the Education Unit operated under the Board of Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) of OUSL since 1980, with three academic members. The Founding Professor of Education, Prof. Elsie Kotalawela functioned as the first Head of the Education Unit from 1981-1985. She was followed by Dr. Rupa Wijeratne from 1985-1987. They were the pioneers who set the foundation for the



latter greatness that became a feature of the faculty. In 1987, when three faculties were established at OUSL, the Education Unit became the Department of Education under the Faculty of HSS. Prof. Elsie Kotalawela functioned as the first Head of the new



department from 1987-1992 followed by Dr. Rupa Wijeratne from 1992-1995. In 1993, Prof. Chandra Gunawardena joined as Professor of Education, and became the third Head of the Department of Education, and later the first Dean of the Faculty of Education in 2003.

The vision of the faculty is to be a leader of the advancement of knowledge and professional practice in education as a fundamental human endeavor through Open and Distance Learning in Sri Lanka and in the region.

Postgraduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) and Certificate in Pre-School Education (CPE) were two major programs offered through the Education Unit since the inception of OUSL from 1981, and those programs are offered up-to-date. Consequently other programs commenced such as, Master of Education (MEd) in 1990, BEd (Natural Sciences) Programme in 1992, and Master of Arts in Teacher Education in 1995, with many more to follow later.



The establishment of the Faculty of Education on 03rd February 2003, as the second Faculty of Education in the Sri Lankan University system, is a significant achievement for the university as well as faculty. Currently, the faculty consists of four departments of study: Department of Secondary and Tertiary Education (since 1980), Department of Early Childhood and Primary Education (since 1999), Department of Special Needs Education (since 2003), Department of Educational Leadership and Management (since 2020). The vision of the faculty is to be a leader of the advancement of knowledge and professional practice in education as a fundamental human endeavor through Open and Distance Learning in Sri Lanka and in the region. With a mission to achieve excellence in research and scholarship in the field of education and make significant contribution to the general and teacher education in the nation, the Faculty of Education looks back at the past 40 years with great satisfaction and looks to the future with confidence.



Faculty of Health Sciences: the Future of High-quality Health Education

“A journey of a thousand miles begins with a single step”

- Lao Tzu, philosopher

In 1993, a Nursing Unit was set up in the Faculty of Natural Sciences which was the beginning of the BSc Degree programme in Nursing. This degree programme was developed in collaboration with Athabasca University, Canada and the first batch of 75 registrants was supported by a teaching panel of only 3 local teachers and 01 foreign consultant. The first batch of 21 students graduated in 1997, marking a significant



milestone in the noble path towards facilitating Nursing education in Sri Lanka. It has since paved the way to upgrade diplomates in nursing to graduates who currently contribute to the Nursing field, locally and globally.

In 1995, a significant milestone was achieved with the establishment of the



Department of Health Sciences as one of the academic Departments of the Faculty of Natural sciences. In 1996, the first two permanent staff members were appointed to the new department and later the cadre was increased to 11 academics and 6 non academics. In 2013, this department reached further heights by taking a leap towards launching two more Degree Programmes, the Bachelor of Medical Laboratory Sciences and Bachelor of Pharmacy. Similar to the opportunity reaped by the Nursing diploma holders, these degree programmes were an avenue for in-service MLTs and Pharmacists to upgrade their knowledge and skills and obtain graduate level qualifications. The first set of MLS and Pharmacy students obtained their degrees at the 2017 & 2018 Convocation, respectively.



In 2015, the Department was upgraded to the Faculty of Health Sciences with a total staff cadre of 101. This new faculty included the Departments of Nursing, Medical



Laboratory Sciences, Pharmacy, Basic Sciences, Psychology & Counselling, and Health Education & Research.

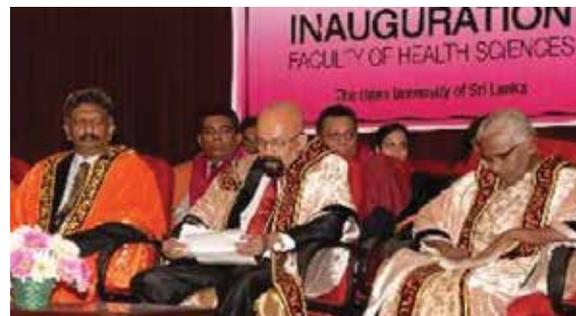
In 2016, the Faculty was able to expand its services in another dimension by establishing a Counselling Unit administered by the Department of Psychology & Counselling. Currently a full-time counsellor provides psychological counselling services to staff and students of the OUSL community and it is conducted as a free and confidential service.



In 2017, the services to the OUSL community were further expanded by the launch of the Diagnostic Services Laboratory administered by the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences. Both staff and students of OUSL use this service at a concessionary rate with quality assured diagnostic testing and reporting. Further, the Department of Medical Laboratory Sciences, together with other Departments, enthusiastically contributes to the biennial OUSL Health Camp by performing diagnostic medical tests for approximately 700 employees of the University.

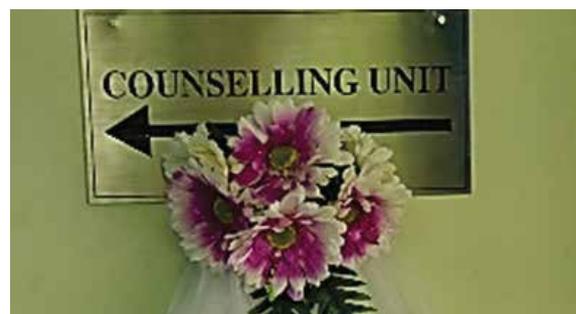
Since becoming a Faculty, the first new programme to be launched was the BSc

Honours Degree programme in Psychology, in 2018, by the Department of Psychology & Counselling. This was unique because it provided opportunities for fresh A/Level-qualified school leavers as well as working professionals. Today, the Faculty offers 04 Honours Degree Study Programmes in Nursing, Pharmacy, Medical Laboratory Sciences and Psychology, all of which conform to the SLQF guidelines. Academic activities of the Nursing degree programme is offered in all 9 Regional Centres. Departments have taken the effort to enhance its learner support by offering



supplementary online support for all its courses using the Learning Management System. The Department of MLS ventured into a new initiative by providing course material only in the electronic mode with a fee concession. Some of the teaching and discussion classes are conducted via web-based video conferencing enabling students from any part of the country to join synchronously and recorded video lectures are also uploaded to the Learning Management System for asynchronous learning.

Presently, the total undergraduate student population of the Faculty is approximately





4,200, with an annual new enrolment of nearly 1,000, with the majority of them studying in the Nursing programme. Significantly, up to now a total of 1,599 from Nursing, 84 from MLS and 43 from Pharmacy have completed their undergraduate education at the OUSL.



The establishment of the faculty is an opportunity to support and train more healthcare professionals in diverse health-science-related fields at both the undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Over the last 5 years, the faculty has made



improvements and initiated plans to expand its services. Taking the next steps towards reaching another milestone, the Department of Nursing recently obtained approval of the Senate to offer a MSc in Nursing with an exit for Master of Nursing qualification – this would be launched in the future after obtaining UGC approval.

On 15th August 2019, another step towards increasing the service capacity of the Faculty was initiated as the foundation stone was laid for a new 5-storey building for the Faculty of Health Sciences.



The future of the Faculty of Health Sciences is yet to be written, but as Abraham Lincoln once stated, 'the best way to predict the future is to create it'. Therefore, as a Faculty we are all committed to being part of the



OUSL vision of being the pioneer in Open and Distance education in Asia through contribution to the quality of education in the Health Sciences sector.



The Faculty of Management Studies: a Gateway to Success in Management



The Faculty of Management Studies (FMS) has been the gateway to success for academics and professionals as part of the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) community over the past 40 years. The OUSL was established in 1980 as the premier Open and Distance Learning (ODL) Institution in Sri Lanka. It was set up as a space where adult learners (no matter their age) can pursue or continue their education through ODL methodologies. Over the past 40 years, OUSL has also been recognized as one of the pioneering ODL institutions in the Asian region. The FMS is the sixth and youngest Faculty of the OUSL, with the vision “to be the premier Management Education provider through Open and Distance Learning in Asia and ensure excellence, efficiency and equality in lifelong learning.” It boasts 40 years of experience in providing management education through the ODL mode in Sri Lanka.

Management Studies has been an integral part of the OUSL’s education portfolio since its inception in 1980. Initially the Management Division was set up to provide management education under the purview of the Board of Studies of Management,

Science and Technology (MST). It was in 1990 that a separate department known as the “Department of Management Studies”, was established in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. In 2019 a separate Faculty for management education was approved by Gazette notification on 8th May 2019. Formal academic activities of the new “Faculty of Management Studies” began on 14th May 2019 with the appointment of the Dean and Heads of the four Departments that constitute the Faculty, namely: Organizational Studies, Marketing Management, Human Resources Management, and Accounting and Finance. The Faculty is the 17th management faculty formally recognized in Sri Lanka’s State University system.

The FMS presently offers a variety of high-quality programmes leading to Certificate, Diploma, and Degree at undergraduate level as well as Postgraduate qualifications such as Postgraduate Diplomas, Postgraduate Degrees and PhDs. The undergraduate course offerings currently include the Bachelor of Management Studies (BMS), the Diploma in Management, and the Advanced Certificate

As part of its strategic plan, the Faculty of Management Studies plans to expand its current portfolio of course offerings to continue to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field of management studies.

in Entrepreneurship and Small Business Management (ESBM). It also provides internationally recognized Postgraduate programmes such as the Commonwealth Executive Master of Business Administration (CEMBA), Commonwealth Executive Master of Public Administration (CEMPA), Master of Business Administration in Human Resources Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Management, Postgraduate Diploma in Human Resource Management, as well as MPhil and Ph.D qualifications for suitably qualified candidates. The FMS also regularly offers important and timely short courses. Its collaborations with the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) and Chartered Institute of Personal Management (CIPM) are testament to the recognition of the FMS' continued excellence in programme delivery at both national and international level.

The Faculty is well-placed to expand its national reach through the infrastructure of the University's Regional and Study center network which is spread throughout the country. There are currently over 4,000 students on roll at the Faculty. In addition, the Faculty offers various management courses as part of the course offerings to students pursuing Bachelors' degrees in

Science, Engineering, Health Science, Education and Arts at the OUSL. All programmes offered by the Faculty of Management Studies are aligned with the Sri Lanka Qualifications Framework (SLQF) and its subject benchmarks. The Faculty has also taken all steps to maintain a high standard and ensure quality by working closely with the Quality Assurance Cell (QAC) which is aligned with the quality practices put in place by the Center for Quality Assurance of the OUSL as well as the Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the University Grants Commission.

As part of its strategic plan, the Faculty of Management Studies plans to expand its current portfolio of course offerings to continue to stay abreast of the latest developments in the field of management studies. It is hoping to introduce new degree programs at undergraduate and postgraduate level and is working to develop student & staff exchange programs through national and international collaborations. The Faculty of Management Studies is a dynamic, forward-looking and modern faculty that is committed to supporting our learners in their pursuit of excellence. With 40 years of experience behind it, the FMS has its eyes fixed on scaling new heights as it works to build an intellectually challenging, stimulating, and pathbreaking learning experience for all our learners.

Postgraduate Institute of English: Expanding Research Capacity and Partnerships



The PGIE was established in 2005 as the only state institute for postgraduate education in English Studies by the University Grants Commission of Sri Lanka. Beginning with no physical infrastructure and limited human resources – often on loan from the Open University of Sri Lanka – the PGIE today has its own four-storey building and 15 staff members. The institution offers four full time programs leading to postgraduate qualifications:

- The Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Second Language (MA TESL) is Sri Lanka's pioneering Teaching English as a Second Language postgraduate qualification. For nearly 15 years this program has provided a professional growth pathway for university teachers of English language, education administration officers, teacher trainers and teachers in the state sector and private and international school teachers

Currently the PGIE has a total student cohort of approximately 400 students spread across the country drawn from diverse backgrounds: university lecturers, teacher educators, education administrators, journalists, corporate sector professionals and even medical professionals who seek training in more effective English and communication skills.

of English. PIGE MA TESL alumni work in all national universities and many have used the MA TESL qualification to gain entry to prestigious PhD programs overseas.

- The Master of Arts in Teaching Literature (in a Second Language Context (MA TLSC) – a unique program found nowhere else in the South Asian region. The MA TLSC specifically addressed the challenge of ‘how to teach literature’. With eminent faculty drawn from theatre, prose writing and poetry, the MA TLSC provides the practical and theoretical knowledge to empower literature teachers.
- The Postgraduate Diploma in Bilingual Education (PGDip BE) is another unique qualification offered by the PGIE in conjunction with the Ministry of Education. Though introduced in the year 2000, bilingual education in the Sri Lankan education system has had limited success, partly due to the lack of teacher training. This program equips teachers with the ability to teach content subjects such as mathematics and geography using a combination of English and mother tongue instruction.
- The Postgraduate Diploma in Professional Practice in English (PGDip PPE) was developed in response to the rising demand for effective communication skills in the workplace. The PGDip PPE offers working professionals the skills necessary to upgrade their English communication skills and develop their professional skills set. In keeping with the PGIE’s vision of addressing ground realities, the program faculty includes industry professionals and takes a hands-on and highly interactive approach.

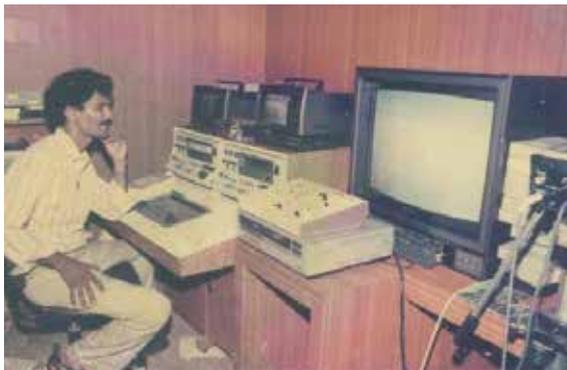
Currently the PGIE has a total student cohort of approximately 400 students spread across the country drawn from diverse backgrounds: university lecturers, teacher educators, education administrators, journalists, corporate sector professionals and even medical professionals who seek training in more effective English and communication skills. Though the initial focus of the institution was on English language teacher training this outlook has diversified significantly in the past 5 years.

In 2018 the institute won a competitive grant from the British Council to conduct research into the Arts and Reconciliation in Sri Lanka. In addition to the postgraduate courses mentioned above, the PGIE also offers a range of a short courses on Social Sciences and Humanities Research Methodology and Writing, GCE OL and AL English Literature Teaching, Qualitative Data Analysis among others. The institute also maintains links with many international institutions such as the American Institute for Sri Lankan Studies, the School of Political and Social Sciences at the University of Edinburgh and Queen’s University Belfast.

In future, the PGIE plans to expand its course offerings further and also to build its research capacity and research partnerships through strategic linkages with other national and international institutions.

Centre for Educational Technology and Media: Breaking New Ground

An Educational Technology (ET) division sets the OUSL's Open and Distance Learning (ODL) approach apart from more conventional universities. OUSL's ET division, the Centre for Educational Technology and Media (CETMe) plays a pivotal role in designing and developing instructional/learning resources for OUSL learners. Unlike the face-to-face instruction provided in conventional universities, these instructional resources are the main teaching material available for learners



Mr Lal Gunawardena, first AV Technical Officer working in the Audio-visual unit

studying from a distance. The CETMe has rendered yeoman service as an ET division for 40 years. It currently serves all six Faculties, supporting them to develop their instructional/learning resources including online courses.

The CETMe started small. It began work from a single office room in 1980 with the establishment of the audio-visual unit at the inception of the OUSL in 1980. Initially there was only one staff officer overseeing the collection of donated audio-visual cassettes and equipment.

The audio-visual unit was transformed into a division in 1989, and further strengthened with the State of Art studio complex built



Control room of the state of Art studio complex built with the assistance from JICA in 1993

with financial assistance from Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) in 1993. It comprises of a television studio with three movable cameras, dubbing and audio studios and a post-production unit. The CETMe has been a valuable source of income for the university for the past four decades by hiring its studio facility and its services and undertaking consultancies bringing much needed revenue to the division and to the OUSL.

A research cell was instituted in CETMe in 1994 to promote ODL research and

Based on its solid work and achievements in a field that is constantly changing, the CETMe gives the entire OUSL community confidence that it can continue to be a pioneering ODL institution in Asia.

expanded with academic cadre in 1997. The division has been responsible for conducting in-house Professional Development Programmes for academic staff that address the unique training needs associated with the OUSL as an ODL institution. The areas of training are on ODL methodologies, writing self-instructional material, producing audio and video productions and new technological innovations in teaching and learning. It is also responsible for formulating Quality Assurance (QA) guidelines and quality assurance of all learning resources in order to maintain the quality standards of OUSL's learning resources.

The current form of the CETMe is a result of a major restructuring in 2011. The ET Division was established as CETMe with two separate units; an Academic and Research Unit, and the Production Unit. The studio of the Production Unit of the CETMe was further enhanced, digitized and transformed into a Hi-definition television studio under the OUSL-CE Project. It supports the academic staff in the production of high quality educational audio-visual resources.

The CETMe has also been at the forefront in taking education to the masses with weekly OUSL video productions broadcast over the Sri Lanka Rupavahini channel as far back as 1993. Several OUSL programmes were also broadcast over ITN. In addition, some of the Radio programmes were broadcast on Saturday afternoons from 1993 to 1995. These programmes not only helped build OUSL's image with the public but also generated publicity for OUSL's academic programmes. The CETMe has also kept pace with developments in the education technology and media landscapes. It has been working to transform existing OUSL learning resources to OUSL Open Educational Resources (OER) and has made them available through the OUSL web since 2014. From 2018, the Centre has taken the initiative to house audio-visual resources in two digital repositories; "Open Cast" which is only for OUSL learners and "OpenUtube" which is an open access repository enabling the global community to access curated OUSL resources. It is also currently in the process of establishing a dedicated audio channel; Radio OUSL, to communicate OUSL news, deliver lectures and carry discussions on various topics to the widely dispersed OUSL learners thereby building a closely-knit OUSL learning community.

Going International

The CETMe has played a vital role in enhancing the value of OUSL's name internationally. CETMe conducted the first international Professional Development Programme on Online Course Design and Development for 17 participants representing SAARC countries on the request of the Committee on Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD) with the financial assistance by the University Grants Commission (UGC). It also conducted its first overseas Professional Development programme on ODL and Online Course Design and Development in 2014, for the academics of the Maldives National University on invitation. In 2014, CETMe took



the initiative to launch the first Cross-border International Online Course on “Online Tutoring and Mentoring” as a Continuing Professional Development Programme with four International e-Mentors from the University of New Mexico and three academics of CETMe serving as online mentors. This exclusively online course was offered to 31 participants from Pakistan (10), Mauritius (10) and Sri Lanka (11). CETMe also developed learning resources for the Commonwealth of Learning (COL) on “How to develop educational video material using available simple equipment”.



First Professional Development Programme on Online Course Design and Development for the participants of the SAARC countries, OUSL in 2013.



First overseas Professional Development Programme on ODL and Online Course Design and Development for the academics of the Maldives National University, Male, Maldives in 2014.

Four Decades of Excellence Recognized

Over the past four decades the CETMe has won international, national and OUSL awards in the areas of research, video productions, multimedia and photography.

The CETMe has won

- Five international Awards; 2 Best Paper Awards from Ireland (2019) and Cambridge, UK (2009), Best Presentation Award from Thailand (2019),
- Best Paper Silver Award (2018) and Best Practice Silver Award (2017) from the Annual Association of Open Universities (AAOU),
- Three OUSL Research Awards for Best Research Paper in ODL for the years 2012/2013, 2010/2011, 2009, and
- One Excellence in Research in 2003.

It has also won ten International Awards and three National Awards for video productions. Mr Gamini Algama has won a total of 10



Best Practice Silver Award in 2017 at the 31st Annual Conference of the Asian Association of Open Universities (AAOU), 27-29 September 2017, Yogyakarta, Indonesia.

awards.

- Four Best productions from Japan (Sony ICD Prize, 1998 and Grand Prix Award, 1996), Iran (Golden Book Prize, 1995) and India (Best Asian, 2003) ;
- One Regional Award (UNEP, 2001), one Silver Award (Japan, 1999), one Diploma Prize (Iran, 1995), three Special Judges' Prize (Japan, 1997,1995, 1994) and

- Three national Awards (Two UNDA Awards in 1996, 1994 and One Silver in 2001).



Grand Prix Award for the Educational Video film (1996) at the Sony/ICD Video Contest in Tokyo, Japan in December 1996 for the production of educational video film "Buds that Bloom". Scripted and Directed by Mr Gamini S Algama. Mr Algama and Mr Dullep Samarasinghe participated in the event.



UNDA Award for the Best Educational Video Programme in 1994 for the "Tree of Life" and Gold Award in 1996 for the "Knights of the sea". Both Productions were Scripted and Directed by former Director of ET Division, Dr Buddhi Weerasinghe.

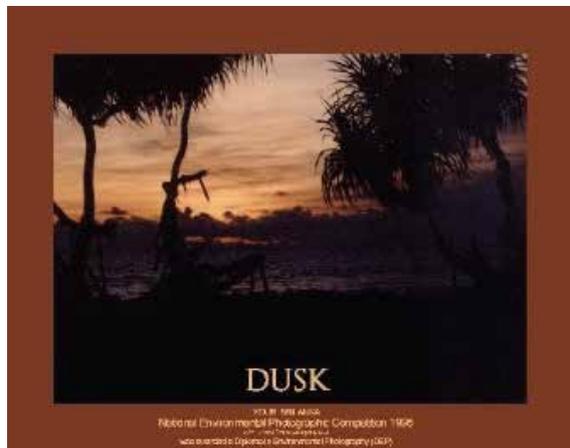
The division also awarded one OUSL award for best Multimedia Production in 2009. In addition, staff have won three National Awards for photography (First, Silver and Diploma).



Mr Duldeep Samarasinghe
"Buddhlambana". First place at National Photographic Art Society of Sri Lanka (1998).



Mr Duldeep Samarasinghe
-"Minisuni Abhaya Duna Manavi" (Let this Tree Live)". Second Place at the Centenary Celebration Photographic Competition of the Department of Forest Conservation



Ms. Rani Ponnampereuma
"Your Sri Lanka" - Diploma in Environmental Photography Competition by Sri Lanka Environmental Journalists Forum (1996).

Furthermore, the CETMe staff have excelled in photography and paintings and they have organized several exhibitions locally and internationally giving publicity to OUSL.

Painting Exhibitions by Mr. Santha Jayalath



2007



2014



2005

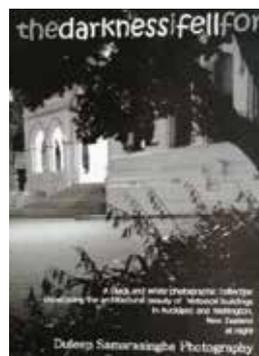
Photography Exhibitions by Mr. Duleep Samarasinghe



Exhibition of OUSL Photographs at the 30th Anniversary of the OUSL in 2010



“Salu Mudaa Hara”(2008).



“The Darkness I Fell For” held in New Zealand (2006)

Based on its solid work and achievements in a field that is constantly changing, the CETMe gives the entire OUSL community confidence that it can continue to be a pioneering ODL institution in Asia. For its part, the CETMe will continuously support the OUSL to reach its vision of “Education for All through lifelong learning” while supporting the maintenance of the OUSL’s high quality standards in Educational Technology.

OUSL Library: Reading the Past, Writing the Future



In 1980, on the strength of two library collections donated by the External Services Agency (ESA) of the University of Colombo and the Sri Lanka Institute of Distance Education (SLIDE), the OUSL Library began its long and arduous journey. The library had twin purposes: provide books and journals for the staff to enable them write course materials, update their knowledge and engage in research work; and for the students to have access to books recommended by the staff as supplementary reading material. In addition, with able assistance of the National Library Services Board (NLSB), the public library system of Sri Lanka was utilized by the university to provide reading material for ODL students scattered throughout the country. It was a classic example of utilizing many resources to offer learning opportunities for the OUSL student population.

In 1983, OUSL's Colombo Regional Centre library was opened at the premises of the Sri Lanka Technical College in Colombo 10. A specialized reading material related to the discipline of law was the first formidable collection of the new library comprising of law reports donated by a leading lawyer. By

that time, the library also owned the first ever Audiovisual Unit which was established with a collection of 558 slides produced by OUSL experts with the assistance of UNESCO. Mrs. Malini N. Wijesinghe served as the first librarian of this gently expanding storehouse of knowledge.

The main library collection holds more than 105,000 books, 24 journals, 3,225 items of audiovisual material and a large amount of course material and theses.



In 1991, the library successfully automated the library operations starting with computerizing its catalogue with ISIS. The computerization process also brought under its wing the circulation system in 1993, acquisitions with Dbase in 1995, and later with WINISIS software package in 1999. The library was able to introduce a fully automated circulation system using Alice for Windows software package in 2003 to carry out all the key functions related to circulation service. At present, the library carries out all the operations including books and journals acquisitions, cataloguing and circulation using the Koha open source package.

Currently, OUSL maintains a network of libraries all over the country with the main library located at Nawala and 08 others at OUSL Regional Centers in Kandy, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Kurunegala, Badulla and Ratnapura. Up-to-date the library continues to uphold its original twin purposes of operations by fulfilling the information requirements of the staff and students for teaching, learning and research. The main library collection holds more than 105,000 books, 24 journals, 3,225 items of audiovisual material and a large amount of course material and theses. In addition to printed resources, the library website plays a major role in providing the required information resources using electronic databases subscribed by the university and provided through UGC consortia, open access databases and e-journals, E-books, past question papers, thesis abstracts, OUSL publications and many of the open access information resources.

The primary services provided by the library include circulation, inter library loan, inquiry, photocopying and offering user education programs. In order to cater for the diversified needs of the library users, the library offers group learning and individual learning spaces, an outside discussion room, an exclusive area for staff researches, leisure reading spaces, computer and audiovisual facility with single and group viewing options.

The library created a historical milestone in 2018 when it launched a much-needed Open-and-Distance-learning-facilitated Bachelor of Arts Honours in Library and Information Studies degree programme with the support and collaboration of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences. The library carries out outreach community development projects, training programmes and workshops every year. One of the revolutionary outreach projects achieved by the OUSL library was the automating of public libraries scattered over the country and establishment of the public library e-centre and nodal point.



Research Unit: Advancing the Research Mission of OUSL



OUSL recognizes that developing the capacity of its academic staff by providing them with opportunities to engage in research would pave path to explore and validate novel ideas in research, innovation and other intellectual activities. This would, in turn, contribute to national development in the long term. Thus, on the initiative and recommendation of the Vice Chancellor, the OUSL established the Research Division in February 2014 to serve as a vehicle to spearhead its research mandate. This Division is headed by the Director, Research. Its vision is to advance the academic and research mission of the university while promoting a culture that exemplifies excellent service, transparency, collaboration and innovation.

The Research Unit publishes the bi-annual *OUSL Journal*, which is a multi-disciplinary research journal dedicated to disseminating high-quality innovative knowledge. This Unit also spearheads the annual OUSL research sessions which attracts researchers from all over Sri Lanka and the world.



Staff Development Center: Skills for Life



OUSL's Staff Development Centre (SDC) is a nerve centre of training for all university staff and is nestled amidst the serenity of a grove of Mango trees overlooking the Senate Building.

Driven by a vision to expand the horizons of knowledge of all university staff, SDC constantly provides an innovative array of training programs to the staff of OUSL and other universities on disciplines ranging from research skills, on-line course design, ICT skills, language skills and other work-related training.

The centre enlists the support of internal and external resource personnel for their training programs

The centre enlists the support of internal and external resource personnel for their training programs. Equipped with a computer laboratory and a spacious air-conditioned lecture room to conduct these training programs, SDC is poised to offer more innovative courses for the staff and shares OUSL's 40th anniversary vision to transform university staff through hands-on training and knowledge.



The Centre for Environmental Studies & Sustainable Development:

Key Partner in Learning and Policy Making in Environment and Sustainable Development

One lesson the world has learnt over the past 40 years is that both the environment and sustainable development are critical to our futures. The Centre for Environmental Studies and Sustainable Development (CESSD) at the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) was established in 2015 with a mission of contributing academically to building a sustainable university, country, and world. In pursuit of this vision, the CESSD now offers a Master of Science in Environmental Sciences. The M.Sc. in Environmental Sciences has been in existence for almost two decades. It was initially offered by the Environment Studies Unit (ESU) of the OUSL. Since 2015 this M.Sc. has become the flagship programme offered by the CESSD. Offered in the Open and Distance Learning (ODL) mode, the programme gives employed learners the flexibility of learning while working as professionals in different fields. It would not be wrong to say that with the benefit of 20 years of experience, the programme has evolved into one of the best M.Sc. in Environmental Sciences programmes offered in the Sri Lankan university system.

Looking to the future, the CESSD has started taking steps to expand its work in line with the broader framework provided by the Green Policy adopted by the OUSL in 2018.





In addition to offering this M.Sc., the CESSD is also working to address environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, wildlife conservation, deforestation, sustainable development, and climate change. It also works with other agencies and research organizations in conducting Environmental Impact Assessments and in supporting the formulation of Environmental Policies through research as well as multi-level, and multi-sector collaborations in the broad areas of Environmental Sciences and Sustainable Development.

Established in 1998, the CESSD has worked closely with policy makers and guiders of environmental policy planning in Sri Lanka since its inception. When it was established, its primary aim was to support the educational and professional development of the environmental officers of the Central Environmental Authority (CEA) and the Ministry of Environment through offering a Postgraduate Diploma in Environmental Science. In 2007 the CESSD started offering the M.Sc. in Environmental Sciences. The programme was jointly designed and conducted by a team of outside experts and academics of the Natural Sciences, Engineering Technology, Education and Humanities and Social Sciences faculties of the OUSL.

Looking to the future, the CESSD has started taking steps to expand its work in line with the broader framework provided by the Green Policy adopted by the OUSL in 2018. In support of the broader mainstreaming of this policy throughout the university, the CESSD has created the “Green Committee” and “Green Club” forums to provide spaces for teachers and learners at the OUSL to engage with the Green Policy concept and its implementation. The CESSD will soon introduce diploma programmes, short courses, stand-alone courses and training workshops in a variety of subject areas such as “Greening Cities”, “Circular Economy and Waste Management”, “Disaster Management”, “Crops and Environmental Change” and “Sustainable Water Resource Management”. In addition, the CESSD is currently designing collaborative research projects with universities in Germany and the United Kingdom on “off-grid cities”, “microplastics and ocean pollution” and “hydraulic civilization and cascade systems”. With these plans, the CESSD is positioning itself to be a key partner in both learning and policy making in the fields of Environment and Sustainable Development in the future.

International Relations Unit: A Bridge to the World



The International Relations Unit (IRU) is tasked with spearheading the growth of OUSL internationally by encouraging and guiding cross directional engagement with academic institutes, governmental, non-governmental and corporate entities. The IRU was established in October 2013 with growing recognition that more collaborative international relationships were crucial to enhancing the OUSL's international standing, build its global profile, increasing the recognition of its academic offerings and conducting high impact research. This vision also aligns with the Government of Sri Lanka (GOSL) vision of strengthening the education sector of the country through international collaboration.

Since its inception 40 years ago, the OUSL has benefitted from its international engagements. International bodies like the UNDP, UNESCO, Commonwealth of Learning (COL), and the Department for International Development (DfID) have played key roles in enhancing the quality of learning offered by the OUSL over the past four decades. International academic relations also help to ensure that OUSL curricula are up to date with international developments. Exposure and opportunities for learning and training in foreign contexts

for staff are key to updating existing curricula and developing new programmes. In addition, the OUSL also benefits from welcoming internationally reputed academics for short or medium-term engagement with the university community here. The IRU plays a key role in facilitating all these collaborations and engagements.

The OUSL wants to ensure that it has sufficient faculty and institution level agreements in place to meet the growing needs of Sri Lanka's student population and that of the broader international community. The IRU provides expert advice and guidance to the University on the development of international relations strategies and the establishment of formal relationships and partnerships with universities and other entities around the world. As global connections become critical to enhancing programme quality in a highly competitive environment, the role of IRU is sure to become even more crucial to the next stage of OUSL's growth.

The Regional Educational Services:

Expanding the Reach of OUSL



The Regional Educational Services (RES) of OUSL provides extensive support required by the six faculties of the university to conduct their academic programmes. There are nine (09) Regional Centres and nineteen (19) Study Centres spread throughout the country, all coming under the purview of this division.

The government of Sri Lanka, recognizing the need to ensure life-long learning and the right of every citizen to improve his or her life chances through the access to higher education, established The Open University of Sri Lanka as a national single mode distance teaching university in 1980. The RES, with its far-flung network of offices, is committed to make this vision a reality. By expanding the reach of the OUSL through dedicated Centres, the RES brings life-long learning to a lot of Sri Lankans.

RES is responsible for planning implementing and overseeing the Regional Education Services. According to the policy of OUSL, one Regional Centre should be

situated in a province and one Study Centre in every district. However, according to the demand of the courses and the availability of students, some districts contain more Centres.

The Annual Award Ceremony is the key event of the regional centres when they award students who successfully complete the Diploma, Advanced Certificate and Certificate programmes which are conducted by RES.

Ratnapura Center was the latest addition to the 9 regional Study Centers while the Matala Study Center -- the 19th Study Center was opened early this year. RES serves the 40,000 students through this network of Regional Centers in-line with facilitating higher education through a flexible system of Open and Distance Learning.

Industrial Liaison Centre: Fostering Innovation



The Faculty of Engineering Technology (FET) established the Industrial Liaison Centre (ILC) on 15th December 2014 to inculcate entrepreneurial activities within the Faculty as a formal mechanism to coordinate industry liaison and commercialization activities. The ILC provides a single contact

The ILC provides a single contact point for external business linkages to the FET. The ILC is well positioned to help industry collaborators build mutually beneficial relationships with researchers.

point for external business linkages to the FET. The ILC is well positioned to help industry collaborators build mutually beneficial relationships with researchers. The ILC has been working diligently to become the best informed office on campus. The centre is poised to expand its activities to offer more opportunities to the untapped and unexposed potential within the university as OUSL marches through its 40th anniversary.



Career Guidance Unit: helping undergraduates to be socially responsive



The vision of the Career Guidance unit is to help undergraduates to be socially responsive, efficient members of the future work-force with necessary knowledge, skills and motivation to compete in the job market. The Career Guidance Unit is a dedicated to bridge the skill gap among The OUSL students and to build well rounded individuals to meet the present-day workforce requirements.

They provides students with skills to find employment opportunities based on their abilities, desires and expectations. By providing them with the necessary knowledge, skills, attitudes, and motivation required by prospective employers both in the state and private sector. Facilitation of student welfare activities is another component of this unit. The services provided by this Unit are:

- Counselling with regard to behavioural competencies
- Counselling on career exploration and career planning.
- Career skill development workshops/ seminars / personal career mentoring on
- CV writing.
- Facing interviews & Aptitude tests.
- Leadership and Effective communication skills.
- Team work & Time Management.
- Professional ethics & Interpersonal relationships.
- On line job training opportunities & job placement.
- Facilitation of Inter university Competitions

OUSL Printing Press: Powering the ODL System



As a UNDP funded programme the Printing Press of OUSL was established in 1982 to provide registered students with course material in line with Open and Distance Learning policies. Having started with minimum and basic equipment it has today become a fully-fledged printing press with the latest machinery. The Press is supported by the Asian Development Bank (ADB-DEMP) periodically to improve Open and Distance Learning at OUSL.

The Press currently has 3 offset printing machines, 3 digital duplicator machines, binding and guillotine machines, folding



machine, plate maker and wire stitching machines. It has a strength of 50 staff members who work round the clock to service the OUSL community.

Currently the Printing Press supplies course material for over 40,000 students who are following various courses conducted by six faculties and the PGIE. They also facilitate the printing of leaflets, annual reports, academic journals etc. OUSL printing press is a state-of-the-art facility that will serve the needs of the OUSL community in the future.

Thank you!

The special 40th anniversary edition of The OPEN Quarterly was made possible by the efforts of many and we wish to offer them our heartfelt appreciations.

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Senior Professor Gaya Ranawaka -
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The Open University of Sri Lanka
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Sri Lanka.



+94 112 881000
pio@ou.ac.lk
www.ou.ac.lk

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