

THE OPEN

QUARTERLY

iii/2016



**AN IMAGINATIVE RESPONSE
TO STRENGTHENING
HIGHER EDUCATION
IN THE DEVELOPING WORLD**
p.10

**DIFFERENCE BETWEEN
MERE COMPLETION OF A DEGREE
AND THE SUCCESSFUL ACCOMPLISHMENT
OF AN EDUCATIONAL MILESTONE.**

p.19

**LIFELONG LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES
TO FACE CHALLENGES IN A KNOWLEDGE SOCIETY**

p.13



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9 772478 041007

WITH THE CONTENT **IN THE NEWS**



OUSL CONVOCATION ADDRESS

Professor, Asha Singh Kanwar

10



MY LIFE IN OPEN

Reflections

19



Referenca Award for Science & Technology

membership of the Austrailian Society for Microbiology Incorporated for Dr. Nimsha Weerakkody

Award of Training Research Fellowship for Thikshani Somarathna

Students and staff of the Department of Management Studies of the OUSL with the help of donors carried out a number of CSR activities

The Department of Management Studies launched it's first research publication

An awareness programme on Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGV) and Initiatives on Eliminating Ragging in Sri Lankan Universities

The first Anniversary of the faculty of Health Sciences

The Engineering faculty of OUSL , in association with the Blood Bank organized a blood donation camp in the university premises

The Faculty of Health Sciences established the Health Web Society for the purpose of strengthening staff-students activities

Consultancy & External Resources Centre (CERC)

The Department of Social Studies has introduced a course on Social Harmony

Semi-Automated Cinnamon Bark Processing Machine by Sherin Ginige

FBest Student's Award at the GLOBAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FORUM – SINGAPORE for Nisansala Swaranamali

Start-Up Business Entrepreneur of the Year 2016 for Erangi Loshani Pathiraja

EMPOWERING THE NATION THROUGH LIFELONG EDUCATION

Sunethra Goonetilleke

13



THE OPEN QUARTERLY

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THE OPEN UNIVERSITY
OF SRI LANKA

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The Open University is the premier institution that caters to the largest student population in Sri Lanka. It is equal, collectively, to all students in all national universities. Thus, I believe it is fair to say, the Open University of Sri Lanka has been able to keep the dream of higher education of an entire nation, reachable and plausible.

By adapting to the changes of world order and rising market needs, the Open University of Sri Lanka has been continuously producing skilled graduates, from all corners of the country and from varying socio-economy statuses and demographics. Our efforts as an educational institution, with our Open and Distance Education strategies, were able to address the issues of marginalization and inequities to a considerable extent and keep the doors of education open to everyone and anyone who so desired.

The national and international achievements of our graduates stand witness to the quality of our education. Therefore this issue of the Open Quarterly features the best of the high achievers. It is our vision "to be the premier Open and Distance Learning institution in Asia through excellence, efficiency and equity in lifelong learning" and in the process, to create a prosperous future for our people and thereby contribute to make our world a better place.

Sameera Tilakawardana

Referenca for a Sri Lankan for the First Time in History



P.D.S. Hiroshan Gunawardane attached to the Department of Mechanical Engineering, who followed Bachelor of Technology Honours in Engineering in Mechatronics stream, has become the Winner of the year 2016 and the first Sri Lankan to receive the Referenca Award for Science & Technology for Peaceful Work from REFRENCA European Union organization, awarded at the Academic Economic Congress 2016 held in SLOVENIA .

REFERENCA EU is a European Union organization comprising of hundreds of companies and institutions in Europe to distinguish renowned persons in global acadamia and they have assessed his academic background, projects, research works, publications and community work and a short report on Mechatronics Technologies in Sri Lanka submitted by him.

Award of Training Research Fellowship



Mrs. Thikshani Somarathna, a PhD student of Dr. Nimsha S. Weerakkody, Department of Agricultural Plantation Engineering, Faculty of Engineering Technology was awarded India Science and Research Fellowship (ISRF) By the

Department of Science & Technology, Government of India. She wishes to continue a part of the PhD research project to study Cell tissue culture application methods to assess mammalian toxicity of the plant extracts at Bharathidahasana University, India. This Fellowship is in addition to the National Research Council of Sri Lanka research grant awarded for the project on "Application of extracts from selected spices, herbs and medicinal plants to reduce cross contamination of food-borne bacteria and to extend the shelf life of ready to cook marinated chicken meat".

Start-Up Business Entrepreneur of the Year 2016 for OU Graduate



Erangi Loshani Pathiraja, a talented student who completed her Bachelor of Industrial Studies from the Open University of Sri Lanka, won the prestigious Star-Up Entrepreneur of the year 2016 award presented by the Women's Chamber of Industry and Commerce. This coveted award was granted to her imaginative brand of ladies fashion emolcan, whose products are presently creating waves in the local markets. This venture began as a home-grown industry and today she has her own manufacturing facility with eight specialized employees. Her ability to penetrate a highly competitive market and sustain this initiative at a high level of success won her this rare accolade. Her ability as an outstanding individual was reflected while she was a student at the OUSL when she won the prestigious Anura De Silva Gold Medal awarded by the Textile Institute Sri Lanka Section for the Best Student of the Diploma in the fields of Textile and Apparel Technology.

Membership of MASM



Dr. Nimsha Weerakkody, Head of the Department of Agricultural and Plantation Engineering of the OUSL has obtained the membership of the Australian Society for Microbiology Incorporated after giving the details of her ongoing research work.

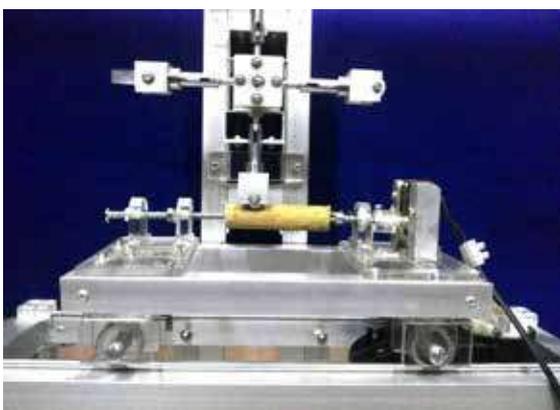
Her area of specializations are food molecular and microbiology. Her research interests are antimicrobial and antibiofilm activity of novel chemical compounds, toxicity study.

OUSL Post-Graduate Student Wins Global Recognition



Ms. Nisansala Swaranamali Bopage who is currently working as a demonstrator at the Department of Chemistry, OUSL, was awarded the Best Student's Award at the 4th International Conference on Pharmaceutical and Pharmacology – GLOBAL SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FORUM – SINGAPORE 2016 for the paper titled "Scratch Wound Assay (SWA) Guided Investigation of "Seetodaka" Oil, a Medicinal Oil Reputed for Wound Healing in Sri Lanka" by Nisansala S. Bopage, G.M. Kamal B. Gunaherath, K. Hector Jayawardena from the OUSL and S. Chandrani Wijeyaratne, A. M. Abeysekera from the University of Sri Jayawardenapura. This paper was based on part of the work she has carried out at the OUSL for her M. Phil degree which was funded by grants from Link Natural Products Ltd., and the Faculty of Natural Sciences, OUSL.

Semi-Automated Cinnamon Bark Processing Machine



Ms. Sherin Ginige, a student of B. Tech in Mechatronic Engineering, introduced her newest invention, a Semi-automated Cinnamon Bark Processing Machine, to Primary Industries Minister Daya Gamage and the Ministry Secretary Badula Wickra-

marachchi at the Ministry premises recently. This invention was based on her final project which was supervised by Dr S.A.M.N Senanayake and D.C. Wijewardene of the Dept of Mechatronic Engineering. She has achieved recognition as the Most Outstanding Presenter in the Discipline of Mechanical Engineering at the FETSAC 2015 and had also been nominated for the Migara Rathnanga Trust Award for University Undergraduates for their Industrial Training Projects 2015/2016.

The first Anniversary of the faculty of Health Sciences



The first anniversary of the youngest faculty of the OUSL was celebrated on Thursday, 7th July 2016. The event was graced by the presence of Professor S.A. Ariadurai, Vice-Chancellor OUSL, former Vice-Chancellors Professor Dayantha Wijeyesekera, Professor Nandani de Silva and Professor Upali Vidanapathirana, Professor Nalini Ratnasiri, the founding Head of the Department of Health Sciences and pioneer of the Nursing Unit, Deputy Vice-Chancellor and other members of the Senior Management, former Deans of the Faculty of Natural Sciences, Heads of Departments, and staff members of the Faculty, both past and present. Everyone who contributed to the development of the Nursing Unit and paved the way for it to be transformed into the Department of Health Sciences and then into the Faculty of Health Sciences were remembered with much gratitude. A souvenir publication was launched to mark this milestone which traces the journey of the Nursing Unit from 1993 to the Faculty of Health Sciences in 2016.



Blood Donation Camp



The Engineering faculty of OUSL, in association with the Blood Bank organized a blood donation camp in the university premises on 31st August 2016 under the title "Pinsara Mehewara". Prof S.A Ariadurai, Vice Chancellor of the OUSL inaugurated the camp by lighting the oil lamp. On this occasion, he congratulated the staff and students of Engineering Faculty for coming forward to organize this event of social benefit and also assured support for similar events in the days to come. Kasun Duminda, a student of Engineering Faculty proposed the vote of thanks. About 145 students/ staff and public volunteered to donate blood



Health web Society



The Faculty of Health Sciences established the Health Web Society for the purpose of strengthening staff-students activities on 30th June 2016 for

the year 2016. Office bearers were elected during the inaugural meeting and Ms. P.W.G.D.P. Samarasekara, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Nursing was elected as the founder president of the society.

Other elected members of the society are Mr. Harith Eranga Yapa - Vice President, Ms. B.M.C.R. Wimalasiri - Secretary, Ms. G.G.W.C. Wijesekara - Treasurer, Mr. Athula Gunasiri - Assistant Secretary, Mr. Deshitha Thrimahavithana - Assistant Treasurer. Ms. Nadee Weerasinghe (Deputy Bursar-Finance) - Auditor. Elected nine committee members for the society are Ms. R.B.J. Buddhika, Mr. E.W.S. Chameera, Dr. Gayani Gamage, Ms. N.K.R.D. Wickramasinghe, Mr. Imalka Hettiarachchi, Ms. T.N.W.K. Silva, Mr. K.C. Nanayakkara, Mr. Anura Kumara and Mr. K.P.R.P Kumara.

All the staff and students of the OUSL are encouraged to be a part of the Health Web Society.

Launch of the Journal on Research Publications: Management Issues



The Department of Management Studies launched its first research publication, Management Issues on 15 June 2016 at the Seminar Room of the Faculty of Humanities and Social Science.-Professor. S.A.Ariyadurai, Vice Chancellor of OUSL was the Guest of Honor and Professor. H.D.Karunaratne, Professor in Economic, Faculty of Management and Finance, University of Colombo was the Chief Guest. Dr.V.Sivalogathan, Head of the Department of Management Studies, Dr.L.P.S Gamini, the Chief in Editor, Deans of Faculties, Registrar, Bursar, Librarian, academics and other staff and students were presented at the occasion.

Management Issues disseminates latest knowledge in the discipline of management. More importantly, this will pave the way for the participants of the MBA programme conducted by the Department of Management Studies to publish their research work.

CSR project by The Department of Management Studies

Students and staff of the Department of Management Studies of the OUSL with the help of donors carried out a number of CSR activities in 2015. This was done keeping in mind that 'Life is all about learning'. The most important facet in life should be learning with emotional intelligence. This is all about learning by understanding, by helping others, because you have been given a chance, a rare chance to be a human being. The CSR projects are;

Cataract Surgery

Cohort Ten of the MBA group demonstrated their excellent team work, by helping needy people to undergo cataract surgery at the Vijaya Kumaratunga Memorial Hospital in Seeduwa.

Library for Udagama Primary School in Padukka

After a need-based assessment, it was decided that there is a need for a library at Udagama Primary school in Padukka. Hence, Cohort Nine students took the challenge, and raised a sum of 1.5 Million LKR. This is a CSR program of love and empathy towards the society.

The entire program is about proper management, commitment, dedication and team work which should be a part of the learning outcome of any successful MBA programs in the world.



CERC Opening



Consultancy & External Resources Centre (CERC) was established in 1989 in order to administer activities such as research programs, consultancy services, extension courses, training and Continuing Professional Development (CPD) courses for productive interaction between the OUSL and Sri Lankan community and at the same time to utilize the physical and the human resources of the OUSL to generate income without compromising the duties of the institute.

Currently CERC coordinates in average 25 assignments per months. Last year CERC facilitated to completion of 229 assignments with a net profit of more than SLR 25,000,000.

The CERC office allocated at the first floor of the new building adjoining the Staff Development Centre, and ground floor will be converted to a modern small scale conference room specially to facilitate the CPD courses.

CERC intends to place some initiatives to develop new assignments such as new short courses and specially CPD with the help of the academic departments and also to encourage and support our staff to conduct more consultancies. These will be mainly to fulfill the needs of the Sri Lankan community, specifically to fulfill a gap in industry, to encourage school leavers to acquire knowledge before engaging higher education, allow university students to gain additional knowledge and to motivate professional development. These activities will surely benefit our society, as well as our own staff, and help the OUSL reach Sri Lankan society and to accomplish its Mission and Vision.



Strengthening Social harmony Amongst the OUSL Students



The Department of Social Studies has introduced a course on Social Harmony which is an action packed four-month course for the undergraduates of the OUSL to strengthen the process of national harmony in Sri Lanka. Enriching social harmony amongst Sri Lankans is seen by different stakeholders in the country as the utmost priority of the day.

Indeed, the indication of strengthening ethnic harmony amongst the undergraduate students was one of the major component of the Undergraduate Development programme (UDG) of the Higher Education for Twenty-First Century (HETC) of the Ministry of Higher Education project supported by the World Bank in 2008. The respective national universities submitted individual proposal to establish ethnic harmony amongst the undergraduate students. Hence, the OUSL's task was undertaken by the Department of Social Studies to develop and offer this course.

The course designed in such a way that the students acquire theoretical knowledge of Social Harmony and find opportunities to interact with students of different ethnic communities. The course is offered only for the undergraduate students as continuing education course of the respective undergraduate programmes.

The course consists of three components: a) Course material titled 'Understating Social Harmony'—here the theoretical framework within which the concept of social harmony is defined; b) Interactive learning activity: The students enrolled for the course will visit a family which is different in terms of language, religion and ethnicity, within their neighborhood to gain experience of different cultural values and practice. The candidates are expected stay with the selected family a minimum of eight hours and expected to write about their

learning experience in socializing with the family; and c) Participation in Multicultural Interactive Session (MIS): Students will be given an opportunity to participate or perform in a MIS. The MIS will be organized in the regional centers.

This programme has drawn in much enthusiasm from the students ever since its beginning.



Awareness Programme on SGV and Eliminating Ragging in Sri Lankan Universities



An awareness programme on Sexual and Gender based Violence (SGV) and Initiatives on Eliminating Ragging in Sri Lankan Universities was held on 31st May 2016 at the OUSL. This is an initiative taken by the OUSL with respect to a series of workshops held by the UGC on the same topic. The resource persons were Prof. Maithree Wickramasinghe, Prof. Kumudu Wijewardene, Dr. Nirmal Ranjith Devasiri and Prof. Camena Guneratne. The resource persons focused on issues such as the nature of SGV in local universities, the remedial action for similar issues tried in India and the potential remedial action in Sri Lanka.





Honorable Chancellor,
Distinguished members of the OUSL,
Graduands,
Parents and Friends,

It is a special privilege to receive a DLitt (honoris causa) from the Open University of Sri Lanka, a pioneer in distance learning in Asia and I thank the Vice Chancellor, Professor Ariadurai, and the university community for this great honour.

A Convocation is a very important milestone in the life of an institution and I am really pleased to be a part of this happy occasion. OUSL was established nearly four decades ago and during this time the university has provided opportunities to thousands of men and women who are very diverse in terms of age, income and social background, to gain qualifications ranging from certificates to diplomas, degrees and doctorates. If the student cannot reach the institution, the institution is reaching the student in remote rural locations through flexible need-based programmes.

Even though access to quality higher education is still a distant dream for many young people globally, the demand for tertiary qualifications continues to grow. Sri Lanka has a large system of higher education institutions: 15 public universities, 14 public higher education institutes and more than 40 private institutions. Yet the Age Participation Rates of the 18-24 year-olds in higher education is about 17%, significantly lower than the OECD average of 40-50%, which is required for sustainable economic development in any country. Sri Lanka is exploring various ways of increasing access to quality higher education to its citizens.

**OUSL CONVOCATION ADDRESS
2015**

28th General Convocation 2015
The Open University of Sri Lanka
By

Professor, Asha Singh Kanwar
President & Chief Executive Officer
of the Commonwealth of Learning (COL)
17th May 2016

Open and Distance Learning or ODL is considered a viable option as it can enhance access, raise standards and reduce costs. UGC is supporting public universities to offer more distance and online provision. The National Online Distance Education Service or NODES access centres are another way of strengthening ODL infrastructure in the country. My organisation, the Commonwealth of Learning or COL, has supported the development of a draft policy on ODL for Sri Lanka which will create an enabling environment for distance and online learning to flourish and for more citizens to access quality higher education at affordable costs.

When Heads of Government decided to set up my organisation, the Commonwealth of Learning in 1987, they saw this as an imaginative response to strengthening higher education in the developing world by making use of the potential of open, distance and technology enhanced education. Over the past three decades, we have witnessed an interesting trend. In 1988, there were only 10 open universities in the Commonwealth, of which three were in Canada and one in the UK. Twenty eight years later, that number has tripled. In Canada, the number has reduced from three to just one existing open university in the country. The growth has happened mainly in developing countries. India alone has 17 open universities and the five open universities in Commonwealth Africa will soon be joined by open universities in Botswana and Kenya.

Research shows that there is 'no significant difference' between distance and traditional classroom instruction in terms of learning outcomes; yet there is a lingering perception, especially in the developing world, that distance education is not as effective or adequate as campus-based learning. How do we address this gap in understanding and perception? It is interesting that the perceptions about the effectiveness of distance education in the developed countries are quite different from those in the developing countries. For instance, the Open University of the UK ranks regularly in the top five universities in the UK for student satisfaction and quality. Similarly in Canada, there is no distinction made between a campus or distance learning qualification. Institutions in the developing world need to do much more to raise the profile and quality of open and distance learning.

However, in my view, the students who succeed from a distance learning institution, as you have

done, are any employer's dream. Instead of studying full time in a campus university, you have often balanced the requirements of study with your family responsibilities and job requirements. You are multi-taskers who can do several things efficiently. It is because of your motivation, discipline and commitment that you are sitting here today to receive your hard-won qualifications.

I did my Master's degree studying at a distance since I was married at the age of eighteen. I come from a mountain community in India, where marriage rather than education was the ultimate goal for girls. But I wanted to study like my other friends who were going on to pursue further education in the big cities. I couldn't go to the big cities but I could still study at a distance. So distance education provided me with an opportunity I would otherwise not have had. In those days getting a degree was quite enough and it opened many doors for me.

Today the world has changed and knowledge is multiplying at a rapid pace. What we learnt two or three decades ago is just not enough even for survival, let alone for success, in a highly competitive global market. Research indicates that you could have two to four careers in a lifetime. So if you enter the world of work, you will still need to continue to learn, unlearn and re-learn many different things during the course of your life. In short you need to be lifelong learners if you wish to succeed.

Unemployment is a global challenge, particularly youth unemployment which is 12.6% globally. Here in Sri Lanka, 20% of the young people are unemployed. And many countries face similar challenges. There is a great deal of emphasis on skills development in many Commonwealth countries. What are the skills required for employability? A study interviewed employers in five cities in South Asia: New Delhi, Mumbai, Bhopal; Lahore and Dhaka. Two clear themes emerged from the employer interviews in the three countries. The first is the importance of skills such as leadership, communication, honesty/ethics, teamwork and flexibility. The second is the importance of being able to learn and the need for critical thinking and analytical skills (Burnett, p. 9).

One of the fundamental problems in our countries is the mismatch between education and employment. Are we teaching our students the skills they need for gainful employment? Experts warn that

our education systems are churning out a workforce without the requisite skills for the new economy.

Linda Gratton in her book *The Shift--The Future of Work is Already Here* talks about five major forces that will fundamentally change the way we work. The five forces are: one, the force of technology; two, the force of globalization; three, the force of demography and longevity; four, the force of society and five, the force of energy resources.

How will we face these five forces? According to Gratton we need to make three shifts. The first shift involves making a move from being a shallow generalist to a serial master. What does this mean? Today we cannot succeed by simply being a 'generalist' who knows a little bit about this and that. We need to become 'serial masters' who have in-depth knowledge and competencies in a number of domains. In the past we could be experts in one field and that was quite enough. But today we may need to be experts in several areas. I started out as a professor of literature, moved into the field of education and now work in international development. With so much talent to choose from, what unique skill do we have to stand out? What role does our educational system have in helping us make this shift?

The second shift refers to making a transition from being an 'isolated competitor' to an 'innovative connector'. Instead of working alone we need to work collaboratively with others. This should not be difficult since the majority of the global population of 7 billion are connected in some way or another through technology. Traditionally, success at work was often attributed to personal drive and ambition. Now, it is becoming increasingly clear that we need to have a combination of two skills – expertise in a chosen field and a strong network.

Geoff Colvin's recent book *Humans are Underrated* says that the high achievers in the twenty-first century will be 'relationship workers' as opposed to the 'knowledge workers' of the twentieth century. Robots will perform most tasks better than human beings, but it is humans who have social skills and empathy, can solve complex problems and are creative. How do we nurture these skills?

The third shift is from being a voracious consumer to impassioned producer. This includes a transition towards work that is more meaningful, where you can 'make things' and become an entrepre-

neur. It is more about moving away from a nation of job seekers to a nation of enterprising employees and employers. But that requires hard work.

Malcolm Gladwell gives an interesting recipe for how to become a world class expert in any field of activity – it is the 10,000 hour practice rule. For example, Bill Gates got the opportunity to do computer programming when still in Grade 8. He spent about 20-30 hours on the computer every week during the night and on weekends and he exceeded the 10,000 hour mark in about seven years. As Henry Ford puts it 'Genius is seldom recognized for what it is a great capacity for hard work.'

I am sure OUSL has equipped you with a robust capacity for hard work and discipline. OUSL has been constantly working on improving the quality of its provision for over a decade and COL has accompanied it on this journey. OUSL has gone through a successful completion of the COL Review and Improvement Assessment which will further enhance the 'culture of quality' within the institution. The Commonwealth of Learning values its collaboration with OUSL, and you will be pleased to know that a former OUSL staff member Dr. Ishan Abeywardena, now works for COL. We will continue this partnership as the University adopts new technologies and approaches to provide higher education relevant for the needs of the twenty-first century.

In closing, let me extend my warm greetings and congratulations to all of you, my fellow graduates. As you set out on the next steps of your journey, and as you cross many more milestones that mark your achievements, I am sure you will proudly recall the value of the opportunities that OUSL gave you, and how it empowered you for success. Thank you.

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EMPOWERING THE NATION THROUGH LIFELONG EDUCATION

Is obtaining a degree a dream for a person who missed the opportunity to enter a conventional university by a few marks, or was compelled to give up the idea of studies in order to fulfil family obligations?

Such dreams were given wings, when the Open University of Sri Lanka (OUSL) was born in 1980 cradled by the Diyawanna in the heart of Nawala. Conceived as the University of the Second Chance, today, the OUSL spans Sri Lanka via a network of Regional and Study Centres, which currently provides higher education to more than 35,000 students.

The OUSL is the pioneer of 'Open and Distance learning' in higher education in Sri Lanka, breaking down barriers of age and education and creating a university 'open' to all. This openness has been operationalized by the adoption of a 'Distance' teaching methodology which allows the learner to study at a distance in the comfort of his/her own home and at his/her own time and pace. This Open Distance learning methodology has also opened the door to higher education for working students. Today the OUSL is a leader in Open Distance Education with over 35 years' experience and thousands of success stories of students who have completed their studies while also balancing challenging careers and family commitments.

Status and Qualifications

Established by the Universities Act No. 16 of 1978 and OUSL Ordinance No. 1 of 1990 the OUSL has the same academic status as any other national

university in Sri Lanka. OUSL degrees are recognized both nationally and internationally as equal to those offered by any other university under the purview of the University Grants Commission. Therefore the qualifications earned at the OUSL enhance the holder's chances of obtaining employment as well as securing further study opportunities both locally and abroad.

Areas of Study

Presently five Faculties offer programmes in the OUSL: the Natural Sciences, Engineering Technology, Humanities and Social Sciences, Education and Health Sciences. Each faculty offers an array of programmes ranging from Short Term Programmes, Certificates and Diplomas to Undergraduate and Postgraduate Degree Programmes. Therefore prospective students are provided a broad selection of programmes to suit individual needs.

Short Term Programmes which are less than a year in duration, cater to those wishing to acquire knowledge in very specific areas. Such programmes cover specific topics, and cover diverse areas such as research methodology in education, plant breeding techniques, Auto CAD 2D and 3D Modelling, environmental impact assessment, human resource management and web designing.

Students could also opt for more in depth studies of longer time duration in five major disciplines. The Faculty of Education offers programmes in the areas of early childhood, secondary & tertiary education and special needs while the Faculty of Engineering Technology provides study opportunities in agricultural & plantation engineering, civil engineering, electrical & computer engineering, mechanical engineering, maths & philosophy and textile & apparel engineering. Areas of study



available in the Faculty of Health Sciences are basic sciences, health education & research, medical laboratory science, nursing, pharmacy and psychology & counselling. The Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences specializes in providing knowledge in areas of law, management, language studies and social studies while the Faculty of Natural Sciences is dedicated to teaching botany, chemistry, maths and computer science, physics and zoology.

The OUSL also has two other teaching Centres, i.e. the Postgraduate Institute of English (PGIE) and the Centre for Environmental Studies & Sustainable Development (CESSD). The PGIE is the only tertiary level institution dedicated to English in Sri Lanka and it conducts the only Master's degree in Teaching English as a Second Language presently available in Sri Lanka. The Centre for Environmental Studies & Sustainable Development (CESSD) currently offers a Master of Science in Environmental Science programme. It is also actively involved in research and collaborative work on environmental pollution, biodiversity loss, wildlife conservation, deforestation, sustainable development, climate change, environmental impact assessments and environmental policies.

Entry Criteria

The OUSL has a programme to suit every one regardless of his/her present level of education. The study programmes are structured in a manner that allows entry and exit at any point enabling each person to find a programme to match their needs. Therefore even those with no formal educational qualifications can follow a certificate programme, and then progress via a ladder of opportunities to diploma, degree and postgraduate study.

Entry requirements for degree programmes

The basic requirement for those wishing to follow a degree programme is successful completion of the GCE (A/L) examination. However there are a range of other qualifications which may be accepted even in the absence of the GCE (A/L)'s. Those who do not possess the basic requirements, can register for a Certificate Course at the Open University and use this as an entry point for a degree programme.

Joining OUSL

Keeping pace with developing technology, the OUSL provides all information regarding

programmes of study on its Website at www.ou.ac.lk. An online application process, which includes payment of application fees via credit cards and Easy-Cash has been adopted by the University. This enables students to apply for a course regardless of where they are, at the time of calling for applications.

Once a student is selected registration takes place at centrally located Registration Blocks at the Centre chosen by the applicant. Course material provided for the course is provided at the time of registration from Book Distribution Centres.

New students are issued with a Student Record Book, and a registration as well as student number. They are also provided with a 'My OUSL' Account. Information relevant to the student during his/her study period is available via this account, helping to keep the student updated. Information provided through this account includes personal details, payments, examination results and notices.

Place of Study

The main campus and the Nawala Regional Centre are located in Colombo. However the OUSL also has a network of Regional and Study Centres spanning the country enabling students to successfully follow study programmes throughout the island. The OUSL has eight Regional Centres located in Colombo, Kandy, Matara, Jaffna, Batticaloa, Anuradhapura, Badulla and Kurunegla as well as eighteen active Study Centres across Sri Lanka. This makes the OUSL an ideal place of study for those working and living even in remote parts of Sri Lanka.

Working While Studying

The primary objective of the Open University is to provide an opportunity for persons who were unable for various reasons to pursue their studies at the first instance. Therefore each programme of study is designed in a manner that allows adult learners to study at a distance at their own time and pace. The University follows an Open and Distance methodology, which provides the student the opportunity to choose his/her workload taking into consideration his/her other obligations. This gives the learner the flexibility to take on a lesser workload or even simply suspend studies for a period of time retaining 'studentship' if other commitments prevent them from temporarily devoting time to studies.

The Open University has over 35 years of experi-

ence in teaching working adult learners. Thousands of professionals holding key positions in state and private institutions including members of the armed forces and the judiciary have successfully completed various programmes in the Open University. Therefore employment is not a barrier to education in the Open University.

Study Material

The main teaching resource in the OUSL is 'course material' known as the 'tutor in print'. This is printed material which contains the basic content required for the study programme. This material is supplemented by face to face sessions known as 'Day Schools' where students can obtain clarifications for problems encountered when reading the course material.

Another important component of teaching in the University is web based learning. While some courses are offered fully online, most others contain supplementary online material which must be read together with printed course material. The online material can be accessed by the student from his/her own home. Those who do not possess internet facilities can access the material by visiting National online distance education service Access Centres (NAC Centres) located at Regional and Study Centres of the Open University.

Audio and visual aids, tutor clinics, laboratory and field work, and industry based visits are also used in teaching at the OUSL.

Library Facilities

The OUSL has a network of libraries spread across the Regional and Study Centres Island wide. The main library is located in the Main Campus in Nawala. The library contains an extensive selection of over 150,000 books. It provides lending, referencing, AVRC (Audio Visual Resource Centre) VRC (Virtual Resource Centre) and photocopying services. Online facilities including access to past examination papers and a range of e-journals and e-databases are also available to OUSL students.

Accommodation at OUSL

In keeping with the Open Distance teaching methodology the requirement for a student to be physically present at his/her centre of study is minimal. This may be for Day Schools, examinations, library reference or laboratory work.

The University has Temporary Residence Facilities (TRF) in the Colombo, Kandy and Matara Regional Centres, which provide students short term accommodation, for such course related activities. These consist of dormitories and a common study area. A moderate fee is charged for the use of this facility. The Main campus is currently in the final stages of constructing a modern TRF which can accommodate around 400 students.

Facilities for Study

Constantly upgraded class rooms with modern teaching aids and well equipped laboratories for science and engineering students enhance the learning experience at the OUSL. Qualified visiting academics both from the OUSL and other universities as well as industry experts provide guidance at these teaching sessions.

Group activities are also an important aspect of OUSL learning. Study areas which encourage group study and facilitate group work have been built into the environment in all Centres while the main library has a Discussion Room especially dedicated for this purpose.

Continuing studies while away from the Centre In keeping with the objective of enabling education at a distance, the University provides students with the unique opportunity of sitting examinations in any part of the world. Therefore a student, who is compelled to travel abroad, can, subject to the payment of an additional fee, request that provisions be made to sit the examination abroad. Most programmes also permit a person registered for study in one Centre to participate in activities of the programme in any of the Centres where the programme is offered.

Support Services

The OUSL provides a range of services which ensure that all requirements of students can be met within the University premises. Stationery can be purchased at the World University Service (WUS) Bookshop at the Colombo Regional Centre. Photocopy services are available in the library, Colombo Regional Centre Building and WUS Bookshop, while facilities for obtaining computer print-outs and binding of books are also available. University publications can be purchased at the Sales Centre located in the Colombo Regional Centre.

Centrally located student cafeterias provide food at subsidized rates. A Highland outlet operates



adjacent to the examination halls in the Colombo Regional Centre where dairy products can be purchased at discounted rates. The main campus in the heart of Nawala, is within easy access to many restaurants such as Sensal, Perera and Sons, Steam Boat and Chinese Dragon for those with bigger budgets.

The main campus also has a medical centre where qualified nurses and a general practitioner are available for emergency treatment. The Centre is open during all week days.

Advisory Services

The OUSL Career Guidance Unit conducts activities to help students improve career development skills. The Start at OUSL programme run by this Unit aims to develop skills necessary to successfully follow study programmes at the Open University. It also organizes programmes to create awareness regarding opportunities for employment and scholarships in international universities.

Every Faculty in the OUSL has Student Counsellors. Any student who encounters difficulties which impact their studies can approach these Student Counsellors for guidance.

Disability

Disability is not a barrier for study at the OUSL. Over the years many students challenged by various physical and learning disabilities have successfully completed study programmes in the University. Special Needs arising from disability are speedily met if brought to the notice of the relevant Faculty or Department in a timely manner. All efforts are taken to ensure that every student enjoys an equal opportunity to complete successfully complete his/her studies.

Financial Assistance

Many of the students in the OUSL are employed and therefore able to pay the very affordable tuition fees which are payable annually in two instalments. Students, who nevertheless require financial assistance towards payment of tuition fees, can obtain partial assistance through Mahapola Scholarships which are awarded by the Mahapola Education Scholarship Trust Fund and University Bursaries. The University Bursary entitles the recipient to 50% of the tuition fee for the year it is awarded and is granted on the basis of merit as well as need. Mahapola scholarships also cover

part of the tuition fee. These too are annual awards which are based on merit and need and are awarded to unemployed students below 30 years of age.

Student Unions

Students are key stakeholders of the university. Therefore the OUSL ensures that they play an active role in decision making regarding study programmes. The University By-Laws provide for the annual election of members from among the student body to a Student Union. This Union is empowered to represent student interests in various fora including Faculty Boards.

Student Life

Each Faculty has different societies and associations which organize religious, social, cultural and educational activities throughout the year. The Zoonet, Bot-Soc, Bucky ball society, Spectrum and computer society are some societies which actively engage in such activities. Membership in most societies comprise of both staff and students. The societies engage in many activities including organization of lectures and awareness programmes. Funds for these activities, are generated by projects such as bazaars held during festive periods.

Student life on the campus is also enlivened by sports activities including cricket, volleyball, chess and carom. The University organizes a Sports Week annually, to encourage students across Faculties and Centres to engage in healthy competition.

Fulfilling the OUSL Mission

A dedicated team of academic and non-academic staff under the leadership of the Vice Chancellor are firmly committed to the mission of the OUSL "to enhance access to high quality, affordable and relevant education through Open Distance Education and ensure lifelong learning opportunities to face challenges in a knowledge society." Thousands of OUSL graduates across the world bear testimony to the success of effort. The mission continues...

by Sunethra Goonetilleke

MY JOURNEY IN OPEN



Rachel Halliday

Faculty of Natural Sciences

**NALINI RATNASIRI GOLD MEDAL
FOR EXCELLENCE IN ZOOLOGY 2015**

The doors of the OUSL are open for students who are keen to learn while working. Needless to say, I am privileged to be a part of this great institution.

I completed my degree and research project under the tutelage of an inspiring group of professionals at the Zoology Department. I am humbled at being awarded the Nalini Ratnasiri Gold Medal for Excellence in Zoology--for I am aware that it would have been impossible, if not for the timely and tactical guidance of my lecturers.

I would like to thank Dr. Ruwan Illeperuma, Senior Scientist at Gene Tech Research, and Prof. Gaya Ranawaka, Senior Lecturer at the Zoology Department, for providing me with the necessary equipment and supervising my research project. Of course, I would not forget my A/L Biology teacher, Mrs. Faith Wickramasooriya for motivating me to pursue higher studies in Zoology.



Privanka de Mel

Faculty of Natural Sciences

**PRIZE FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE
IN ZOOLOGY 2015**

Reflecting on the years I spent at the OUSL, I could say with confidence that my mind was immensely enriched. As an undergrad of Natural Sciences, I gained much exposure to the boundless and limitless spheres of science. The mode of learning, called the ODL, although unfamiliar at first, was quite a wonderful experience because it gave me the freedom to explore, experiment and experience for myself what the written material implied. The lecturers and staff went the extra mile for students. That really made the difference between mere completion of a degree and the successful accomplishment of an educational milestone. I am truly grateful for the opportunity I had at the OUSL. I thank my lecturers, my family and all those who encouraged me before and throughout my studies: you raised me up!

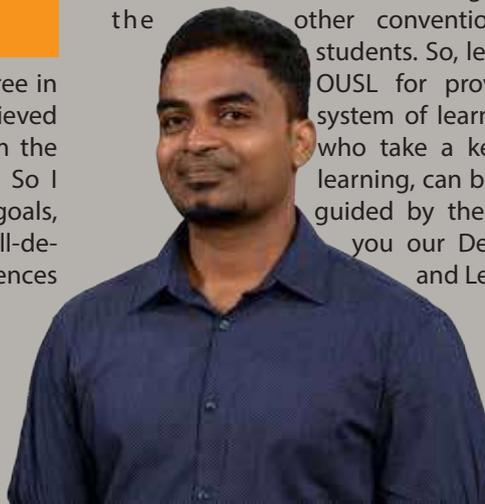
V. Thirukkumar

Faculty of Natural Sciences.

**FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCES PRIZE
FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE
IN APPLIED MATHEMATICS 2015**

I began my arduous journey towards a degree in 2011, and within 04 years I successfully achieved that objective with First Class Honors. From the very beginning, I had my eyes on success. So I worked hard, despite my professional career goals, to complete my degree successfully. The well-defined structure of the Faculty of Natural Sciences

study programmes is the first reason for my success. That was complimented by inventive and attentive instructions and guidance by our Professors and Lectures. In my opinion, the students of the OUSL have a wider knowledge than most of the other conventional university



students. So, let me thank the OUSL for providing such a system of learning. Students who take a keen interest in learning, can be exceptionally guided by the OUSL. Thanks you our Dean, Professors, and Lectures.

Shehan Gunawardane

Faculty of Engineering

OP KULSHRESHTHA GOLD MEDAL

FOR THE BEST STUDENT IN THE BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY HONOURS IN ENGINEERING 2015

THURAIRAJAH GOLD MEDAL

FOR THE BEST BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY HONOURS IN ENGINEERING PROJECT 2015

ENGINEERING RESEARCH UNIT (ERU) GOLD MEDAL FOR THE BEST TECHNICAL PAPER BASED ON THE BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY HONOURS IN ENGINEERING PROJECT-2015

S.M ABEYGUNASEKARA DE SILVA GOLD MEDAL FOR THE BEST STUDENT IN MECHATRONICS ENGINEERING IN BACHELOR OF TECHNOLOGY HONOURS IN ENGINEERING-2015

After completing my A/L examination at Thurstan College, I was looking for higher education opportunities. Then I got to know about the OUSL from a friend and registered for the “Mechatronics Engineering” program. My decision was based on affordability, flexibility and the reputation of the OUSL as well as their academic programs. In the five-year long OUSL journey, I’ve gathered invaluable knowledge. That’s not all! I also gained hands-on experience in real-life engineering after serving two internships. The excellent teaching panel and meticulous research project supervision from the Department of Mechanical Engineering led me to several IEEE publications and national awards during my undergrad period. I completed my OUSL journey with First Class Honours with four gold medals, including the Best Student in the



Bachelor of Technology (Engineering) Programme, Best Undergraduate Student Project, Best Research Publication and the Best Student in the Bachelor of Technology (Engineering) in Mechatronics stream with the Dean’s List Scholarship. Currently, I’ve been nominated for the Science and Technology REFRENCA EU reference certificate by the Knowledge Ambassador for Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka in the EU. At the moment, I’m working with the OUSL team for “Harvard University Soft Robotics Design Competition 2016” in the research area of biologically inspired robots. I would like to express my gratitude to the Faculty of Engineering Technology for all the support extended to make my endeavors—and my life! -- a success.

Minoli Wijethunga

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

THE GOLD MEDAL

FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE IN THE BA IN ENGLISH & ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING PROGRAMME- 2015



I first heard about the coveted BA in English Gold medal when I was a first year student of the programme. Mr. Medawattegedara, who was our coordinator at that time, told us about this glitzy prize, along with an urging for all of us to go for it. Thus, I began my work for this goal from year one. It was rather difficult to balance a full-time job plus studies—weekend lectures. However, the lectures were so inspiring that I never missed a single day-school, unless there was an unavoidable circumstance! All the lecturers of the English Department were extremely helpful, always available whenever we had any doubt. It was their support, along with much hard work, and very supportive employers and loved ones that made me achieve this. Special thanks to Mr. Medawattegedara for ensuring that we took the correct track from year one!



Safna Farook

Faculty of Natural sciences

DB ELLEPOLA GOLD MEDAL FOR SCIENCE 2015
PRIZE FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE IN BOTANY

The BSc Degree at the OUSL is a top notch option for any individual seeking knowledge through the Open Distance Learning (ODL) mode. Having finished my A/Ls, and after marriage, I decided to continue my higher education in the science stream. The OUSL welcomed me with open arms and helped me achieve my goal. All thanks to their excellent flexibility. I could select the dates for the practical sessions and they do not have daily lectures unlike the other universities and institutes in Sri Lanka.

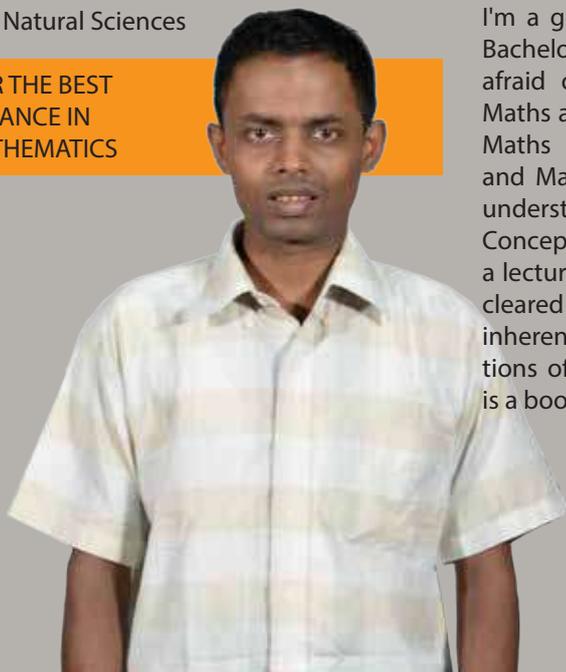
I gained tremendous knowledge through the day schools and practical sessions which promote critical thinking; with time and effort I was able to tap into my own special abilities to obtain a first class degree in science.

I would definitely recommend the OUSL BSc program to anyone: it is a perfect for anyone who wants to continue higher education in the science stream through the ODL method.

Ramachandran Thushanthan

Faculty of Natural Sciences

PRIZE FOR THE BEST
PERFORMANCE IN
PURE MATHEMATICS



Gayani Abeysinhe

Faculty of Health Science

ROBERTA L CAREY PRIZE FOR EXCELLENCE IN
NURSING 2015

CHANDRA DE SILVA MEMORIAL AWARD IN
NURSING 2015

In comparison to the most of the other countries, Sri Lankan nurses have fewer opportunities to earn a degree within Sri Lanka. To fill this gap, the OUSL has provided nursing professionals with a degree program which paves the way for career development.

The OUSL helped me gain success in many ways. The physical environment of the university, sacrifices of the academic staff of the Department of Nursing, easy accessibility to academic staff, affordable course fees, library and other facilities and well planned course schedules were major components of my success.

The OUSL has understood the learning needs of nursing professionals who work in different areas of the island. The ODL system and the Regional Study Centre network have been an integral part of my success. Thank you OUSL, the Dean of the Faculty and the Head of the Department of Nursing for your guidance, dedication and support.

I'm a government school teacher. I joined the Bachelor of Science degree in 2009. I was a bit afraid of some courses, like Pure Maths, Applied Maths and Physics. Nevertheless, I took the Pure Maths Course (PUU1140--Mathematical Logic and Mathematical Proofs). That book is so easy to understand and designed for self study purposes. Conceptualized by Dr. R. Vigneswaran of the OUSL, a lecturer from the University of Jaffna. His book cleared all my doubts and most importantly my inherent fear. Even the course book on Foundations of Mathematics written by Dr. W. Ranasinghe is a book that inspired me to be the best I can be.



Udara Ireshani

Faculty of Natural Sciences

PRIZE FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE IN CHEMISTRY

I am proud to be an OUSL Bachelor of Science degree graduate. I began my higher studies at the OUSL just after completing of my A/Ls at Hanwella Rajasinghe Central college. In 2011, I registered for the B.Sc degree as per the guidance given by my parents. I can still remember the day when I entered the OUSL. It was a turning point in my life. I became a changed person after exposing myself to the OUSL's great ODL learning mode. It was very helpful in achieving and converting my dreams into reality. The Faculty of Natural Sciences of the OUSL was very supportive. Their orientation programs, pass sessions and day schools were great motivators.

I am proud to say I have completed the B.Sc degree with 2nd Upper and won 3 Dean's List Awards, Zoonet Award, C-60 Scholarship Award and the Faculty of Natural Sciences prize for the best performance in Chemistry in 2015. I would like to convey my sincerely gratitude to all persons who have guided me to be successful. I would strongly recommend the OUSL to anyone as it is one of best universities in Sri Lanka for ODL.



Dilini Madushika

Faculty of Natural Sciences

FACULTY OF NATURAL SCIENCE PRIZE FOR THE BEST PERFORMANCE IN COMPUTER SCIENCE 2015

I joined Virtusa Pvt Ltd as an Intern-Software Quality Assurance after completing my B.Sc at the OUSL. After the successful completion of my degree with second class honors, I got a promotion as an Associate Engineer-Software Quality Assurance (SQA). I am currently following an SQA automation training programme where the theoretical knowledge on SQA and Programming Languages which I learned from the OUSL has become infinitely valuable. The B.Sc. degree programme at the OUSL provided me with broad knowledge of Information Technology in different disciplines, and experience gained during the final year project equipped me with both programming knowledge as well as the technical ability to handle challenging tasks.

I will not hesitate to recommend other students and graduates to apply for programmes at the OUSL. Thank you so much, OUSL, for everything!

Umega Jinendri

Faculty of Engineering Technology

LIYANAGURUGE ASSIE ANNETTE DE SILVA GOLD MEDAL FOR THE BEST STUDENT IN BACHELOR OF INDUSTRIAL STUDIES HONOURS (AGRICULTURE)-2015



I am lucky to be a student at the OUSL's Department of Agricultural and Plantation Engineering. I followed a Bachelor of Industrial Studies Honours. This degree is a stepping stone in my life. It allowed me to develop my interpersonal skills plus much much more .

The journey was tough: we had to study by ourselves, the most important aspect of the ODL system. I owe my success to my own unlimited effort. I've attended all the day schools, and all the lecturers. I've read all the text books and applied myself. It's my privilege to thank my parents, especially my late mother, and the Rajapaksa family.



Achala Niroshika Punchihewa

Faculty of Humanities & Social Sciences

PROF. H. A. DE. S. GUNASEKARA GOLD MEDAL FOR THE EXCELLENCE IN ECONOMICS IN BA DEGREE PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL SCIENCES 2015

DR. GAMINI COREA GOLD MEDAL TO THE BEST STUDENT IN THE BACHELOR OF ARTS IN SOCIAL SCIENCES- 2015

DR. ANURA GOONESEKARA GOLD MEDAL EXCELLENCE IN MASS COMMUNICATION IN BA DEGREE PROGRAMME IN SOCIAL SCIENCE

As a teacher, I could say confidently that the Bachelor of Arts in Social Sciences is a unique undergraduate program at the OUSL. As a multidisciplinary training in social sciences, it enabled me to enhance my levels of professionalism. The program was also a source of encouragement for higher studies--it opened doors for my post graduate life. Furthermore, I was able to function more effectively in my career as the programme provided avenues for academic and professional development. There was excellent support from the panel of lectures who gave me the opportunity to customize my dissertation to fit my personal interests. That helped me successfully complete the course and pass out from the OUSL as a competent and hands-on social science graduate."



CALLING FOR APPLICATIONS IN THIS QUARTER

Programme	Issuing Application
Certificate in Pre-School Education	04.01.2017
Post Graduate Diploma in Education	04.01.2017
Bachelor of Engineering Technology	08.01.2017
LLB	11.01.2017
Bachelor of Science in Nursing	05.03.2017
Bachelor of Pharmacy	05.03.2017
Bachelor of Medical laboratory Sciences	05.03.2017