



University of Peradeniya Alumni Association USA Newsletter - December 2022



Dear Pera Friends

The Executive Committee wishes you a Happy New Year 2023 to all our Peradeniya Alumni and Friends. In this year-end newsletter we would like to highlight some of the activities that were conducted in 2022 and provide an outlook for next year's activities.

2022 Flash Back



UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION USA (UPAA-USA)
invites you to:

FACULTY & STAFF MEET UP

The UPAA-USA
Executive committee
invites former UoP
Faculty and Staff living
in USA as well as alumni
serving or served as
Faculty or Staff in US
Universities to meet
other alumni in this
networking event.

February 17, 2022
9 PM EST
Online Meeting
via Zoom

Check us at
www.UPAA-USA.org

Faculty/Staff Meet Up February 17, 2022

In 2022 we were able to achieve one of the key objectives of the Association. This was to bring the scattered Pera Alumni in the US together. Towards this end, we conducted a Virtual Networking event for former and current UoP Faculty/ Staff and Alumni in USA. More than 80 participants attended this zoom meeting. The objective of this session was to pay tribute to the former faculty and staff and recognize alumni now serving as faculty/staff in USA academic institutions.

During the session invited faculty/staff members were introduced by their executive committee member hosts. After the introduction they reminisced about their time in Pera and about their present activities in the USA.

One of the highlights of the event was a Pera related song by a guest mystery singer, a former Peradeniya faculty member. The audience was then asked to guess who the singer was. It was Professor Oliver Ileperuma, and after revealing his identity he addressed the gathering.

All in all, it was a very enjoyable event, walking down memory lane and re-connecting with old friends!

University of Peradeniya
Alumni Association USA
Presents.

CAREER GUIDANCE WORKSHOP

Resume Preparation, Writing
Research Summary, Interview
Readiness, Work Visa Info.

SAVE THE DATE

Saturday April 9 | 3 pm EDT
Microsoft Teams Meeting



This workshop is targeted to graduate students seeking entry level employment or internships in Industry or Academia. Please register with us through this link: <https://forms.gle/2whESnBSg1gSblfz9>

www.UPAA-USA.org

Career Workshop: “Life After Graduate School - Preparing for Your Job Search” April 9, 2022

We conducted a virtual workshop via zoom for Graduate students and Post Docs in USA to prepare them in their job search after graduate school, followed by a Panel Discussion on different job opportunities in Academia, Industry and National Labs, as well as on Immigration/Working Visa requirements.

More than 30 participants attended the session. The workshop was conducted by Dr. Ravi Ranatunga, Director, Corporate Analytical at The Procter & Gamble Company. He is also the Vice President of UPAA-USA. He was supported by below panelists who shared their experiences in their respective careers and provided valuable advice to the participants on things to consider as they go through the job search and application process.

Panelists:

Representing Academia - Professor Rasika Dias, Distinguished University Professor of Chemistry and Biochemistry, University of Texas at Arlington, Arlington TX

Representing Government Labs - Dr. Geethani Bandara, Senior Biologist, Laboratory of Allergic Diseases, National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Institutes of Health (NIH), Bethesda MD

Representing Industry - Dr. Ravi Ranatunga, Director, Corporate Analytical, The Procter & Gamble Company, Mason OH

Visa/Immigration Matters – Ms. Disna Weerasinghe, Attorney-at-Law (Admitted in New York) and Member of American Immigration Lawyers

UNIVERSITY OF PERADENIYA ALUMNI
ASSOCIATION USA
CORDIALLY INVITES YOU TO OUR

ANNUAL GET TOGETHER

Royal Albert's Palace, 1050 King
Georges Post Rd, Fords, New Jersey
5 PM - 12 midnight, Saturday,
September 24, 2022
\$ 100 per person (Sri Lankan style
appetizers, food and some drinks
included)
Visit our website (www.upaa-usa.org) to
purchase tickets and additional
information

OPEN TO PERA ALUMNI AND FRIENDS
RSVP TO UOPAA.USA@GMAIL.COM

Annual Get-Together and Fundraiser Edison, NJ September 24, 2022

We had a very successful gathering and a fundraiser on September 24th at Edison NJ with more than 175 participants. Everyone had a wonderful time, interacting with others, meeting friends, sharing old stories, enjoying music and Sri Lanka food catered from Sigiri Restaurant in NJ.

The highlight of the event was entertainment by Pera Alumni to the music by the band consisting of former UoP Ghandarva Sabha members led by Arjuna Balasuriya. We received excellent feedback from the participants through the post event survey that we sent to attendees.



Please visit our website for photos from the event:
<https://www.upaa-usa.org/gallery>

Other On-Going Activities

Fundraising

Thus far we were able to raise approximately \$8000 to support UPAA-USA activities, and to support University of Peradeniya and its students. The funds were raised from profits realized from September gathering ticket sales and from generous individual contributions at the event and through our website. We would like to thank everyone who attended the event and make it a success. The Association is also thankful to UPAA-USA executive committee members for their generous financial support that helped reduce the overhead expenses for beverages, some food items, decorations, and other event related items.

We are continuing to raise funds via our website and invite those who missed participating in the get-together or have not had a chance to contribute directly so far. Please consider sending your contributions through our website. Any amount you can contribute would extremely be helpful and appreciated. Your donation is tax-deductible, and donating is easy.

Here is the link: <https://www.upaa-usa.org/donations/>

We are working very closely with the Alumni Association of University of Peradeniya (AAUP) in Sri Lanka to allocate the funds to UoP infrastructure and student needs. In the next few weeks, we will provide you a detailed update on how we have allocated the funds for maximum benefit.

We are planning to award need-based scholarships to student from each faculty and currently coordinating with AAUP to organize these scholarships and identify the recipients. In addition, we are looking into installing wi-fi routers in each residential hall throughout the campus which will be beneficial to many students. Some of you have expressed the desire to support the cost of wi-fi installation to the residential halls they lived during their campus times. We will ensure the name of the sponsor is recognized by the residential hall in this project. If you are willing to sponsor this wi-fi project, please let us know soon which residence hall that you would like to sponsor. We are in the process of working with UoP and finalizing the budget for the wi-fi project.

Regional Hubs

As we communicated last year, we are in the process of establishing regional hubs of the association in different parts of the country. The objective is to conduct regional gatherings and events and recruit members through these hub activities. We had a kickoff meeting last June with the regional leaders. Thank you for those who volunteered to be regional leaders and members. We plan to host a few regional gatherings this Spring/Summer, so please be on the lookout for related information (to be communicated through e-mail and via our website <https://www.upaa-usa.org>)

Annual Get-together 2023

The Executive Committee is considering having this year 's (2023) annual gathering in the Washington DC area in September during the Labor Day weekend (Sept 2-4, 2023). Please mark this on your calendar and plan to attend. We want to ensure that it will be a fun filled event just like as in the 2022 event we had in Edison NJ! We will communicate detailed information in due course.

As always, if you have any comments, suggestions, and feedback, please let us know

<https://www.upaa-usa.org>