



**University of Peradeniya Alumni Association USA (UPAA-USA)  
Annual Report 2023**

Dear Pera Friends,

We would like to provide our annual report for 2023 outlining the activities of UPAA-USA during the year. During 2023, we have been actively involved in various activities that have benefited the University of Peradeniya and its students as well as the interests of alumni in the United States.

**New additions to the Executive Committee**

We expanded our Executive Committee in March 2023 by adding the following members to strengthen the 2023 planned activities and fundraising efforts:

Channa Bambaradeniya (MD) – Pera Science; 91-95 Batch

Siva Nadaraja (NJ) - Pera Engineering; 92-96 Batch

Ananda De Silva (AZ) – Pera Science; 80-83 Batch

**Annual General Meeting**

The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held on July 6, 2023, via Microsoft Teams. During this meeting, the accomplishments and progress made from 2022 to 2023 were presented, including activities planned for the rest of the year 2023. Furthermore, during this meeting, we requested nominations for the 2024 Executive Committee. The meeting was concluded with a drum entertainment session conducted by Dr. Suren Lewkebandara, a Pera alum (81's science) residing in Houston, TX.

**Studentship Awards (Funds for Needy Students)**

We liaised with the Alumni Association of University of Peradeniya (AAUP) and its student welfare group and awarded NINE studentship awards to needy students, one from each of the nine faculties. Each student was given Rs. 5000 per month for a 12-month period. These students were vetted by each faculty representative for their needs, and a list of names was provided to us by the AAUP. Every student who received funds from us sent acknowledgment letters to the association and thanked us for our generosity. We plan to continue this effort in 2024 and increase the number of awards to 18 scholarships, 2 from each faculty for all 9 faculties in UoP working with AAUP and respective faculties.

**Contribution to the Center for Environmental Studies (CES)**

We have donated Rs 225,000 to the University of Peradeniya Center for Environmental Studies (CES) for the Environmental Awareness Competition held among school children in the Central



Province in October 2023. These funds were raised by the Association's executive members. The CES has been providing training, research, and consultancy services over the last few decades with the intention of supporting and addressing several environmental issues in a sustainable manner. We were informed that 64 schools with approximately 32,000 students participated in the online sessions during the first round of the selection process for the final competition. The funds donated by us were used to award three cash prizes amounting to Rs. 100,000.00, Rs. 75,000.00, and Rs. 50,000.00 for the winning schools that secured first, second, and third places in the competition, respectively.

### **Funding for the Physics Department to Upgrade the Physics Lab**

The Physics Department of Peradeniya University was in dire need of help to purchase much-needed teaching materials. Many instruments were either broken or completely outdated, making it difficult for the faculty to provide quality teaching. To help address this issue, the department approached the Association for financial support to purchase much needed equipment. Most of the equipment requested were demonstration kits and oscilloscopes for the electronics lab. We reached out to the Physics and other alumni in the USA and were able to purchase most of the requested equipment worth in excess of \$10,000 and ship it to the faculty. We would like to thank Gamini Dharmasena for taking the lead in executing this project with the support from some of you.

### **Annual Gathering 2023**

Our 2023 Annual Get Together and Fundraiser was held on September 2<sup>nd</sup> in Rockville, Maryland, with the participation of approximately 200 Pera alums. The event started with a Meet and Greet ("Thela") session over appetizers and drinks, followed by fun filled entertainment, singing along, and dancing with a live band playing Pera and Sri Lanka songs. Fundraising was conducted through individual contributions and attendees purchasing UoP memorabilia. Several private corporates in the US also donated funds to organize the annual gathering and other activities of the association. During the event, we introduced Dr. Channa Bambaradeniya, who was elected by the Executive Committee as our President for 2024.

### **A Webinar for University Students at Peradeniya: Planning for Higher Studies in the United States**

The University of Peradeniya Alumni Association in the USA decided to conduct a series of information sessions for undergraduate students at the University of Peradeniya regarding continuing higher education in the USA. Due to the ongoing economic crisis in Sri Lanka, we have received a growing number of inquiries from undergraduate students expressing strong interest toward exploring higher education options in the USA. As a part of our commitment to undergraduates in the University of Peradeniya, UPAA-USA decided that it would be a timely need to provide them with information about the application process as a general overview.

As the first information session, a workshop on "**Applying for Graduate Studies in USA**" for the University of Peradeniya students was held on **Sunday August 27, 8 am (Sri Lanka Time)** via



a Zoom call. More than 150 undergraduate students from all nine faculties at UoP participated at this session and were interested in pursuing higher education in the United States. The workshop was led by Prof. Roshan Gunasekara, Department of Chemistry, Yale University. It included a panel discussion with four professors: Rasika Dias (Chemistry), Senarath Parakrama (Sociology), Lahiru Jayakody (Agriculture), and Udari Madushani (Engineering). The panel provided information on how to choose between a PhD and a master’s program, the application process and requirements, how to select a university and a research group, application preparation, completing aptitude tests, details about financial support, and how to maximize the chances of success in the process. The webinar was also broadcast live on YouTube. We would like to thank Sasanka Ulapane for organizing this webinar with the support from Pubudu Wimalasiri, Pramuditha Perera and Ravi Ranatunga.

**Financials**

We are happy to inform you that we raised \$7,335 last year from the September Get-together and direct contributions received from individual and corporate donors. Given below is a breakdown of income and expenses as of the end of 2023.

**Income 2023**

September Get Together Tickets Sale, Donations and Sale of Merchandise	\$32,535.00
Donations to Physics Department Project	\$2,025.37
Donation to Pera CES	\$765.00
Donations to Wala Green Room Project	\$350.00
<b>Total Income 2023</b>	<b>\$35,675.37</b>

**Expenses 2023**

September Get Together	\$24,006.23
Donation to Pera Physics Department	\$1643.00
Contribution to Pera CES Project	\$757.00
Scholarships given to UoP Students	\$1612.00
Webserver Maintenance	\$164.99
Microsoft 365 Software	\$72.00
Tax Filing Fees	\$85.00
<b>Total Expenses 2023</b>	<b>\$28,340.22</b>

**Final Budget Statement 2023**

Income	\$35,675.37
Expenses	\$28,340.22
Carry Forward from 2022	\$9,138.54
<b>Net Amount in bank as of Dec. 31 2023</b>	<b>\$16,473.69</b>

We would like to thank everyone who attended the event to make it a success, and others who have contributed directly to the UoP fund. All financial contributions to the Association are Tax Deductible and for those of you directly contributed to the UoP fund should have received a letter



## University of Peradeniya Alumni Association - USA



from Udaya Silva, our treasurer to help you with 2023 tax filing. If you have contributed but have not received the supporting letter to claim your tax deductions, please write to Udaya (uopaa.usa@gmail.com).

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

[Executive committee, UPAA-USA](#)

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