

University of Peradeniya Alumni Association USA (UPAA-USA) Annual Report 2024

Dear Pera Alumni,

The Annual Report of UPAA-USA for 2024 is intended to summarize the fellowship events and other activities implemented during the year aimed at helping the University of Peradeniya. It also includes a detailed financial report on funds raised and expenses incurred over the year.

Appointment of a New Executive Committee

A new Executive Committee consisting of seven (7) office bearers and 14 members were appointed at the beginning of the year. The five Standing Committees (Project Evaluation, Communications, Financial, Mentoring, and Social) were also activated with the appointment of Chairs and members. Three additional alumni were appointed to the Executive Committee in mid-2024. <https://www.upaa-usa.org/upaa-usa-committee/>

Fellowship and Other Social Events

Annual Alumni Reunion: Our 2024 Annual Gathering and Fundraiser was successfully held on September 2nd in Mesa, Arizona, at the beautifully decorated Villa Tuscana Reception Hall. The event was attended by approximately 180 Pera alumni and other local Sri Lankans. The event started with a Meet and Greet ("Thela") session over appetizers and drinks that enabled alumni to mingle with friends and cherish their memories at Pera. The entertainment sessions commenced with the traditional Sri Lankan folk dance '*nonchi-kolama*', followed by a comedy skit, traditional dance performance, three historical drama songs presented by the veteran actress Sunethra Sarathchandra, and a beautiful dance choreographed by a group of local Sri Lankan ladies. Subsequently, the live band 'Midwest Melodies' led by a Pera alumni actively entertained the participants with popular Sri Lankan songs including baila sessions that sustained a packed dance floor. The Executive Committee members who attended the event actively engaged with the participants to raise funds for studentship awards and equipment donations for Pera.

Inter-University Cricket Tournament: We collaborated with the Colombo University Faculty of Science Alumni Association (CUFSAA) to organize the first Sri Lanka Inter-University Softball Cricket Tournament in the United States. The event was successfully held on September 22nd, at the Warminster Community Park in Warminster, PA. About 45 players representing the Universities of Peradeniya, Colombo, and Moratuwa participated at this event that also attracted over 100 Sri Lankan spectators. The University of Moratuwa won the Masters Trophy, while the University of Colombo won the Champions Trophy. This was a historic event that enabled to promote fellowship among alumni of Sri Lankan Universities, and several alumni from other Sri Lankan Universities have already expressed their interest to field teams at future events.

Annual General Meeting: The Annual General Meeting of the Association was held remotely on November 21, 2024, via the Microsoft Teams App. About 40 Pera alumni residing in the US joined the AGM. During this meeting, the accomplishments and progress made during 2023—2024 were presented, including activities planned for the year 2025. We also presented the revised Constitution/Bylaws of the Association and called for nominations to the 2026 Executive Committee and Standing Committees.

Studentship Awards

At the beginning of the year, the funds raised in 2023 enabled us to award 18 studentships through the Alumni Association of University of Peradeniya (AAUP) and its student welfare group. Two needy students from each of the nine faculties were awarded Rs. 5000 per month for a 12-month period. Every student who received funds from us sent acknowledgment letters to the association and greatly appreciated our generosity. Our active fund-raising efforts this year will enable us to increase the studentship awards to 30 for year 2025; three needy students selected from each faculty by the AAUP and respective faculties.

Equipment Donations

Donations to Zoology Department: In response to a request from the Head of the Zoology Department, we purchased and donated equipment worth of \$1,500 to facilitate practical sessions. The instruments included a GPS instrument, binoculars, water quality measurement meters, range finders, and a microwave oven.

Donations to Physics Department: The instruments that we donated to the Physics Department in 2023 enabled the faculty members to increase the practical demonstration stations from two to 10, enhancing the efficiency of practical teaching for students. We managed to raise additional funds to meet their urgent equipment needs identified for this year, and already purchased \$8,500 worth of instruments that will be shipped before the end of December. <https://drive.google.com/file/d/1MsfE4kyBymyFCs-4qLjVrxnRhXIMujog/view?usp=sharing>

Donations to Science Faculty Audio-Visual Unit: We also donated useful AV instruments to the Science Faculty Physics Department Audio-Visual Unit. These donations have helped them to provide quality AV services for several conferences organized by the faculty, including the PGIS **RESCON 2024**, saving them over SL RS. 1,000,000 in outsourcing and/or rental costs. They have also been able to use these instruments at outstation science camps for school students.

Donations to Engineering Faculty: In response to a request from the Department of Electrical and Electronic Engineering, we purchased relevant equipment worth of over \$1,000 and arranged them to be shipped before the end of December.

Student Mentoring Program

The Physical Society of the Physics Department initiated an online weekly 'multidisciplinary talk series' to motivate incoming freshman and other undergraduate students of the Faculty of Science, and invited members of our Executive Committee to share their experiences. Several of our EC members have already presented motivational talks based on their life experiences, each event attended by 55 to 150 students online via Zoom. The participating students have shown great interest in learning from the diverse experiences shared by the speakers.

Activities to Streamline and Facilitate UPAA-USA Operations

Corporate Fundraising Initiative: The Chair of our Standing Committee on Finance promoted corporate fund-raising initiatives among our alumni who are in the IT industry and the pharmaceutical industry. Since UPAA-USA is a 502(c)3 registered non-profit entity in the US, it is eligible to receive corporate funding as matching donations, and payment for volunteer work. We managed to raise over \$2,000 this year as matching donations and volunteer work donations from 3-4 alumni employed in the corporate sector.

Revision of UPAA-USA Constitution/Bylaws: As requested by members of the EC, a special committee was appointed by the President to review suggestions for revising our constitution/Bylaws to further ensure smooth functioning and sustenance of the organization. The committee updated the constitution/Bylaws accordingly, and the Executive Committee approved the revised Constitution/Bylaws at the monthly meeting held on October 10, 2024. Subsequently, the revised Constitution/Bylaws was presented to the members who attended the AGM on November 21, 2024, where it was formally adopted.

<https://www.upaa-usa.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Summary-of-Revisions-to-UPAA-USA-Constitution.pdf>

Hiring of a Professional Financial Service Provider: We hired the services of LaMoth and DeSimone Financial Services, Inc. (LDFSI) - a professional financial service provider based in MA to compile our annual financials and file taxes for a very reasonable fee. This will help to further enhance our transparency in handling finances as a registered non-profit entity.

Financial Statements

Activities Planned for 2025

Donation of a Model Robot to the Physics Department: Gamini Dharmasena, the Secretary of our EC has been able to arrange the donation of a model underwater remote controlled robot ('Defender') to the Science Faculty Physics Department. The market value of the actual ROV is \$1.5M. Gamini himself was part of the team of scientists and engineers working for VideoRay, a reputed industrial technology company that developed this remote controlled vehicle (<https://videoray.com/industries/defense/>). This would be a historical milestone that would inspire future generations of Pera students to pursue in the study of robotics.

Pera Memories Book Project: Our EC member Geewananda Gunawardana has initiated the compilation of a book on Pera Memories. So far, 23 Pera alumni representing batches . from 1954-2018 have agreed to submit articles. The publication is planned to be completed by the end of the second quarter of 2025.

Establishment of UPAA-USA Regional Chapters: Discussions have already been initiated by the EC to setup a UPAA-USA Regional Chapter in Texas. We encourage our members to consider similar initiatives in other geographic areas in the US, as it would help us to expand membership and activities.

UPAA-USA Annual Gathering: Our EC member Sujith Wimalasooriya has already established a local committee of Pera alumni to organize the annual gathering to be held in Houston, TX in October 2025.

Provide Support for the Pera Health Center: We have initiated preliminary discussions with the Head of the UoP Health Center to assist with useful activities and purchase of needy equipment and consumables.

Find Post Graduate Research Opportunities in the US: The AAUP requested our support to find post-graduate research opportunities for young faculty members at UoP. We are currently pursuing on a research collaboration between Clemson University in SC and UoP.

Continue Fundraising: We will continue to raise funds for helping the needy students to pursue in their academic activities at UoP, and also fund other useful projects at Pera in collaboration with the AAUP. We hope that you will continue to support UPAA-USA and contribute towards making a positive impact on our alma mater. Your donation is tax-deductible, and donating is easy via our website. Here is the link: <https://www.upaa-usa.org/donations/>

Acknowledgements

We wish to thank the Executive Committee of the AAUP for finding us opportunities to support the students and other projects at UoP. We appreciate the voluntary support and donations made by the members of our Association to organize social events and also help our alma mater.

*We welcome your comments, suggestions, and feedback. **Send feedback or questions to:***

president@upaa-usa.org : Channa Bambaradeniya

secretary@upaa-usa.org : Gamini Dharmasena / Dammi Rupasinghe

Follow us on

UPAA-USA | [Official Website](#)

UPAA-USA | [LinkedIn](#)

UPAA-USA | [Facebook](#)