



# Wisdom : QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER OF THE ALUMNI OFFICE University of Jaffna

[www.jfn.ac.lk/alumni](http://www.jfn.ac.lk/alumni)

[ujalumni@jfn.ac.lk](mailto:ujalumni@jfn.ac.lk)

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## Editorial

Welcome to the first issue of the "Wisdom" Newsletter of the Alumni office. The Alumni office is different from Alumni Associations of the university which has already established here and abroad. This office comes under the direct administration of the university with the following objectives:

- To encourage, foster and promote close relations between the University and its Alumni across the world and among the Alumni themselves.
- To provide and disseminate information regarding the development of the University.
- To assist and support the efforts of the University in obtaining funds for development.
- To serve as a medium through which Alumni may support and advance the pursuit of academic excellence at the University.
- To guide and assist young Alumni to obtain scholarship & employment and to engage in productive pursuits useful to the society.

The "Wisdom" newsletter and the Alumni Web site will be the media through which the Alumni will be made aware of the development of the university. The newsletter brings news under various sections such as:

- **News Round-up:** provides latest development in the university.
- **Alumni in Action:** informs the achievements of Alumni.
- **Alumni Profile:** focuses on alumni holding prestigious post in institutions.
- **Alumni Guide:** provides information useful to young alumni for their early career.

In each issue of the newsletter, one faculty will mainly be focused on. This issue focuses on the **Faculty of Science**.

Please do give us your feedback on this issue.

Dr.P.Ravirajan, The Alumni Officer

## Acting Vice-Chancellor's message



The Alumni of any educational institution are the backbone of that institution and help the institution to walk forward and create a better image of that institution. The Alumni of the University of Jaffna live all over the world. The common thread that links them is that they were all students of the university at some time or other. The bonding together of old students through Alumni Associations enables to direct their joint energy towards the furtherance of common objectives connected with education.

Although the Alumni of schools make tremendous contributions to the development of their Alma Mater, the Higher Educational Institutions have not succeeded in establishing strong Alumni Associations. It is the policy of the University Grants Commission as well as that of the University of Jaffna that the universities should have close links with its Alumni and that the Alumni should be invited to maintain close links with each other and with the university and work together to achieve common objectives that would benefit both the Alumni and the Alma Mater. For this purpose an Alumni Office is established in the university and an Alumni Officer is appointed to coordinate and establish links with its Alumni.

While the alumni may be separated by thousands of kilometres living in various countries all over the world, I believe that their hearts and minds continue to enjoy the common bondage, traditional values and heritage instilled by the university. The University of Jaffna is keen to keep in touch with its Alumni and wishes to hear and cherish their achievements in various spheres of life. It is appropriate to quote the following couplet from Thirukkural:

"சன்ற பொழுதில் பெரிதுவக்கும் தன் மகனை  
சான்றோன் எனக் கேட்ட தாய்"

"Hearing words of good deeds uttered by people about her son, the mother feels greater joy than what she felt on the day he was born"

High levels of collaboration among the Alumni and between the Alumni and the University could be achieved through the modern technologies that have emerged during the recent years. The website of the university and that of the Alumni should be used to provide an excellent media enriched by common themes, information and messages that our alumni cherish. We should explore the possibility of activity based collaborations that can help to knit the alumni stronger.

The Alumni Officer, Dr.P.Ravirajan should be congratulated for creating an Alumni Website and bringing out the first issue of the "Wisdom" newsletter. I am confident that the link among Alumni and the Alma Mater will grow strong very soon and contribute to achieve our mission in higher education.

I wish the Alumni every success in all their endeavours.

Prof.R.Kumaravadivel, Acting Vice-Chancellor

## Alumni Directory

Kindly complete the registration form available in the web site ([www.jfn.ac.lk/alumni](http://www.jfn.ac.lk/alumni)) and send the same to [ujalumni@jfn.ac.lk](mailto:ujalumni@jfn.ac.lk) for inclusion of detail in the alumni directory and for receiving e-newsletter.

**Alumni in action:** This section focuses on updates of alumni's activities.

### Awards received by Alumni

- **Dr.S.N.Surendran**, Senior Lecturer in Zoology, UJ received a **Presidential Award** in 2000 in recognition of research works published in indexed journals and a **postgraduate research award** for best research work carried out in Sri Lanka leading to his doctoral degree.
- **Dr.P.Ravirajan**, Senior Lecturer in Physics, UJ was awarded a **CVCD Excellence Award** for the Most Outstanding Young Researcher in Physical Sciences for the year 2006 by the Committee of Vice-Chancellors and Directors (CVCD).
- **Dr.K.Sutharsan**, Former Lecturer in Physics, UJ and Postdoctoral Research Associate, Arizona State University, USA won Mark Anderson Award for the **outstanding doctoral thesis in Physics** for the academic year 2006-2007 of that university.
- **Mr.P.Thayaparan**, Lecturer in Physics, UJ won several awards including **Expert Teaching Credential Award**, Lawrence Award for **Excellence in Teaching** (2005), and Journal Club **Speaker Award** (2007) at the Northeastern University, USA.

### Alumni holding Professorship/Associate Professorship in the university



#### Prof. S. Sivalingarajah

Professor of Tamil

Born on 16 December, 1945, Prof. Sithamparapillai Sivalingarajah gained admission to the University of Jaffna in 1976 and graduated in 1980 with First Class Honours in Tamil.

After graduation, Prof. Sivalingarajah was appointed as an Assistant Lecturer in Tamil in the University in 1981. He earned his MA and PhD degrees in 1986 and 1995, respectively in the university. He received '**Thambimuthupillai Kanakasuntharampillai**' and '**Vidyananthan**' Memorial prizes from the university for his PhD thesis in 1996. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade II in 1986 and then to Senior Lecturer Grade I in 1992. He has authored ten books related to Tamil literature/culture. He attended many conferences in India and presented research articles. He has also made educational tours to Canada and England. He served as examiner for PhD theses submitted to the universities of Chennai, Kerala, Madurai Kamarajar, Manonmanium Suntharanar and Annai Thirasha. He was promoted to the post of Professor in Tamil in 2003.



#### Prof. S. Krishnarajah

Associate Professor of History

Born on 10 October, 1953, Prof. Selliah Krishnarajah gained admission to the University of Jaffna in 1975 and graduated with an Upper Second Class Honours in History in 1979.

After graduation, Prof. Krishnarajah was appointed as an Assistant Lecturer in History in the University. He proceeded to India in 1981 and successfully completed an MA degree in Ancient History and Archaeology at the University of Mysore in 1983. He was promoted to Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer Gr. II in History in 1984 and 1989, respectively. He worked on a research project under the supervision of Prof.N.C.Ghosh at the Vishva Bharati University, India during the years 1987- 1990. He was promoted to Senior Lecturer Grade I in 1991. He published more than twenty reports / articles in local newspapers / magazines about his findings in history and archaeology and many research articles in local and international journals. He became an Associate Professor in History in 1999.

### Research Grants received by Alumni

Alumni in the faculty of science of the university received research grants of over 30 million rupees (~USD 300,000.00) from national and international institutions for the projects listed below:

Title of the project	Investigator(s)	Dept.	Amount	Source
Systematic and Population Dynamics of Squids in Northern Coastal Waters of Sri Lanka	Dr.(Ms)S.Kuganathan	Zoology	679,780/-	NSF
Electrical properties of some natural organic materials	Dr.S.Sivaraya	Physics	770 000/-	TWAS
Cuticular hydrocarbon profiles to distinguish sibling species in the Anopheles culicifacies and Anopheles subpictus complex	Dr.R.Srikanan Dr.S.N.Surendran	Chemistry Zoology	700,000/-	NRC
Low cost solar cells based on nanocrystalline titanium oxides and vegetable dyes	Dr.P.Ravirajan	Physics	1,100,000/-	IFS
Characterisation of polymer/fullerene blend solar cells under direct sunlight	Dr.P.Ravirajan	Physics	1,900,000/-	NSF
Bionomics of the sibling species of the Anopheles culicifacies species complex in Sri Lanka	Dr.S.N.Surendran	Zoology	3,300,000/-	NSF
Isolation and characterization of novel anti-bacterial and anti-dipterans lead molecule from medicinal plants	Dr.K.Pathmanathan Dr.J.P.Jeyadevan	Botany Chemistry	3,320,275/-	NSF
Fabrication and Characterization of Hybrid Organic Metal Oxides photovoltaic devices	Dr.P.Ravirajan	Physics	6,700,000/- 1,550,000/-	NRC
Optical properties of points defects in diamond	Dr.L.Jeyanathan	Physics	11,500,000/-	NRC

Abbreviations: TWAS – Third World Academy of Sciences, Italy, IFS- International Foundation for Science, Sweden, NSF-National Science Foundation & NRC-National Research Council.

**News roundup:** A closer look at a faculty of the university in terms of teaching, research and development. This issue focuses on the **Faculty of Science**.

**Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project funded by the World Bank**

A Local Technical Secretariat(LTS) with Prof.K.Kandasamy (Dean/Graduate Studies) as Director oversees the implementation of the project.

	Faculty	Funds(Rs.)	Coordinator(s)	Activities
QEF <sup>a</sup> (I)	Medicine	93 m	Dr.S.Balakumar	Curriculum revision, improving teaching, learning process and research activities etc.
QEF(II)	Science	77 m	Dr. R.Vigneswaran & Dr.(Ms.).M.Senthilnathanan	Curriculum revision, Improving teaching, learning process Improving social harmony , Improving students-staff research activities etc.
IBG <sup>b</sup>	All	66 m	Mr.K.K.Arulvel, Dr(Ms.) S. Ramesh, Mr.Sivachelvan, Mr.A.Rasakumar	Improving student learning environment, Skill enhancement in IT and English, social harmony.

<sup>a</sup> QEF-Quality Enhancement Funds awarded on a competitive basis. <sup>b</sup> IBG – Institutional Block Grant awarded to 13 universities.

**Activities of Improving Relevance and Quality of Undergraduate Education (IRQUE) project Funded by World Bank**

**Curriculum Revision Workshop:** A five-day workshop on curriculum revision in Physical Sciences under the IRQUE-QEF(II) project was conducted from 3-7 September, 2007 at Hotel Janaki in Colombo. Twelve academics from other Universities participated as resource persons. Dr. Vincent Smith, University of Bristol, UK has actively contributed in the workshop as an international consultant. Senior Academics of the faculty, its graduates and stake holders contributed to this workshop.

**Split-site Ph.D. programme:** The following junior staff are pursuing split-site Ph.D. programmes under the IRQUE-QEF(II) project

- Mr.A.Ramanan - Universities of Sheffield and Jaffna
- Mr.K.Velauthamurthy - Universities of Liverpool and Peradeniya
- Mr.K.Kannan - Universities of Southampton and Jaffna

**Research Methodology Workshop:** A workshop on research methodology will be conducted on December 27, 2007 at the University of Jaffna. This is organised by the coordinator/ IRQUE-QEF(II). All academic staff and special degree students in all disciplines of the Faculty of Science are invited to participate this workshop.

**Activities of Science & Technology Personal Development projects (STPDP) Funded by Asian Development Bank**

**Establishment of laboratories/unit:** The following laboratories/unit were established under the above project:

- Spectroscopic Laboratory -Department of Chemistry
- Food & Soil Laboratory -Faculty of Agriculture
- Information Technology Resource Centre -Computer unit

**M.Sc. Course in Material Physics:** The course was conducted under the above project and the results of the first batch of students of the M.Sc. course were released on 02.07.2006. Out of the 19 students who had appeared for the examinations, 4, 6 and 5 students passed with distinction, merit and ordinary pass respectively and 3 students were awarded Diploma. The following Alumni / Researchers from abroad had served as resource persons in addition to the faculty staff:

- Dr.A.Thavendrarajah, Senior Medical Physicist, Mount Carmel Medical Centre, USA
- Dr.S.Thevuthasan, Senior Research Scientist, Pacific Northwest National Laboratory, USA
- Dr.S.Gnanarajan, Senior Research Scientist, Commonwealth Scientific and Industrial Research Organisation, Australia.
- Late Dr.S.Maheswaran, Senior Lecturer, University of Western Sydney, Australia

They have given their allowances to the University for purchasing research equipments for the M.Sc. course.

**Member, National Research Council**

Prof.K.Kandasamy, Professor of Physics has been appointed by HE the President of the country for a **second consecutive term** as one of the fourteen members of the National Research Council. Sri Lanka.

**Awards received by the staff**

- **Award** for Popularisation of Science- Dr.N.Sivayogan won the award from the Young Scientist Forum, National Science and Technology Commission, Ministry of Science and Technology, Sri Lanka.
- **Presidential Awards**-Prof.K.Kandasamy won the awards three consecutive years 2000, 2001 & 2002 in recognition of research works published in indexed journals.

**Subject Review under the Quality Assurance Programme**

A quality assurance team comprising academics from other universities in Sri Lanka carried out a subject review in the following departments in the Faculty of Science in 2005. The judgement given by the team are listed below:

Aspect(s) reviewed	Judgment given			
	Botany	Zoology	Chemistry	Physics
Curriculum design, content and review	Good	Satisfactory	Good	Good
Teaching learning and assessment methods	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Students' Quality –progress and achievements	Satisfactory	Good	Good	Good
Extent and use of student feedback	Good	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Postgraduate studies	Unsatisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good
Peer observations	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Satisfactory
Skills development	Satisfactory	Good	Satisfactory	Good
Academic guidance and counselling	Satisfactory	Satisfactory	Good	Good

### *The SIDA funded IT Networking Project*

The Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA) has been funding a project to enhance internet connectivity of Sri Lankan Universities and to train academics in IT. All the materials and accessories needed for cabling had been brought to Jaffna for the above project and the work commenced in September 2005. However due to the volatile situation prevailing in Jaffna since the latter part of November 2005, the contractors have temporarily suspended their work. Three scholarships are awarded to junior staff in the Department of Computer Science on competitive basis for pursuing their research degree in Sweden and Sri Lanka.

### *Distant Education Partnership Programme*

A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Distant Education Modernization Project (DEMP), Ministry of Education and the University of Jaffna on 31st June 2006 to facilitate the development of Distant Education through the use of modern technologies. The Demp has agreed to provide funds amounting to Rs. 4,980,000/- through the DEPP to the University of Jaffna for this programme. A Diploma course in Business Management has been chosen as a Pilot Programme. Mr.K.K.Arulvel, Senior Lecturer and Head / Commerce serves as the coordinator of this Diploma programme.

**Alumni profile:** This section focuses on alumni holding prestigious post in international institutions.



**Prof.A.Nanthakumar**, Professor of Statistics, State University of New York at Oswego, USA

Born in 1958, Prof. Ampalavanar Nanthakumar graduated from the University of Jaffna in 1981 with honours degree in Statistics. After graduation, he proceeded to the USA and earned MA and PhD degrees in Statistics from Bowling Green State University, Ohio in 1984 and University of Kentucky, Kentucky, in 1989, respectively. He was appointed as an Assistant Professor at the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science, Bloomsburg University, Pennsylvania, USA in 1988. Then he moved to the Department of Mathematics, University of Tennessee at Martin and served first as an Assistant Professor and then as an Associate professor for ten years and became a Full Professor of Statistics in 2000. His research findings have been presented at many international conferences in the USA, Australia, India and Sri Lanka. He has published more than 30 research articles in well known international refereed journals. These articles have been cited in more than 200 research papers in refereed journals. One of his recent research works has shown that one of the assumptions that has been used in computing the 'Universal Expansion Constant' is wrong. This is an important finding in Astrophysics which has already been published in a few refereed journals in Astrophysics. The confidence which funding authorities had on Prof.Nanthakumar's ability to conduct research has resulted in the award of substantial research grants to him. In 2000, the International Biographical Centre, Cambridge, England awarded him '*The Twentieth Century Award for Achievement*'.

**Alumni guide:** This section provides information useful to young alumni in their early career.

### *Research grants opportunity*

- **National Research Council** invites researchers of universities and public scientific institutions to submit application for research equipment, consumables and postgraduate studentships (MPhil/PhD). Application forms and guidelines can be obtained by sending a mail to [scadv@sit.lk](mailto:scadv@sit.lk). **Deadline – 30.04.2008.**
- **International Foundation for Science, Sweden** invites young scientists in developing countries to submit application for research grant (maximum budget is USD 12,000) to do research on the sustainable management, use or conservation of biological or water resources. Further details can be found its web site, [www.ifs.se](http://www.ifs.se).
- **National Science Foundation** calls applications for Postgraduate Research Scholarships and Postdoctoral Research Fellowships for 2008. Further details can be found its web site, [www.nsf.ac.lk](http://www.nsf.ac.lk).

### *Application for CVCD Excellence awards - 2008*

Applications are invited from researchers and academics for the CVCD excellence awards -2008 which cover four spheres of research (Health Sciences, Technology and related Sciences, Biological Sciences and Physical Sciences), innovations and inventions, securing grants and promotion of international relations. This is a lifetime award because a person who has won in one category is not allowed to apply in the same category for a second time. Applications are evaluated by a panel of judges consisting of past Vice-Chancellors, Emeritus Professors and/or senior professors. **Closing date for application is 30 June, 2008**

### *TWAS/NSF Prize for Young Scientists – 2008*

Third World Academy of Sciences (TWAS)/NSF Prize for Young Scientists is awarded annually to talented young scientists who attain a high level of excellence in research work in the fields of Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics and Physics. **Deadline for application is 25.03.2008.** Further information may be obtained from <http://www.nsf.ac.lk>.

**SCOPUS** The university has free access to Scopus [[www.scopus.com](http://www.scopus.com)] as NSF shares its access rights with all the SL Universities. This is the largest abstract & citation database of scientific, technological, medical and social science research information.

### *Vacancies*

Applications are invited from suitably qualified candidates for academic and other posts at the following universities.

- **University of Jaffna** – closing date for Senior Professor / Professor-28.02.2008 and for other posts - 31.01.2008. Further information – visit [www.jfn.ac.lk](http://www.jfn.ac.lk)
- **University of Peradeniya** – Closing date 17.03.2008 Further information – visit [www.pdn.ac.lk/jobs/](http://www.pdn.ac.lk/jobs/)

### **Keep in touch**

Please keep us informed of your or other alumni's news, such as significant research outcomes, new senior appointments, national / international honours / awards and also of any funding opportunity for post graduation and research to our young alumni. You may get in touch with us by e-mail [ujalumni@jfn.ac.lk](mailto:ujalumni@jfn.ac.lk).