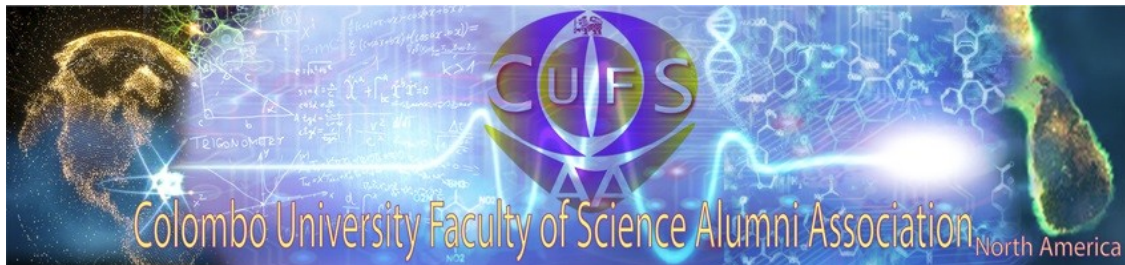


**In this issue: CUFSAA News, Recently completed Activities and Projects** and more ...

[View this email in your browser](#)

**Next issue: CUFSAA News, On-going Activities and Projects** and more ...



## CUFSAA Newsletter - Vol. 07 - No. 01 August 01, 2022



### CUFSAA-NA Medical support project to help Sri Lankan hospitals during the economic crisis

To say that our land of birth is going through a tough time right now is a gross understatement and will insult the reader's intelligence even to attempt to describe how grave the situation is. CUFSAA-NA had always come to Sri Lanka's aid in crisis, as we did in 2021 when we contributed over US\$ 150,000 in terms of lifesaving COVID equipment to save the lives of dying Sri Lankans. Even as we speak, Sri Lankans breathe life using the expensive O2 machines we donated to Sri Lanka. CUFSAA-NA is honored to step up again to help struggling Sri Lankans in their gravest hours.

The challenge which Sri Lankans were facing this time around was two-fold. On the one hand, emptying the country's dollar reserves stopped the import of life-saving medications. On the other hand, the lack of financial resources in the hospitals prevented physicians from accruing critical medicines for their patients.

As the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo alumni, we are honored to make a significant impact in both directions, thanks to your gracious and timely support.



We started the medical supplies project to help hospitals in Sri Lanka, in April 2022, after receiving requests that they have a critical shortage of life-saving drugs. We received lists of drugs and found that critically needed Cardiac and Oncology medicines (such as the chemo drug paclitaxel, which we gave to the Avissawella hospital, and the mandatory anti-



anti-rabies injections.

With the help of CUFSAA-NA members, their friends and family, we donated over Rs. 4.5 million worth of medical supplies, approximately (Equivalent to USD 12,800). Hospitals at Gampaha, Karapitiya, Homagama, Avissawella, Rathnapura, Horana, and the Ministry of Health, Medical Supplies Division were our primary recipients. Dr. Asoka Ramanayake from Sri Lanka helped coordinate this project for CUFSAA-NA. Due to her excellent support, we were able to deliver medicine quickly to hospitals which may have helped save patients' lives.

CUFSAA-NA also collaborated on a project where medical support was directly delivered to Sri Lanka, which is crucial at this time when the country is facing a critical dollar crisis. CUFSAA-NA participated in a joint venture with "The Medical Help Sri Lanka" to donate a total of 5000 triple blood bags to the Sri Lanka Blood bank. The Medical Help Sri Lanka agreed to coordinate the effort to get a month's supply of blood bags to be delivered to Sri Lanka, working with donors from the USA, Canada, and Australia. Those groups are the Australia Sri Lanka Medical Aid Team, Medical help Sri Lanka Team, Georgia Buddhist Vihara, Tharana Foundation, and Colombo University Faculty of Science Alumni Association. The bags were delivered to the Sri Lankan Blood bank on July 06, 2022.

CUFSAA would like to extend its deep appreciation to its members and well-wishers for stepping up to save Sri Lankan lives once more. We have saved lives again thanks to your generous support and compassionate spirit! Thank you!

Please visit [CUFSAA-NA Medical Supplies Project Page \(http://www.cufsaa.com/medsupplies/\)](http://www.cufsaa.com/medsupplies/) for additional information about the project as well as to contribute your generous donations to the project.



## Establishment of Prof. MLT Kannangara Scholarship & Gold Medal



The CUFSAA Executive Committee officially approved a proposal to establish two Scholarships to be given to Physics Special students at the University of Colombo (UoC) each year (a third-year scholarship and continuing it during the fourth year), and a gold medal to be awarded to the outstanding Physics Special Graduate with a First Class Honors at the UoC Convocation in memory of **Professor MLT Kannangara**, a former head of the Department of Physics, in recognition of his contributions to UoC.

Professor MLT Kannangara was an excellent instructor and was instrumental in establishing the extremely successful UoC-Uppsala (Sweden) collaboration in physics, among various other services to the

Physics program at UoC.

Professor MLT Kannangara graduated from the University of Ceylon, Colombo Campus (now known as UoC) with a BSc special degree in Physics. He obtained his PhD from the University of Manchester concentrating on Cosmic Ray Physics and returned to his alma mater in the mid-1950s and spent his

entire academic career until retirement in 1990. He actively participated in the advancement of science in Sri Lanka and was a Founder Fellow of the National Academy of Sciences of Sri Lanka. He was conferred the title of Emeritus Professor by the university senate after retirement and in 1994, University of Colombo conferred Professor Kannangara an Honorary DSc. In the 1960's, together with his colleagues, Professor Kannangara published a series of papers in the Journal of Geophysical Research (a leading journal of geophysical research) on geomagnetic micro-pulsations based on observations taken close to the geomagnetic equator, which runs through Sri Lanka. Professor Kannangara amply demonstrated that quality research carried out from Sri Lanka could be published in highly recognized international journals.

The UoC administration including the Head of the Department of Physics, Dean of the Faculty of Science, and the Vice Chancellor have already given the verbal approval and waiting for the formal approval at the Faculty Board Meeting in due course. However, the CUFSAA Executive Committee felt that we should start the Scholarship program immediately as the new batch of Physics Special students were already selected earlier this month. Given the situation in Sri Lanka, several students are in dire need of financial support according to the Head of the Physics Department. We have already received funds from a few former students of Professor Kannangara to start and fund one scholarship for a student for two years at SLR equivalent of USD 35 a month. However, the goal is to raise funds needed for a sustainable Scholarship program. Hence, we are contacting the UoC alumni and well-wishers, who would be interested in donating towards this effort to help UoC Physics special students.

To learn about Prof. Kannangara's service to the University and how to contribute towards the Scholarship and the Gold Medal, please [follow this link \(http://www.cufsa.com/mltk/\)](http://www.cufsa.com/mltk/).



## **Help Science Faculty Students with their Remote Learning - Textbooks and E-books Purchase**

During the time Sri Lanka went through the island-wide lock down due to COVID and when all activities came to a standstill, Faculty and staff of University of Colombo refused to give up and didn't allow the lock down to disrupt the academic progress of students. After going through many challenges and enormous hurdles, faculty was able to implement a remote learning platform for students to continue their education. During that time many students were in danger of dropping out of the remote learning program as they did not have computers to participate in classes. Then the CUFSAA family came together and donated computers to these students to continue their education. Again, we want to express our heartfelt gratitude to our dedicated members as well as many non-alumni well-wishers for coming forward and helping these students.

Today, our motherland is going through an unprecedented economic crisis that has devastated the country and crippled all aspects of life. At present, all normal activities and operations conducted by the university have been put on hold. The academic programs have been rescheduled to start in late July, but it is uncertain due to the current shortage of fuel and other essential goods and disruption to public transportation.

The Faculty of Science will likely implement its remote learning platform again to maintain academic progress of students. However, they have an acute shortage of required textbooks. The University is unable to purchase these textbooks due to the current shortage of dollars in the country. The Faculty of Science has reached out to CUFSAA for assistance.

We have been asked to help purchase **29 e-books** which enormously benefits students under the current situation by allowing them free and unlimited online access directly through their computers. Additionally, we have also been asked to help purchase about **47 hardcopy reference textbooks** for multiple departments including Chemistry, Mathematics, Plant Science, Statistics, and Zoology.

By fulfilling these requests, we can help the students continue their education and build a life for themselves. At a time all hopes are lost, and the future is uncertain, the most important thing we can do is to give them hope and tell them, "We Got Your Back".

**We urgently need to raise approximately \$9,000 to fulfill this need.** We kindly appeal to your generosity which you have shown time and time again and help these students in their hour of need.

[Please visit this link or send us an email to \[info@cufsaa.org\]\(mailto:info@cufsaa.org\) to obtain further information or make your valuable contribution.](#)



## **CUFSAA Distinguished Speaker Series**

The second Talk of the CUFSAA-NA Distinguished Speaker Series organized in association with the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo was delivered by **Prof. AP de Silva** on July 07th 2022, 10:30AM Eastern Time with attendance from around the world. If you missed the live presentation, you can view the recorded lecture via the [speaker series webpage](#) and access the [CUFSAA-NA youtube channel](#).



# CUFSAA Distinguished Speaker Series



## From Chemistry to Medical Diagnostics and Information Processing



**Prof. A P de Silva**  
School of Chemistry and Chemical  
Engineering,  
Queen's University,  
Belfast BT9 5AG, Northern Ireland

**Date : July 7<sup>th</sup> 2022**

**Time : 8.00 PM (Sri Lanka)  
3.30 PM (Belfast)  
10.30 AM (EST)**



Meeting ID: 897 9630 3462  
Passcode: 074146



[tinyurl.com/CUFSAA-SpeakerSeries](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL_GnZDP5Ecq)



[www.facebook.com/CUFSAA](https://www.facebook.com/CUFSAA)

### Abstract

One of the main principles underlying fluorescent sensors is based on PET (photoinduced electron transfer). A switching 'on' of fluorescence in response to chemical and biochemical analytes can be designed in this way. Since its generalization in Colombo, Sri Lanka, it has grown to involve >1130 laboratories worldwide. Some of these sensors are serving in hospitals and ambulances, performing blood diagnostics. These form a half-billion-dollar industry ([www.optimedical.com](http://www.optimedical.com)). Other sensors operate inside living cells or near membranes, some of which are too small for silicon-based wireless devices to enter. Our introduction of molecular logic gates from Belfast, Northern Ireland (following inspiration in Colombo, Sri Lanka), allows us to build more complex sensors and micro-object identification systems. Even human-scale computations, e.g. edge detection of objects, are now achieved by molecules. >1430 laboratories have contributed to this field. A short video is available at [www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL\\_GnZDP5Ecq](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sL_GnZDP5Ecq).

**Presented by CUFSAA-NA in association with the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo**

Visit <http://www.cufsaa.com/speaker-series/> for more information

**Our upcoming talks of the series are as follows.**

## Coming up ...

August	September	October	November
			
<p><b>Dr. Jayeni Hiti-Bandaralage</b> Postdoctoral Research Fellow Centre for Horticultural Science</p> <p>The University of Queensland Brisbane, Australia</p> <p><u>Subject Area</u> Plant Biotechnology/ STEM Entrepreneurship</p>	<p><b>Professor David Hoskin</b> Department of Pathology Dalhousie University Halifax, Canada</p> <p><u>Subject Area</u> Immunology, Pathology and Astronomy</p>	<p><b>Dr. Binodh DeSilva</b> Vice President, Lead, Discovery and Optimization, Small Molecule Drug Discovery Bristol Myers Squibb, New Jersey, USA</p> <p><u>Subject Area</u> Drug Discovery/ Pharmaceutical Industry</p>	<p><b>Professor Ranga Dias</b> Department of Physics and Astronomy Department of Mechanical Engineering University of Rochester, Rochester, USA</p> <p><u>Subject Area</u> Condensed Matter Physics/ Room Temperature Superconductivity</p>

Please visit the [speaker series webpage](#) for updated information, details, dates and times of the talks.



## Alumni News



### **Dr. Tharanga Wijetunge Wins the Lamar Williamson Prize for Faculty Excellence in Teaching**

Dr. Tharanga Wijetunga, Assistant Professor of Mathematics at Derby Center for Science and Mathematics, Lyon College, Arkansas, USA, was the recipient of the Lamar Williamson Prize for Faculty Excellence in Teaching, the highest award given to a faculty member at the 2022 commencement.



Dr. Wijetunge received his B.Sc Special (Honors) degree in Finance, Business and Computational Mathematics from the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka and his Ph.D. degree in Mathematics Education from the Central Michigan University, Mt. Pleasant, Michigan.

Dr. Wijetunge is an executive Committee Member of CUFSAA-NA. His wife, Prof. Irosha Nawarathne, is also a Professor of Chemistry at Lyon College and a member of the CUFSAA-NA. She was instrumental in raising funds

through CUFSAA-NA to donate an urgent medical equipment to Colombo National Hospital, Sri Lanka during Corona pandemic time.

[Source and Photo Credit Lyon College <https://www.lyon.edu/news/posts/wijetunge-wins-2022-williamson-prize>]



## Three CUFSAA Board members presented at the Institute of Chemistry Conference

Three Board members of CUFSAA-NA, **Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody**, **Dr. Angelo Gunasekera**, and **Dr. Wasundara Fernando** were recently invited by **Prof. Srianthie Deraniyagala**, President of the Institute of Chemistry, Sri Lanka to speak at the 51st Annual Sessions and the 81st Anniversary Celebrations of the Institute. All three were students of Prof. Srianthie Deraniyagala. The Inauguration Ceremony of the 51st Annual Sessions was held at Sri Lanka Foundation on June 22nd. The Theme Seminar on Shaping Minds to Break Through Frontiers in Chemical Research and the Annual Sessions were held on June 23rd, 2022 via ZOOM. Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody and Dr. Angelo Gunasekera attended in person and Dr. Wasundara Fernando joined via Zoom.

  
**Theme Seminar on**  
*Shaping Minds to Break Through*  
*Frontiers in Chemical Research*  
 23<sup>rd</sup> June 2022      9 am - 4 pm via Zoom

*Past students of College of Chemical Sciences (CCS) and University of Colombo (UOC) who have reached the point of Breaking Through Frontiers in Chemical Research will present some of their key research findings in the background of how the Research exposure in Sri Lanka Shaped their minds to reach their present heights*

**Speakers**

  
**Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody**  
*Director of Innovation and Product Development, Porex Technologies Corporation, Filtration Group, St. Charles, Michigan, USA*

  
**Dr. Wasundara Fernando**  
*Postdoctoral Scholar, Department of Pathology, Faculty of Medicine, Dalhousie University, Canada*

  
**Dr. Angelo Gunasekera**  
*Senior Director, R&D, Chembio Diagnostic Systems Inc, New York, USA*

  
**Dr. Nuwan Bandara**  
*Research Fellow, The Australian National University, Australia*

  
**Dr. Buddini Karaweniya**  
*Research Fellow, Research School of Physics, Australian National University, Australia*

  
**Dr. Ann Sanoji Samarakkody**  
*Research Fellow, Boston Children's Hospital and Harvard Medical School, Boston, USA*

<i>Registration Fee</i>	
Undergraduate Students	Rs. 500/-
ICChemC Members	Rs. 900/-
Non members	Rs. 1200/-



**Institute of Chemistry Ceylon**  
 9 : Adamantane House, 341/22, Kotte Road, Rajagiriya.  
 ☎ : 011 286 1231, 011 286 1653  
 ✉ : icchem@slinet.lk  
 🌐 : <http://www.ichemc.ac.lk>

They presented some of their key research findings in the background and how the exposure to research while in Sri Lanka shaped their minds to reach their present heights. The presentation titles were as follows:



**Dr. Wasundara Fernando** – Mechanisms of breast cancer progression and development of novel treatment options

**Dr. Angelo Gunasekera** – Multiplexed Assays for point-of-care diagnostic applications



**Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody** – Porous Polymers: Solid solutions for fluid challenges



The theme seminars were moderated by **Prof. Sujatha Hewage**.



---

## **A recent visit by CUFSAA-NA members to the Science Faculty, University of Colombo**

During their recent visit to Sri Lanka, CUFSAA-NA members, **Dr. Angelo Gunasekera**, **Mr. Chatura Patuwathavithane**, and **Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody** met with **Prof. Nalin de Silva**, Head of the Chemistry Department, and **Prof. Chandana Jayaratne**, Head of the Physics Department and reviewed ongoing projects and future opportunities to support the faculty. Prof. Nalin de Silva highlighted the importance of having a Synthetic Organic Lab in the Chemistry Department and Prof. Chandana Jayaratne thanked CUFSAA-NA for the water fountains that were installed a few years ago that are still in use. If needed, CUFSAA-NA is happy to work with the departments to set up a maintenance and filter replacement schedule so that these water fountains continue to serve the students for years to come. Dr. Chandana Jayaratne also asked if CUFSAA-NA can support the department with ten computers for the students in the special degree program. Once a formal request is received, CUFSAA-NA is planning to evaluate and proceed accordingly.





In the picture above are Professor Nalin de Silva – Head, Chemistry Department accepting waterproof, rechargeable, 1000LM, LE LED lantern flashlights donated by CUFSAA-NA to be given to needy students to be used during routine power cuts in Sri Lanka these days.

In the picture below, Dr. Angelo Gunasekera and Dr. Chandrasiri Jayakody meeting with Prof. Chandana Jayaratne, Head, Department of Physics.





## How to Become a member of the Colombo University Science Faculty Alumni Association- North America

It is easy! There are no Annual Dues!! Please visit CUFSAA website ([cufsa.com](http://cufsa.com)) and fill out the online membership list. The link to the page is <http://www.cufsa.com/membership-form/>

Alternatively, you can email [info@cufsa.org](mailto:info@cufsa.org) the following details about you.

1. Name
2. Postal Address
3. Telephone Numbers
4. Email Address
5. Nature of Association with the Faculty of Science of the University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. (Tell if you were a staff member, undergraduate student, graduate student, etc..)
6. Duration of your association. Please let us know the beginning and ending year of your association.

Thanks!

**CUFSAA**

---

**Newsletter Editorial Policy:** CUFSAA welcomes news articles about the University of Colombo Science Faculty alumni for potential inclusion in our newsletter, website or both. The news item must be about alumni and submitted by a member or members of CUFSAA. The editorial committee is especially interested in professional achievements, outstanding contributions, and notable recognition of alumni. The editorial committee reserves the rights to edit the submission as deemed necessary for publication and to make the final decision on the acceptance. Please submit your articles via email to [info@cufsa.org](mailto:info@cufsa.org). Please note that the editorial committee, if needed in consultation with the [CUFSAA executive committee](#), makes the final decision on the acceptance of the article and where it would appear. Please visit, [CUFSAA Newsletter Article Acceptance Policy page](#) on our website for additional information. Thank you!

---

**About Us:** Colombo University Faculty of Science Alumni Association – North America (CUFSAA-NA), a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization incorporated in the state of New Jersey, is formed exclusively for social, charitable, and educational purposes to foster, maintain and support a mutually beneficial relationship between the alumni of the Colombo University, Faculty of Science living in North America, The University of Colombo, and the community at large. Your contributions to CUFSAA-NA may be tax deductible. **Join us and support these worthy causes. Send an email to [info@cufsa.org](mailto:info@cufsa.org).**



Facebook



Website



Email



Donate

---

Copyright © 2022 Colombo University Science Faculty Alumni Association, All rights reserved.

CUFSAA Newsletter Committee  
Colombo University Science Faculty Alumni Association  
2740 Timberline Drive  
Cortland, OH 44410

[Add us to your address book](#)

Want to change how you receive these emails?  
You can [update your preferences](#) or [unsubscribe from this list](#)

