

Forging Cross Cultural Links

Prof. Adam Shoemaker
Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University

The VU-NSBM partnership is an integral part of our academic set up at NSBM Green University, how do you view this link between the two universities?

Victoria University has a long history of offering our programs with international partners outside Australia. When we decided to offer our programs in Sri Lanka more than five years ago, it was because we knew that Sri Lanka was a tremendous partner nation with a fast-growing market for international higher education. We also valued the long and distinct linkages between Sri Lanka and the state of Victoria – creating one of the largest diaspora communities outside Sri Lanka. NSBM Green University was our first choice. Both institutions have placed great value in nurturing international

partnerships. We are proud that VU's partnership with NSBM is the first – and to date – still the only Australian university partnership with a public university in Sri Lanka offering education programs in-country.

What has your experience been like to date of this academic partnership with NSBM Green University?

I have been Vice-Chancellor of Victoria University since December last year, so I am personally still quite new to this partnership. However, having worked in the tertiary sector for many years, I know that partnered academic delivery has many challenges and opportunities. Our team here at VU have extensive experience and expertise in delivering programs offshore, and we recognise that it takes hard work, patience and commitment

to build mutual understanding and trust, and to align different work cultures and practices. NSBM is a young university, but has also had experience in partnered delivery with UK institutions. For us, it has been a matter of getting a good grasp of what was the same and what was different for both sides.

VU is a partnering institution, and we are proud to be the first Australian university to partner with a public university in Sri Lanka, offering our exceptional business and IT degree programs in-country. We have already graduated more than 100 students during this short time, and I look forward to celebrating many more graduations with NSBM students and staff in the future.





Despite these challenges, the benefits have been enormous. For students and graduates, they can distinguish themselves in the global market with a distinctly Australian educational experience – with excellent employability and cross-cultural skills - while remaining firmly embedded in the Sri Lankan community and its networks. For staff, we have strengthened understanding and built friendships. More recently, we have grown closer through our shared experience of the many challenges that COVID has brought to our institutions and to our countries.

There are many of universities that are affiliated with Victoria University; what unique features do you identify in NSBM that sets it apart from other partner institutes?

Both institutions are strongly aligned in our commitment to planetary health and what we will now call in our new Strategic Plan 'Protecting Country'. There is much potential for us to work on our sustainability goals together. Our presence at NSBM builds the Australian brand and reputation in Sri Lanka. In turn, our

growing understanding of Sri Lanka's education system, community, culture, and economy, will continue to benefit Victoria University in countless ways.

NSBM Green University is a swiftly growing and developing university. How would you see the potential of it reaching the global higher education standards that it aims for?

I am very confident that NSBM has a decidedly bright future. The fact that you are partnering with overseas universities for the delivery of foreign award programs, meant that your own programs will benefit from cross-fertilisation. Your partnership with highly ranked universities has meant having to work with different curricula, university systems, quality assurance and regulatory frameworks. It's a lot of effort and we appreciate the hard work involved, as we're also partnered in different jurisdictions with a variety of partners and models.

An unwavering commitment to academic quality and to achieving the best experience for students and their future careers will see NSBM

reach its future potential, and we are very happy to be part of that journey.

NSBM Green University is celebrating its 5th anniversary, what message would you like to share with the students and the staff?

On behalf of Victoria University, I send my warmest congratulations to NSBM on the five-year milestone you have achieved. We are thrilled to share in this milestone with you, especially as the VU-NSBM partnership is also celebrating its five-year anniversary at the end of this year.

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I am looking forward so much to meeting you all soon and to visiting your wonderful campus. ■

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