



JOURNEYING THROUGH UNIQUE EXPERIENCES

REMINISCENCES FROM THE FACULTY

MS. THILINI DE SILVA
DEAN SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

How did you start your career at NSBM and when?

Just after finishing my final year 2nd semester examinations I was seeking job opportunities and applied for a lecturer vacancy at NIBM and after a series of interviews and a presentation I was recruited as a temporary lecturer to NIBM on 22nd October 2011. That was the time when NIBM was working on the NSBM project under the leadership of Dr. E A Weerasinghe the then Director General of NIBM. They took me to the NSBM project and NSBM commenced its operations on 1st March 2012. So, I was one of the

pioneers in the team, yet at a very junior level.

During this successful journey, what are the milestones which you could remind on at this juncture of celebrating two years of successes at Green university town.

Well, NSBM Green University is a dream come true. Since 2011 it was a roller coaster drive and had many ups and downs. The government changed, and the ministers changed, but the project continued. I still remember my first visit to Pitipana site and it was a land of coconut trees, and today it is hard to imagine the

transformation. From the foundation laying ceremony to the opening ceremony I was a part of every milestone.

As the Dean of the business faculty what are your unique experiences?

My role is quite different from any other dean in the public sector universities in Sri Lanka. I deal with UGC as an accreditation body and 3 international universities - University College of Dublin, Plymouth University and Victoria University with which we are affiliated for the delivery of our degree programmes. The

procedures, content, delivery, administration etc are different from one to another, and it is a unique experience. My team (the lecturers and the non academics of SOB) are brilliant and working with them indeed is a unique experience for me. They are talented, energetic, dynamic and a great team to be a part of and they actually make my life at NSBM much easy.

What is the most challenging task in managing your faculty?

The huge number of students and their needs... simply to make the diversified group of customers we have. My faculty is the biggest in terms of number of students, number of employees and the facility/ premises at NSBM. There are nearly 6600 students and everyday there is a new problem and it is very challenging.

How did you face those challenges?

You need lot of strength and patience to face these challenges. I stay calm and take necessary action at all times. Support is always really important and the top management and my team at SoB provide me the due support to face any and all issues and obstacles.

How will be the future of the NSBM business faculty?

I want the SOB of NSBM to be the best business school in Sri Lanka within the next 5 years to come and definitely the best in South Asia in years to come. I'm looking forward to working with my team in completing the AACSB process and achieve the accreditation which is a very difficult task.

What types of changes could we expect in future?

Well, I'm looking forward to

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initiating a business consultancy Centre and an entrepreneurial business Centre to link SOB to the industry and facilitate the students. There will be many new degree programmes added to the current portfolio and we are working to bring down two new affiliated universities from USA and Australia. While continuing all best practices, as a team we are continuously improving our quality of work.

What is your message at this special moment of celebrating successful 2 years at NSBM Green

University town?

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The international university of Sri Lanka is certainly looking forward to breeding more and more young graduates as contributing members to the society!



UNCONDITIONAL SUPPORT: BUILDING COMPETENCIES

REMINISCENCES FROM THE FACULTY

MR CHAMINDA WIJESINGHE
DEAN SCHOOL OF COMPUTING

When did you start your career at NSBM ?

I joined NSBM in 2012 with its inception as a lecturer attached to the school of computing and during this time, my career grows as a Senior Lecturer, Head of Academics of the School of Computing and currently I am proudly representing School of Computing as the Dean . At the time we started NSBM, there were few staff members and less facilities compared to today, but we grew rapidly and after implementing the concept of NSBM Green University Town, with the visionary and brave leadership of Dr E A Weerasinghe, today we are having a fully-fledged,

world class university in making the future of the country.

As the Dean of the School of Computing, how do you see the future of your School?

Computing is a discipline that demands not only for knowledge, but also skills. At SOC, we are striving to produce graduates with all knowledge, skills , and attitudes. They will be able to create the future for technological adoption and enhancement. The SOC should be a center for excellence in computer education which provides knowledge and professional training for undergraduates preserving our

own values. Our graduates are well competent and ready for the industry. We are always encouraging students to be creators who will create new jobs, new products and technologies to the future world. Our faculty members are here to support the students unconditionally to make them ready for the competitive industry and that is where we are unique.

What is your message to students?

Be a person in demand, be a brand in your specialization, and try to build up your brand name within the University.



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CREATING LINKS WITH THE INDUSTRY

REMINISCENCES FROM THE FACULTY

DR. PRABATH WEERASIGHE

HEAD OF ACADEMIC - SCHOOL OF COMPUTING

How did your career begin?

I am Head of School of Computing. Currently Director of the UGC approved degree programmes. I am also a visiting Professor of Graduate School of International Management at International University of Japan, Niigata, Japan. I have conducted my Post Doctoral Research at Ambient Biomedical Engineering Laboratory, Department of Information Science and Control Engineering,

Nagaoka University of Technology, Japan I received my Ph.D. in the field of Information Science and Control Engineering from Department of Management and Information Systems Engineering, Nagaoka University of Technology, Japan. I received a Master in Computer Science and Engineering from the University of Aizu, Japan. I obtained my first degree from the Faculty of Science, University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. I have more than 12 years of experience of teaching and

research in various universities, including University of Aizu, Japan., Keio University, Japan., Nagaoka University of Technology, Japan., International University of Japan, Japan., and University of Colombo, Sri Lanka. I have been an advisor for various projects, including BuildAngle –Automated Enterprise Resource Planning System based on Super Concrete Mobile plant and Concrete Plant, collaborated with Iwatsuka Sangyo, Japan and Ambient Biomedical Engineering

As a faculty, we take necessary steps to ensure the employability of the graduates. One such initiative is the collaborative agreements with several Japanese companies, to offer internship opportunities to our graduates, in Japan. Under this initiative, our very first set of students have already received their appointment letters for their internships in Japan. These students were selected via a transparent interview process. Secondly, we take part in industrial collaboration workshops. For example, our internship program is a very robust program in terms of equipping the students with relevant knowledge and skills.

Laboratory, Department of Information Science and Control Engineering, Nagaoka University of Technology, Japan., and Multilingual Information System, collaborated with the Ogi Laboratory in Graduate School of System Design and Management, Keio University, Japan and Embark Japan Inc. I have worked as a System Engineer at NSK Ltd, Saitama, Japan. My current research interests, including Computer Systems Engineering, Software Engineering, Control Engineering, Information Systems, Machine Learning, Personal Communications Systems, Mobile Application Programming, Mobile Networks, Advanced Signal Processing, Computer Network, Network Security, Social Networking Service, Virtual Reality, and Kansei Engineering.

Can you briefly give us an overview of the School of Computing?

As of today, we offer number of degrees which are mostly in demand by the market. For instance, today every single function is trending towards automation, thereby making use of Artificial Intelligence, Data Visualization, Management Information Systems, Business Intelligence and Quantum Computing crucial in an organization. Degrees such BSc (Special) in Management Information Systems, BSc (Honours) in Software Engineering,

BSc (Honours) in Computer Networking, BSc (Honours) in Computer Science, BSc (Honours) in Computer Security and Bachelor of Information Technology are offering a very good qualification for an individual who is willing to serve in markets. Specially to develop such systems we need software engineers with relevant qualifications. To cater to this market, we offer a well-recognized Software Engineering degrees. For Industrial automation, we need good researchers, and to build a good researcher through an undergraduate we are offering UGC approved Computer Science degree. We have to ensure a good communication channel within such systems, accordingly to cater to these markets we offer Computer Networking degree. Apart from that, we also offer Multimedia degrees. Therefore, we believe that NSBM caters to every possible inch in the market. In addition to these we also offer Postgraduate Diplomas in Software Engineering and Networking.

What can you say about the employability of the graduates of SOC?

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already received their appointment letters for their internships in Japan. These students were selected via a transparent interview process. Secondly, we take part in industrial collaboration workshops. For example, our internship program is a very robust program in terms of equipping the students with relevant knowledge and skills.

Very importantly, we maintain continuous links with the industry. More than 60 IT companies connect with our IT department via the career guidance unit. Moreover, we have in-house IT incubators with R & D centers, that will basically open doors to work within the university while being monitored and guided by the company itself.

What are the milestones you would like to mention at this juncture?

At this point I would like to mention a few important milestones to me; Firstly, I am really glad that I could engage in the Curriculum development process of NSBM and hope I have contributed to the overall improvement of NSBM. As an active lecturer, I got the opportunity to work with a large number of students very closely. Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to wish the entire NSBM team and our own students for all what we have achieved together, and for many more milestones to come.



A LANDMARK IN GLOBAL EDUCATION

REMINISCENCES FROM THE FACULTY

DR. CHANDANA PERERA

HEAD OF ACADEMIC - SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING

As a senior lecturer and Academic head of SOE what is your experience?

NSBM is a milestone in Sri Lankan education. NSBM was created to give a unique learning experience to the students and it can be identified as a bench mark in Sri Lankan higher education. Our degrees are sound with updated curriculums which are on par with many reputed universities. I would like to identify it as a learning hub

where students get the opportunity to learn while they are engaging in many co and extra-curricular practical thing. It is a multidisciplinary forum.

Other than that, students get opportunities to develop systems and software, found businesses and many other types of realistic projects which are directly related to their field of study. Here at NSBM we truly provide abundant facilities to broaden up their knowledge parameters. Facilities we have provided here

are unmatched to any other Sri Lankan university and the experience they get as learners are unique.

When talking about the quality of education at NSBM the curricula of degree programs are designed to improve analytical and practical skills of the students and they get the opportunity to explore what they learn in many forums. Further we run model programs, test programs related to IT, engineering and those are

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the areas which are supportive in improving their analytical skills.

So, my experience at NSBM is very unique and I'm so happy to be a member of this mechanism.

Under your observation at engineering faculty there are 2 degree programs that are being run. what will be the future of Engineering faculty?

Engineering is a demanding field in Sri Lanka. There are many potential candidates who are seeking technical degrees and our aim is to facilitate those needs. In future there will be many engineering degrees under

the Faculty of Engineering at NSBM.

What I see here is that students who come for higher studies are in need of a good induction and we accurately give that induction and primary care until they realize the structure and gravity of the academic program. We have created a learning culture with a lot of practical components which deal with real hands-on practices and thousands of theories. This practical component supports students in retention of knowledge.

As a scientist and an inventor what is your

message to our students and parents?

What I believe is that our students are very competent with knowledge and they are ready for the industry. But to develop Sri Lanka we need innovative thinkers. So be innovative, apply your knowledge and create something new and suitable, contribute to your society and country. Be selfless and always go ahead while keeping humanistic values.

And at last I wish NSBM for the success achieved within a very short period of time and this will be another landmark in Global education in the near future.



CATERING TO THE 4TH INDUSTRIAL REVOLUTION

REMINISCENCES FROM THE FACULTY

LAHIYRU GUNASEKARA

HEAD OF ACADEMIC - SCHOOL OF BUSINESS

How did you start your career at NSBM?

I started my career at NSBM in year 2014, that was right after I completed my degree in March 2014. Then from 1st April 2014 itself I joined NSBM as a Temporary Lecturer. As soon as I joined NSBM, I was given many projects to contribute from my end. "World Conference on Youth", is one such event, a national level project given to NSBM by Ministry of Youth Affairs

and Skills Development, where NSBM was the content management committee. That was represented my all the Youth Ministers of Common wealth countries, and I got the opportunity to work with them. Then there were many other events, including NSBM Siyapath Siya Udanaya, Talent Show, were but some of the extracurricular events that I was a part of from the very beginning.

In terms of career experience,

after a few months of joining, looking back at my personal experience, I was given the position of Head of Career Guidance unit. At the same time, I was given the position of Course Director for NSBM Postgraduate Diploma Programs, that was all in 2014. After about 1 ½ years, I got a scholarship from Chinese government to pursue my Master's studies in China. So, I took a break from NSBM for 2 years on study leave, then in 2015 August I left for China. After

completing my Master's in Management Science and Engineering. I returned to NSBM in 2017 September, after 2 years. I became the Course Director for UCD program in 2017 October and in 2018 September I was promoted as the Head of Academics of School of Business.

Can you give us an overall idea about School of Business?

For NSBM School of Business, we have few affiliations and of course, we offer degrees under University Grant Commissions' approval. Under that we offer several specializations related to management including; Logistic management, Industrial Management, Human Resources Management, Project Management and Accounting and Finance. As an international affiliation we have UCD degree program, under which we offer two-degree programs. One is BSc Hon in Management and BSc Hon in HRM, that is actually the oldest affiliation that NSBM and School of Business has. Actually the 20th Batch will be graduating this year. The next affiliation - Plymouth University, UK. Under Plymouth University also we offer several management related degree programs including International Management, Logistics and Operations Management etc. Victoria University is one of the recent affiliations we have. We offer Banking and Finance related degrees under VU. We also have a link with University of Western Australia, which is a top up program of 2+2, the students who complete the first 2 years of NSBM UGC Approved degree, can opt to straight away go to Western Australia university to continue their studies.

Currently, we are in discussions with University of Colorado, USA

and Sichuan University, China. At the same time, we are exploring the possibility of introducing the most demanded degree programs with our existing affiliations. For SOB we currently have a student population of about 6000, making it highest student population of NSBM and we are growing.

How do you ensure the graduate employability and as a faculty what are the actions taken to improve student skills and attitude?

At NSBM, School of Business we have clearly identified the requirements of the future graduates. For an example, the social scientists say that we are facing the fourth industrial revolution. In 2020 we call it industry 4.0 and the skills, attitudes and capabilities that the people who will be going to the industry in the 4th industrial revolution starting from 2020s, will not be expected to have the same set of skills that were expected in the past. For example, in the past what was expected was the technical knowledge and a knowledge was contained in books. But now, according to the World Economic Forum there are 10 skills that would be expected in the 4th industrial revolution, which has areas like emotional intelligence, creativity, critical thinking, complex problem solving and working in teams. What we are working on is, we give the technical knowledge inside the classes but because we have understood the requirement of non-technical knowledge, peoples' skills etc. we are conducting different value additions to our undergraduates.

One such way is, at NSBM we

have so many clubs and societies, that they can be a part of and increase their skills profile. But at SOB, we also have academic related clubs and societies, one key such society is the ABM, Association of Business Management. For an example we give our students the opportunity to gain those skills. Now, social scientists say those skills that I mentioned above cannot be gained in a class-room environment, they have to come out and work on their own only they will be able to acquire these set of skills. One way is actually we give them the opportunity to organize events and exchange their knowledge with the industry. We bring down people from the industry to give them the knowledge on how things happen in the industry.

At the same time, we maintain a special code of discipline that's also something we have understood by looking at the industry and realized by talking to the industry. The structure of our degree program is also special, we have either a 2+2 or 2+1 structure. For example, if I take the UGC program, the first two years are offered on a full-time basis as full time studies but from their third year and fourth year they can go in to the industry and they can work in the industry on a full-time basis. They have to attend lecturers only on a part time basis while getting the full exposure to the industry. All these things actually contribute to make fully employable and highly demanded graduates from NSBM.

As an academic what do you think about the employer expectations from a business graduate today and in the future?

One thing to highlight, NSBM has

our Industry Partnership Program. When we got the opportunity to talk to prominent figures in the industry what they told was, in the past they had the time and capability to train the inexperienced graduates for the benefit of their organization. But now they are working with the Millennials. What they have realized is when they spent their time and money to train a millennial, after they acquire the set of skills needed they quickly switch jobs. So, what they currently do is, because of that bad experience and the time limitation and the highly competitive market, what they currently do is they prefer to recruit employees with the relevant experience. As I mentioned in our 2+2 or 2+1-degree programs, NSBM graduates have at least one year or generally two-years of work experience before they get in to the industry.

That is one thing why NSBM graduates are highly demanded in the industry. If you look at the skills set that the WEF has defined, the skills set of 2015 is different from the skills set of 2020. So, like that it is changing, we need to keep in pace with the changes in the industry. We have some special programs introduced such as CART, Company Academic Round Table, there we actually sit in a round table with the experts in industry. As a guided discussion, we get the expectations from the industry and at the same time we get the industries input about the programs of NSBM and structure, how things happen at NSBM. With that we are actually in a working process to continuously identify the requirements of the industry and to include them in our curriculum. With that I think we can keep in pace with the industry change, and whenever

“ NSBM has been able to do wonders in a very short period of time, in terms of every aspect we are a part of. NSBM was established to fill the gap in the society, like there are so many Sri Lankan youth who sit for the AL exam, and even though they are qualified they are unable to pursue a degree to contribute to the society. So, NSBM was established with the purpose of giving them that opportunity. ”

there is a change in the requirements we can cater to the industry requirements by training and developing our undergraduates.

Do you have any final message to convey at this point of NSBM 2-year anniversary?

NSBM has been able to do wonders in a very short period of time, in terms of every aspect we are a part of. NSBM was established to fill the gap in the society, like there are so many Sri Lankan youth who sit for the AL exam, and even though they are qualified they are unable to pursue a degree to contribute to the society. So, NSBM was

established with the purpose of giving them that opportunity.

We have been able to create that impact in the country and we have identified apart from the current offering we have there are lot of expectations in the society to fill the vacuums in the market. There are many areas that we are planning to expand ourselves into, to create a bigger impact in the society. At NSBM we have been able to do that so far, and we have a long way to go. By the 3rd anniversary we will be able to show a lot more than what we have already done. So, I wish all the very best to NSBM as a part of it, and I will be a very happy employee of NSBM to see its success.