Creating Career-Ready Professionals

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How would you describe your role as the Dean of the faculty?

The motto of the Computing Faculty is to create "technically competent, ethically sound, socially liable, creative & innovative thinkers." To achieve that goal, I must make sure the smooth delivery of lectures, tutorials, practicals, workshops, training programs across all the programs we conduct under the faculty.Since there are affiliated universities like Plymouth University, UK and Victoria University, Australia, I must maintain proper communication with them. IT industry is highly attractive yet highly competitive where technical skill plays a key role when a student is seeking a job. Therefore, improving the students' technical as well as personal skills is also one of the most important responsibilities. We need to continuously track students' performance by conducting various interviews like viva to individually assess the student as well as to identify and find solutions for their weaknesses. Not only that but also keeping up with the ever-changing IT technologies and planning for the future come under my responsibilities.

What are the unique qualities about your faculty?

According to the National IT-BPM workforce survey 2019 conducted by ICTA, the apex ICT institution of the Government of Sri Lanka, there is over twenty thousand skilled IT professionals' shortage annually. We are catering to that requirement in the country as one of the leading computing faculties in Sri Lanka.

We provide extensive hands-on workshops, laboratories, and viva because applied knowledge is essential for an IT graduate. We also prepare our students just before they go to the industry via a unique program dubbed "Industry Preparation Training (IPT)" in which the invited industry experts spend over a week with the participants explaining and sharing their experiences about what the industry is looking from a graduate. Green.EXE, the annual software competition among all the IT students, which we started recently, allows our students to showcase their talents, meet investors, and make their dream products a reality. The program is well-aligned with the semesters so that most of the students get a chance to participate and compete. Our students are also encouraged to participate in the National ICT Awards (NBQSA)

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followed by the Green.EXE. We take student research seriously. All students have research supervisors in their final year, which enables them to publish research articles with their supervisors.

What is the most challenging task in managing your faculty and how do you face those challenges?

The biggest challenge is to maintain the quality while the number of students is increasing. But with the sheer dedication of the faculty members along with the supporting staff, we have been successfully guiding the students to greater heights. Students who graduated recently have been able to join some companies where our students were constrained before. Some students have even joined public universities as lecturers, which proves that we had taken the challenge positively. Another challenge is to keep up with the rapidly changing technology. With an exceptionally good partnership and collaboration with the industry leaders, the academic

staff frequently gets updated about these modern technologies and fields.

How does the future look like for the faculty?

I believe in the expression, "you reap what you sow," meaning the quality graduates we produce today will be leading the industry someday. Therefore, creating high-quality graduates, especially entrepreneurs, would increase the visibility of the faculty both locally and globally. With such visibility, the campus, as well as the students, will be recognized and respected in the industry. Now we are seeing our students work in globally recognized companies as well as higher education institutes including public universities. With that I believe the faculty will be well received in the industry and our students will become the driving force behind the success of the places they work.

Even though the faculty is not offering master's degrees yet, with the master's proposal being approved and a substantial amount of our academic staff members

completing their doctoral degrees, the faculty will soon be able to provide not only master's but also doctoral degrees. With such strong background I believe the faculty can receive both Australian Computer Society (ACS) and British Computer Society (BCS) accreditations which allow the faculty to be globally recognized.

What message would you like to share at this special moment of celebrating successful 5 years at NSBM Green University?

Even though I was not a part of the NSBM at its inception, I feel so lucky to be working at this ever-green university, the NSBM Green University. With the implementation of Phase II and the high number of academic members committed to their doctoral qualifications, I can affirm that the university has managed to flourish even during a pandemic situation. With this pace I am certain that our campus will be the largest and the best in the country in the near future. I wish NSBM all success in this special moment of fifth-year celebration. ∎

By Chalani Oruthotaarachchi