

TEAMWORK: MAKING THE DREAM WORK



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At the initiation, what was your perspective of NSBM Green University? And how did it turn out? Is it exactly what you expected?

Initially, my relationship was with NIBM where Prof. E. A. Weerasinghe was the then Director-General. I was impressed with how Prof. Weerasinghe revamped NIBM from being a loss-making, lethargic organization to a vibrant and profit-making organization within a short time. At this time, during a conversation, I remember Prof Weerasinghe mentioned this unique

and special NSBM concept. He always wanted to do something different and unique, so he came up with this idea to build NSBM, which stands out from the rest of the higher educational institutes in Sri Lanka. Around ten years back, Prof. Weerasinghe took me to the coconut estate where the NSBM is located today. He explained the vision he had for the future generation of this country; to gift them an international university experience within the country. Initially, I felt this was very challenging, especially with finding funds. However, Prof Weerasinghe was so confident from the beginning that he firmly believed that we could

make this dream a reality.

As we stand in this moment, the joy of birth and the memories of the years of growth and struggle fill us with pride and a true sense of accomplishment. This institution, is the national flagship of higher learning, stands tall with its magnificent record of delivering quality multi-disciplinary educational programs designed to empower this nation. Five years ago, NSBM caught the nation's attention with the opening of the new facility. You will do so again next year, when media broadcast images of the fantastic new phase 2 development is completed. NSBM is clearly an institution that acts as well as speaks

when it comes to equity and excellence. The record of enrolments of students of all backgrounds, is an example and is an outstanding accomplishment that the university should be proud of. However, it is not just the enrolment of students that matters, it is the success of those students once they are enrolled and ensuring that they are successful in their studies, successful in creating opportunities for them to go on to further study, to gaining employment, to having productive lives that are richer and more fulfilled because of the university experience they have had at an institution like the NSBM.

Honestly, when we look back on the journey that we have achieved over the past 10 -12 years, we all can witness a miracle despite the challenges we had throughout. It is a fact that NSBM is a world-class facility, and it is further amazing to see the team Prof.Weerasinghe has gathered around him. I am truly honoured to be able to witness this journey and be part of this success story.

You have played an essential role in the transformation of NSBM from a city campus to the Green University today. How would you describe that journey and your role in it?

I have always played a minor role behind the scenes because I'm not an academic. My role has always been to support the Vice-Chancellor in all his endeavours by working through government red tapes and building up institutional and private sector relationships that are academically and financially significant. Initially, it was difficult because we did not receive any funds from the government. NSBM is a Rs. 10 billion facility excluding the new developments which are taking place right now. The entire facility was funded through debt. That is an enormous amount of



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money. This university was built from nothing, and it has become an extraordinary masterpiece within a very short period. In my capacity, initially, I provided some professional services. As I serve as a member of the Academic Governing Council and the Governing Council, my message to the Vice-Chancellor is that I am ready to support, especially in bringing links with the private sector, people and resources whenever and wherever they are

required. I know that I play an extremely insignificant role compared to the work of the entire team, but I'm very proud of being a part of this great journey.

What do you see in the future for NSBM? On both national and international levels?

We have a long way to go. To become a successful educational organization,

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in my view, we need to focus on five key areas. Firstly, we need world-class academics, and we have to develop them continuously. Secondly, we must make sure our subject content is up to date with the changes that happen locally and internationally. The third point is we need to keep developing the world-class infrastructure, which we continuously do. A good example is the phase 2 development and the acquisition of 15 acres of land adjoining the existing facility. We must have collaborations with academic institutions and private sector organizations. The university's strategic collaborations are very impressive and need to keep expanding our relationships. Finally, we have to create a learning environment conducive for academics and the students to pursue their aspirations. If we do all these, the rest of the things will fall into place, and we will receive the due recognition. We are already doing an exceptional service.

What recommendations would you offer for the further improvement of NSBM?

Overall, NSBM is engaged in so many things. Academic and non-academic opportunities provided for students are unbelievable. I wish I had those opportunities when I was straight after school. The commitment, energy and enthusiasm that everyone at NSBM has is amazing. Especially, the academic

staff is unparalleled. This would not have happened if there weren't people to take the initiatives. The credit should go to Prof. Weerasinghe, Prof. Chaminda Rathnayake, Prof. Baratha Dodankotuwa and the entire team. What is important is maintaining this teamwork, the unity among the team, and the enthusiasm that keeps the adrenaline level high. It is pretty challenging. You can't do the same thing that you do every day; you have to be innovative. I think it is the key to success.

NSBM should attract young academics and convince them that this is where they belong and that this is truly an inspiring career. Also, the NSBM should be mindful of the competition. Especially, other private institutions which are UGC accredited who will compete with NSBM. Considering the student numbers, we should be proud of what we have achieved so far, but the important thing is maintaining our no 1 position. Everyone else would want to compete with us and replicate what we are doing. We are attracting overseas students now and need to expand on that initiative. It is worth emphasizing that, in most cases, the initial students who contributed financially knew that the facilities they were supporting would not be completed before they graduated. They were contributing to future NSBM students and to the growth and success of their campus. This example typifies the sense of community that makes NSBM so special. Of course,

today's students are tomorrow's alumni. And NSBM's alumni are fiercely dedicated to their alma mater.

Another important thing is government policies. Now the city campuses have been opened. We should be able to attract the best students coming from schools. They need to see that the opportunity provided by the NSBM is far more rewarding than getting a degree from a state university. We should be able to give some scholarships to outstanding students. Also, I would like to emphasize financial stability, which is critical since we are self-financed; not funded by the government. If we make weak financial decisions, it will backfire on us someday. So, we should be mindful of that as well. These are a few important points that I wanted to add.

Finally, what message would you like to extend to the students and staff on the 5th anniversary of the NSBM Green University?

All of us, including the academics, non-academics, students, past students, and all the stakeholders, are fortunate to be a part of this successful journey. This institution celebrates the thousands of proud graduates who have contributed to the country's national well-being in the public service and in private enterprise. Our graduates have made us proud within the region and across the globe in local as well as in world-class institutions. We can be proud of ourselves for where we are today. We have a solid foundation now to build on, and the sky should be our limit. There are a lot of things which we can achieve as a team. I wish Vice-Chancellor, Senior Management, academics, non-academics, and the students all the very best. I am incredibly proud to be a part of this incredible journey and to witness this success.

By Chandhima Yapa & Tharushi Hettiarachchi

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UGC APPROVED DEGREE
PROGRAMMES – NSBM

KEY FACTS

Duration:

3 YEARS

Study Method

FULL TIME



State Ministry of Skills Development,
Vocational Education, Research & Innovation



UNLEASH YOUR
CREATIVITY



INTERIOR DESIGN

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