



# CREATING THE IDEAL AMBIENCE FOR EDUCATION

VIEWS FROM ACADEMIC GOVERNING COUNCIL  
DR. HARSHA CABRAL  
PRESIDENT'S COUNSELOR

**D**r. Harsha Cabral is a businessperson who has been the head of 6 different companies and presently is Chairman of Tokyo Cement Co. (Lanka) Plc. He is also Member of ICC International Court of Arbitration, Member-Academic Studies Board at The Institute of Chartered Accountants of Sri Lanka, Council Member at the University of Colombo, Member of Law Commission of Sri Lanka, Council Member at Council of Legal Education (Sri Lanka), Course Director at The University of Wales, Vice President of Business Recovery & Insolvency Practitioners Association, Member of National Council for Economic Development, Council Member at Institute For The Development of Commercial Law & Practice, Member of Postgraduate Institute of Medicine of Sri Lanka, Member of Young Chartered Accountants Forum and Member of Iclp Arbitration Centre and on the board of 17 other companies.

## **What is your perspective of NSBM, better than you imagined it would be or exactly what you expected?**

Better than what I have expected. Because overall, I thought that it would be another tutory sort of a place in Sri Lanka. Since I'm involved with the university structure in various other universities, I was quite impressed, first with the infrastructure. Number two is catering not only for Sri Lankan students, but for students from other countries as well. This is something that we have not been able to do in our present tertiary education system. It's better if we can promote our education system. Because nexus for education in Sri Lanka is high, the quality of the lecturers is high. We have the ideal atmosphere for the quality education. Other than the state university structure, what we had was the other types of tertiary education institutions where students were blocked for higher education. So higher education at a different level is very good.

## **Tell me about the role you played in the journey of transformation from city campus to mammoth Green University.**

Once I saw the infrastructure I didn't expect that would get off from the ground so fast. I saw the initial stage of the growth. From the last meeting that I went, I could realize that they have really prospered. Because the overall idea is giving a proper education. Proper education consists of delivering the courses under a university village. When you benchmark with top ranked universities in US, UK you may see that they are cities. For an example, Canberra state of Australia, where the entire city is revolved around two universities Australian National University (ANU) and Canberra University. Green University Village concept is the first of its kind in Sri Lanka. Most of the students will become residents around the university during the course duration.

## Where do you see NSBM headed? On international land and beyond?

The variety of the subjects that green university provides is something mentionable. Sri Lankans are only restricted to medicine, engineering, Law and Accountancy. Those are traditional approaches. But here subjects offer by NSBM is much bigger than from a standard traditional university. For an example, tourism and hospitality and Artificial Intelligent. I see this as one major plus point. The collaborations that you have with the other universities such as Australian Universities, Ireland Universities and UK Universities opens the window for the students to venture into different areas. The Vice Chancellor to the NSBM is a very enterprising and a visionary leader. With this leadership and the supportive board of management with the collaboration of each member of NSBM, I believe that NSBM will rock the national higher education sector and will extend the boundaries beyond the country very easily. I am certain that NSBM has set an example for the stereotype traditional education sector in Sri Lanka by totally thinking out of box.

## Any recommendations for further improvement?

I believe that NSBM is on the right track. For further improvements I urge the assurance of the quality of the education that you are providing. Sri Lanka has the proper atmosphere for the education as a country with a high literacy rate and a well reputation for the education, where NSBM can put its self forward in grabbing these tremendous opportunities as a leading higher education provider. I will repeatedly urge the necessity of introducing new degree programs other than the

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set of standard degree programs provides in other traditional universities. The crisis of driving trishaws by highly qualified people in India is mainly due to the lack of focus on other niche professional degrees than the standard degree programs such as Medicine, Engineering, Accountancy and Law. Though other well-established government sector universities are trying to introduce new degree programs for their curriculum, they were unable to hit the target with

the whole set of bureaucracy involved. With the flexible decision making and implementing system in NSBM, I believe, it can move faster in adding new courses to their degree program.

## Message to students and staff

In passing my guidelines for the students of NSBM, I should mention the fastest growing competition in the education system. Every student should try to compete at their maximum capacity to face this competition during their university life. I will ask the students to outshine in academics while polishing their other soft skills and professional qualifications during the university life. I'll put forward the necessity of the hard working for students during their undergraduate life as well.

The staff members should always think that the students' best years of their lives are in your hands and you have to always be attentive to ensure they prosper. The friendly nature that the staff members must keep up with each student, is a common scenery in global universities, which NSBM should cultivate. I believe that the academic staff should be assembled with 50% from the academics and the rest with the practitioners, as this will reduce the gap between the industry and the graduate. NSBM should develop a Job oriented syllabus. I will suggest the changing of the assessment style of the students. I completely disagree with the closed book exam system, which develops paper qualified graduates and I will ask NSBM to come up with an examining method that inspires graduates.

With all these green and red lights Dr. Cabral added his best wishes for the continuing success story of the first ever green university in our motherland Sri Lanka.

