

PLEASE DISPLAY / NOTIFY AMONG ACADEMIC STAFF
Conference Announcement

SDC /SLAIHEE May 2006 Conference
on Improving Higher Education Effectiveness in Sri Lanka

***“From Teaching to a Learning Culture -
Providing Structures for the Paradigm Shift”***

Thursday 18 May 2006, 9.30am to 4.30pm
at Staff Development Centre University of Colombo, Colombo 3
(all the documents/materials for this conference are available at www.slaihee.org)

The recent need for the government to step in to give jobs to over 45,000 un/under-employed/under-employed graduates has brought to focus, yet again, the urgent need to develop life skills in university students. In the higher education setting in Sri Lanka, students from a diversity of socio-economic backgrounds compete intensely at the GCE AL examination and obtain high grades to enter universities, in the hope of contributing to the economy by becoming a gainfully employed graduate. Employers, however, have persistently been critical of the non-development of appropriate skills in university products for graduate level employment, so that the many unemployable graduates have continued to become socially burdensome, and marginalized. Resulting frustrations have translated to repeated instances of social turmoil and graduate-led violence, prompting governments and universities to find ways by which universities can be made to become accountable to formatively support skill development in students through the teaching of their subject disciplines.

The Staff Development Centre (SDC) of the University of Colombo, established in 1997, pioneered efforts in Sri Lanka at training university staff to use skill-generating teaching methods. The moves that the SDC initiated among its trained academics resulted in the formation of SLAIHEE, the Sri Lankan Association for Improving Higher Education Effectiveness, a national organization committed to improving life skills and performance capabilities of university students, so that the lecturing, teaching, training or facilitating that we do, would ultimately result in inspiring a process of deep learning, and developing life-skills, in undergraduates.

One of the most serious impediments to changing our university teaching methods to make students learn new skills and acquire competencies has been the attitude that staff, and students, show for bringing about this change. The underpinning resistance has been due to many reasons, including the lack of awareness of new learner-centred teaching methods, lack of related competencies, lethargy, as well as the lack of a university policy/structure to reward learner-centred teaching, and the continuation of better rewards to non-teaching academic engagements, such as research, in staff promotions.

This joint SDC/SLAIHEE Conference is focused at examining what we can learn from the successes and failures that universities have recently experienced in trying to shift universities to develop life skills in our student population. Through discussions and training, many staff have realized that developing such student learning-skills require us to ***‘Provide Structures for the Paradigm Shift – to make us to change from a Teaching to a Learning Culture’***.

The conference will examine and identify how (and where) we have ***provided Structures for bringing about the Paradigm Shift*** for us to change the culture in our universities from a ***‘Teaching to a Learning Culture’***.

It will report on and examine **how**;

1. Changed Assessment Methods,
2. Changed Learning and Teaching support methods, and/or
3. Changed Administrative and Management methods,

- **have led us to**;

- i. (already introduce and practice) Established Structures
- ii. (be introducing) Evolving Structures
- iii. (identify and introduce) Structures needing to be evolved

– **to bring about** this shift in thinking and adopting practices in Higher Education in Sri Lanka.

Conference Themes & Abstracts for Presentations

Proposals for sessions, as papers and posters, are invited that address the key theme of ***“From Teaching to a***

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Learning Culture - Providing Structures for the Paradigm Shift". Sub themes that would be addressed are;

1. Changed Assessment Methods
 2. Changed Learning and Teaching support methods
 3. Changed Administrative and Management methods,
- that have **led us to bring about** (or bringing about) this shift in thinking and adopting practices in Higher Education in Sri Lanka, through;
- i. Established Structures in the above areas (should be already introduced and practiced)
 - ii. Putting in place Evolving Structures (should be already identified, introduced, though not yet widely-adopted and fully practiced structures/methods)
 - iii. Structures needing to be evolved (should be structures that have already identified needs, plans, procedures and mechanisms to be introduced and put in place within the next 12 months)

Keynote Speaker

Keynote speaker is Mr Stephen Cox, from England, Former Consultant to the Staff Development Centre, University of Colombo. He is widely experienced in university educational management and development issues. His involvements include having introduced formalized staff development to Sri Lankan universities, while working in the Staff Development Centre, University of Colombo.

The Conference Experience

The Staff Development Centre is known for its relaxed, welcoming and positive atmosphere. This setting would be replicated in the conference, encouraging the sharing of ideas, experience and practice, with supportive, actionable feedback from the participating audience.

Participants and Registration

The conference will be of particular interest to all those with a concern and commitment to the quality and fate of future higher education in Sri Lanka, including:

- ? Lecturers, managers and administrators in higher education
- ? Educational and staff developers
- ? Policy makers

Registration – please use the Registration Form (Form A), to be received at SDC by Friday May 5, 2006

Abstract Submission

Paper and poster presentations will be accepted, based on submitted abstracts that will be peer-reviewed. In the case of paper presentations, each presentation will be limited to not more than 15 minutes, with another 5 minutes for discussion. Poster details are given in the Abstract Submission Form.

Abstracts for the conference should be submitted by e-mail (see below: 'E-MAIL address for submitting abstract'), along with one Abstract submission form (Form B) for each abstract. Guidelines for Abstracts are given on the "Abstract Submission and Poster Guidelines" (available on the SLAIHEE website:

www.slaihee.org)

LAST DATE for receipt / acceptance of Abstracts: May 2, 2006 (6pm) - (send abstracts to slaiheeconf2006@gmail.com, with the two relevant forms: see below)

Abstract acceptance will be notified to return e-mail address by Friday, May 12, 2006.

DOCUMENTS TO BE SUBMITTED WITH ABSTRACT: Abstract Submission Form, and Abstract Submission Self-Evaluation Checklist

FORMAT for Abstracts: please see "Abstract Submission Form" (Form B), or "Call for Abstracts", available on the SLAIHEE website: www.slaihee.org.

E-MAIL address for submitting abstract: slaiheeconf2006@gmail.com (subject line should be made up of your last name + initials continued with the letters "ABS"- e.g. an abstract from SB Silva will have a subject line as 'silvasbABS') (Resend e-mail if abstract receipt is not acknowledged within 24 hours)

IMPORTANT DATES: Abstract e-mail submission: by 6pm on May 2 Tues, 2006

Abstract acceptance: notified to principal presenter -by May 12 Fri, 2006

Registration Form: due by May 5 Fri 2006

Conference on: May 18 Thursday 2006, 9.30am to 4.30 pm.

Contact information: Staff Development Centre, University of Colombo, Colombo 3.

(relevant information - available on www.slaihee.org)

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