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SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT

DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE



**FACULTY OF MANAGEMENT STUDIES AND
COMMERCE**

UNIVERSITY OF SRI JAYEWARDENEPURA

7th to 9th December 2009

Review Team :

Mr. T. B. Andarawewa, Rajarata University of SL

Prof. Ranjith Wijewardena, Rajarata University of SL

Prof. H. D. Karunaratne, University of Colombo

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of education within a specific subject or discipline. This review evaluates the quality of education within the specific discipline of Bachelor of Commerce being offered by the Department of Commerce of Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. The review focused on the report prepared by Department of Commerce. Based on the report, the team evaluated the study program concerning the criteria set by Quality Assurance Council (QAC) of the Ministry of Higher Education.

The self-evaluation report consisted of eleven sections, i.e., introduction; aims, learning outcomes and program details; students, staff and facilities; curriculum design, content and review; teaching, learning and assessment methods; the quality of students: student progress and achievement; the extent of student feedback: quantitative and qualitative; postgraduate studies; peer observation; skill development; academic guidance and counselling. The quality of education within the discipline was evaluated in the light of the aims and learning outcomes given in the self-evaluation report submitted.

The review focused on the following eight aspects of education:

1. Curriculum design, content and review
2. Teaching, learning and assessment methods
3. Quality of students, including student progress and achievement
4. Extent and use of student feedback, qualitative and quantitative
5. Postgraduate studies
6. Peer observation
7. Skills development
8. Academic guidance and counselling

The evaluation of the above eight aspects of the program were done by obtaining the information from the following sources:

1. The self-evaluation report submitted by the Department
2. Meeting with the Dean, Head of the Department, academic members, non-academic members, and undergraduate students
3. Observation of teaching
4. Observation of student presentations
5. Observation of relevant documents (question papers, answer scripts, marks sheets, evaluation sheets etc.)
6. Observation of the Department and other facilities (Computer Centre, lecture rooms etc.)

Each subject review aspect of education was judged by making one of the three standards/levels namely, good, satisfactory and unsatisfactory. For the purpose, strengths, good practices and weaknesses in relation to the each aspect were considered. An overall judgment was made from the three options, i.e., confidence, limited confidence and no confidence by taking into account the status of the judgments given for all the eight aspects of the academic program.

The dates the review team visited were 7th, 8th, and 9th December 2009. The agenda of the subject review has been annexed.

UNIVERSITY, FACULTY AND DEPARTMENT

Sri Jayewardenepura is one of the state funded Universities in Sri Lanka situated atn Gangodawila, Nugegoda; half an hour drive or about forty five minutes by public transport from the Sri Lankan Commercial Capital Colombo. University is located in the historical capital of Sri Jayewardenepura, Kotte, the present Administrative Capital of Sri Lanka.

The history of the University dates back to **1883** when the Ven. Hikkaduwe Sri Sumangala Nayaka Thero laid the foundation for this majestic higher learning center then as a Pirivena (Institute of Buddhist and Oriental Studies) which was named **Vidyodaya** which means the **awakening of knowledge**. This erudite and visionary Buddhist monk started this pirivena on land at Maligakanda in Maradana, within the city limits of Colombo with the monetary donations from Andiris Perera Dharmagunawardhana. In 1959, the Pirivena was upgraded to a University and was named **Vidyodaya University of Ceylon** under the University Act No 45 of 1958. Later, by the Universities Act No.16 of 1978, it was re-named as University of Sri Jayewardenepura, mostly inspired by the political will of then government to reflect the name of the new administrative capital of Sri Lanka. The university currently has full-time students of well over 10,000, pursuing different courses of studies under five faculties, namely Arts, Management Studies and Commerce, Applied Sciences, Medical Sciences, and Graduate Studies. Presently, it is the largest university in Sri Lanka occupying around 55 acres of scenic land with a record number of internal and external student population.

Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC)

The history of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce (FMSC) traced back to foundation of the University itself. During the period 1959 -1960, first ever undergraduate degree programs in Business Administration and Public Administration were launched under the Department of Economics, Business and Public Administration. Later in 1968, the Department of Management Studies was founded and full control of the degree programs in Business Administration and Public Administration came under the wings of the new department. With the reorganization of the university system in 1972, the Department of Management Studies was elevated to the status of a Faculty marking the birth of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce. The new faculty has only two departments then, the Department of Management Studies and the Department of Commerce. The Estate Management and Valuation degree program was introduced as a unit under the Department of Business Administration in 1973. Later in 1980, the Department of Management Studies was splitted and created two independent entities, namely; the Department of Business Administration and the Department of Public Administration. Estate Management and Valuation program units were elevated to the status of departments in 1986. The expansion of the Faculty with more departments was done and the Department of Accountancy and Financial Management was established in 1991, marking a significant milestone in the history of the Faculty. The newly established Department of Accounting and Financial Management introduced the first ever Accountancy degree program in a Sri Lankan university. During the same period, the Department of Commerce revised its curriculum and reorganized its program in three broad specialization areas of Accounting, Marketing and International Trade. In 1994, a degree program in Marketing Management was introduced through the Marketing Unit established under the Department of Business Administration and a degree program in Human Resources Management was introduced in the HRM unit affiliated to the Department of Public Administration. Program reforms took place in the Department of Business Administration in 1995 and introduced specialization areas in the

ee programs namely B.Sc. (Business Administration.)
Administration.) Human Resource Management (special),
Business Economics (special), B.Sc. (Business
Administration) Marketing (special), and B.Sc. (Business Administration) Management
Information Systems (Special). The Marketing unit was elevated to the status of a
Department and the full fledged Department of Marketing Management was established
within the FMSC in 1996. This was followed by the establishment of the Department of
Human Resources Management in 1999 by promoting the HRM unit. Thus, The Faculty of
Management Studies and Commerce by 2000 had seven full fledged academic departments
offering seven distinct comprehensive first degree programs. In 2001, under the blessings of
the UGC, major curriculum and structural reforms in the faculty were undertaken to
restructure the then existing programs of study sections and departments. The academic
faculty were reshuffled between departments and reassigned on the spirit of their respective
research and teaching interest, experience and qualifications. Service departments were
created to reflect the main functional areas of Management and Commerce and also to cater
to different degree programs offered by individual departments. Semi service type set up
came into being as all the so-called service departments were free to design and offer their
own respective degree programs and at the same time, to function as service units to other
degree programs in the faculty. These sweeping reforms anticipated pooling expertise and
knowledge in different functional areas of management and commerce in order to offer
widely enriched course of study with enhanced employability, vital to the development of the
country and domestic industries. These reforms replaced the annual academic term model by
semester system and Grade Point Average (GPA) method was introduced to student
evaluation. Subsequently in 2007, the Department of Information Technology and Decision
Sciences was detached and two new departments, namely the Department of Information
Technology and the Department of Decision Sciences were established, raising the number of
departments in the faculty to eleven. Department of Information Technology commenced a
B.Sc. (special) Degree in Operations and Technology Management in 2008.

The Mission of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce is to be the Centre of
Excellence for Management Education in Sri Lanka. The faculty endeavors to achieve the
highest standards of learning and teaching, promotion of scholarship and research, and
integration of theory and practice through interaction with private and public sector entities
and the wider society.

Department of Commerce (COM)

Department of Commerce was established in 1972 at the very outset of the Faculty of
Management Studies and Commerce. It offered the prestigious B.Com (special) degree
initially in all three languages; Sinhalese, Tamil and English mediums. Subsequently, Tamil
medium was discontinued as the faculty competent of teaching in Tamil was not available
and degree programs in Commerce in Tamil medium were introduced in other universities
especially in the North and East of Sri Lanka. However, the department was able to run a
highly reputed and successful B.Com (special) degree program in Sinhala and English
mediums with students initially allocated from among the students sent to the Faculty of
Management Studies and Commerce and thereafter directly from the University Grants
Commission.

In addition to the internal degree program, the department commenced an external degree
program in Commerce for externally registered students and offered a four year B.Com
(special) external degree program with first year being the qualifying year. Later in 1996,

program was replaced by a three year general external

The department had been a substantially large one in terms of teaching faculty which was once standing at well over thirty lecturers including a Professor. Following restructuring of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce in 2001, the department was down sized and academic staff in the department was reshuffled among other departments, created under the Faculty restructuring initiatives. Currently, the department has around eight academic faculty members, among them five being Senior Lecturers with postgraduate qualifications and an extensive teaching and research experience.

Mission of the Department

The Department of Commerce has recognized its mission to be the Center of Excellence in Commerce education at the University level in Sri Lanka by producing competent graduates to enrich the Business and Commerce in Sri Lanka. Department endeavors to ensure the highest standard of learning, teaching, promotion of scholarship and research, and integration of theory and practice by encouraging and facilitating industrial placements in public and private sectors, and working closely with the corporate sector and wider civil society.

3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

3.1 Aims

The strategic intent of the Department of Commerce is to be the vanguard of the Commerce and Management education in Sri Lanka. Our aim is to produce graduates with appropriate and sufficient managerial skill, knowledge and experience, who are competent to support and augment the economic development of the country by generating and imparting scientific knowledge with the aide of different and most relevant modes of delivery. To accomplish this, the department has formulated and made efforts to implement the following strategies

- i. Impart *scientific knowledge* to the students to build up basic theoretical knowledge in the field of Commerce and Management indispensable to be B.Com graduates.
- ii. Provide wide range of learning scope within the department curriculum and jointly with the other service departments within the faculty to develop *necessary analytical and other soft skills* to perform work professionally in a demanding environment.
- iii. Create a favorable atmosphere within the department at least, to encourage *positive attitudes* in students, which are imperative to success in learning and potential for employment after graduation.
- iv. Mobilize resources at the department disposal to facilitate *higher achievement* of individual learning objectives.
- v. Inculcate *professional orientation* by encouraging students to complete professional qualifications and through industrial training /internship training programs, and maintaining close links with corporate sector organizations.
- vi. Sustain enthusiasm in *research* by both students and staff recognized locally in the short term, with efforts on to achieve international standard in the long term.
- vii. Encourage and assist *career development of academic and non-academic support staff* by providing on the job training and feedback, peer advice, and training opportunities.
- viii. Perform frequent reviews of *teaching, learning and evaluation* in order to ensure revisions are carried out to keep in with dynamic business environment and to maintain quality and relevance.

degree program students must be geared up to take real world challenges and have confidence and capability to fulfill the aspiration of the Department of Commerce in the University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Aim of the Department and vision of the University is essentially founded on the concept of nation building, and national institutions are funded by tax payers' money and grants and loans from local and international agencies with a severe amortization burden on national budget and country's foreign exchange earnings. Having said that, the ideal student the department anticipates on the completion of the program should have

- i. Acquired a general knowledge and theoretical and conceptual understanding in the broad area of Commerce and Management.
- ii. Aptitude to comprehend the role of the Commerce and Management in the national economy and influence on economic development of changes in the broad field of Commerce and Management
- iii. Technical knowledge and skills at benchmark level to identify and collect relevant information or data, and to analyse and interpret the outcome to capture the issue and make necessary recommendations to either to overcome detrimental effects or improve the favourable effects.
- iv. Ability to perform any task within the scope of the degree program independently and extrapolate within reasonable horizon.
- v. Talent to search for new knowledge and achieve academic excellence through research.
- vi. Developed soft skills and other transferable skills such as interpersonal skills, leadership qualities, oral and writing skills, presentation skill, computer literacy etc, essential for effective communication and productive team work.
- vii. Obtained self confidence sufficient to be independent, a self starter for an innovative career preferably as an entrepreneur by conquering potential challenges and risk.
- viii. Desire to embark upon higher postgraduate studies inspired by the thirst for further knowledge and love for life long learning.
- ix. Capacity to be a quick learner, competent to achieve career progress through enhanced performance and display of high level professionalism.

4. FINDINGS OF THE REVIEW TEAM

4.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

B.Com (special) degree is a four year fulltime degree program conducted in English medium. About 125 students are, selected annually for this program, from among the qualified students who are eligible to enter the University at their Advanced Level examinations. The students joining the B.Com (Special) Program do come through a separate window with the highest "Z score" earned at the GCE (Advance Level) Examination conducted annually, by the Department of National Examinations and Evaluation of Sri Lanka.

The core objective of the B. Com. (Special) Degree programme is to produce graduates equipped with appropriate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to meet the challenges of the modern business world.

The four year B.Com (special) degree program is designed incorporating two distinct components. Namely: Common program (duration 02 years; 04 semesters) and Specialization program (duration two years; 04 semesters). The common program consists of 21 courses and

zation program consists of 20 courses and they as well as subjects in the common program include basic Economics, quantitative subjects. In addition, there are English language and supportive environmental scanning courses. The salient feature of the common program is that almost all the Departments coming under the purview of FMSC get involved in conducting the program. Thus, the Department of Commerce conducts "Com 2201 Legal Environment" which is of 30 hours duration and rated with two credit values.

The B.Com (specialization) component consists of 20 courses and from which 15 (75%) subjects are directly related to the specialization discipline and they are conducted by the Dept. of Commerce itself. The balance 05 (25%) courses are conducted by other 03 departments namely: Department of Accounting (ACC), Department of Business Administration (BUS) and the Department of Information Technology (ITC).

The curriculum structure includes a Practical Training I and II (Com 4001, Com 4301) and a Research Project (Com. 4012/4612). In addition, a research Methodology course (COM 3306) as well is conducted in the 3rd year. Rooms are available in the final year for the introduction of elective courses.

Review team noted that, with the subjects included in the common program, students get acquainted with the basic knowledge in management along with quantitative related disciplines which seems a good foundation of a B.Com degree. The subjects included in the specialization program were found to be on par with the aims and objectives of the program.

How ever, it seems that, more subjects related courses could have been included in the Common Program to make it interesting for the students. The only course "Com 2201 Legal Environment" of which the duration is 30 hours and carries only 02 credit values and serviced by the Department of Commerce for the entire two year common Program seem inadequate and unacceptable from every respect.

The common program seems necessary for all the undergraduates to get acquainted with the fundamentals of management related disciplines, and one cannot deny its importance as long as it serves the purpose. When considering the B.Com. (Special) degree as a whole, the way the common program conducted seems ineffective and inefficient for the following reasons.

The undergraduates who join the B. Com. program are well aware of their specialization from the time of joining the FMSC unlike the majority other students joining the FMSC.

Making the two year common program, which is of little relevance for their future specialization, mandatory for all the students joining the FMSC seems depriving the interests of the students in one hand and on the other it is an utter waste of time which discourages the enthusiasm of the students who join the Faculty after facing a serious competition.

The common program scheduled for the undergraduates in the FMSC may be necessary conducted for two years because the specialization of the other degree programs in the FMSC commence with the 3rd year. The undergraduates follow the common program for two years and they are directed for the specialization programs based on their performance at the end of the common program and at the choice of the respective undergraduate as there is no any other method of selecting these undergraduates for different specialization areas available in the FMSC.

B.Com. Specialization undergraduates, because they are FMSC to enable them to follow the B.Com special degree program designed to serve the purpose with relevant courses offered as optional/electives offered by the other departments. It as well may not be from only the FMSC but could be from any of the other Departments of any other Faculty. This flexibility seems necessary for this program.

After 09 years of the introduction of the Common Program the FMSC has taken positive and progressive steps to rectify the draw backs and initially it has brought down the duration of the common program from 02 years to one year. Thereby the duration of the specialization program has increased from 02 years to 03 years. This change has already been introduced since the academic year 2009/2010. But, yet, the curriculum structure has not been fully scrutinized and finalized which can lead for undue problems in the near future. Presently, the old first year common courses are conducted with no understanding of its relevance to the proposed 3 year specialization. It seems, in connection with syllabus revision, still groping in the darkness. It will be advisable to determine the product of each department they intend producing at the end of the four years and then design the profile of the product with required ingredients and guide lines rather than trying the product to design its own profile over the time with trial and error method.

4.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods

Four of the senior most academic members are remaining in the department from the very beginning and they have become asset to the department unto date. It also revealed that the other junior staff members do follow these senior lecturers and show a big commitment and dedication for the development of the department.

It was evidenced that a vivid teaching methodologies are adopted across the entire program to ensure learning opportunities for undergraduates. Intended Learning Outcomes are identified and lessons seem developed and made available to the students ensuring, reaching these learning outcomes. Numbers in each batch of students are manageable and the facilities available for self learning are envisaged.

Rules regulations and conditions spelt out to improve the quality of the academic programs are at acceptable levels. Students are well aware about the course objectives, additional readings, and the time schedules for the assignments to be submitted and the presentations to be done. Students confirmed that the lecturers made the course outlines available at the beginning of the lecture series and they are happy about the programs they follow. Course manuals for each course in the common program are provided for the students. Students use these course manuals as their learning guides and there is a tendency among students to by heart the content of these course manual because the lecturers do as well use these course manuals as basic texts during the lecture. Reading materials (Hand outs) are provided to the undergraduates when they study in the specialization program.

The numbers in the common program (1000 to 1200) are unwieldy, and precautionary measures have been taken to lessen the difficulties encountered by the lecturers when handling big numbers. Small groups with 150 to 200 students are formed, but, these numbers as well are ineffective to conduct classes. The lectures of the common program are conducted during the day time and the lecture halls are little uncomfortable for both teachers and students because of the big numbers on one hand and due to poor logistic facilities available

been air conditioned (in the Soratha Mandhiraya) and (all) do have less ventilation and lighting facilities.

Most of the teachings of common courses in the specialization program take place in the evenings of the day and during week ends. Evening classes and weekend classes seem unhealthy for the students as they are encouraged to keep away from the campus during the day time and by the time they come for lectures in the evenings, they seem tired. The attendance in lectures seems around 50% to 65% both in morning and evening sessions.

There are hardly any tutorial classes for the students in the specialization program and few lecturers have accommodated the tutorial classes as well within their normal lectures. Under such circumstances, instead of 03 hours per week per course two sessions of two hours per week is scheduled.

There is hardly any space for the students to do their studies and practice their role plays and presentations. The library provides space for a reading room but that space is for the entire student population in all the faculties in the university. The space seems inadequate for the purpose. The students use the Open canteen and the canteen of the Students' Centre for their reading purposes. The student' centre is being used by the Sports unit of the university.

The Industrial training provided to the students has enabled them to understand the practical aspects of the subjects they learn in the class room. Moreover, most of the soft skills found to have achieved during the industrial training. However, except for Common Computer centres, the Department lacks a separate computer lab which hinders practical aspect of the students in this department. On the other hand Students do have only 03 courses related to IT in the entire 04 year program. Number of computer hours allocated for the students seem insufficient. However, computer rooms are kept open from 8.00 am to 8.00 pm during week days.

The currently adopted assessment methods in the department are as follows; Continuous Assessment 30% (CA) and Final Semester Examination 70% (FSE). The teaching staff has the liberty to determine the type of CA to be assign for the course they undertake. Assessment of the Industrial Training is done at three stages. i.e. the immediate supervisor of the institution to which the student is assigned, the record book the Student has to maintain which is issued by the department and the presentation done by the student at the end of the training. In addition it is worthy to note that the progress is monitored fortnightly. With the available evidence the review team wish to note that this is a reasonable and justifiable situation for the Performance Assessment of the undergraduates.

Scrutinizing of question papers and mark sheets before handing over to the Examination Department was found to be a good practice. Further more Final results Board is chaired by the Vice chancellor. It will be better if the question papers are got scrutinized from an outside academic than doing it within the department or faculty.

Medium of the instruction seems to be English across all four years. However, some students find difficulties in understanding the language during first two years. Students also reported that teaching of English language need to be improved. One has to study and make recommendations to the relevant authorities, about the co-relationship between the language difficulty and the higher dropout/failure rate among undergraduates.

lish) has adversely affected some Tamil students in the
the situation.

4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements

Students join the B.Com special program through a separate window of the University Grants Commission (UGC). In general, the students joining the program are comparatively with a higher "Z score" level (1.6) earned at their Advanced Level examination. When enquired the students' opinion, they expressed their view about the program as "it is better joining the B.Com program at the University of Sri Jayewardenepura than joining a Management program in any other University." On the other hand more than 60% students in almost all management related programs conducted by all the universities, study for their professional courses simultaneously. This situation is true with the B.Com students of this program as well.

Due to heavy work load in the B. Com program, and the prominence being given to professional courses which guarantees a well recognized job in the market, attention paid to the degree program by the students seems low. Students prefer joining the job market during the 3rd and 4th years as they are free during the day time. They also insist that they be given two years internship/practical training and these two years to be the final two years allocated for the specialization program. However, this situation has hampered the quality of the program. The annual failure/dropout rate (17% to 67%) is at an unacceptable increasing trend.

Strict adherence to the existing regulations on student attendance (minimum 60%) is one of the efforts made by the department to remedy the situation. It was noted that there is a qualified and experienced set of lecturers available in the Department to face any challenge and their commitment seems at a commendable level. Some students also have shown significant results despite all drawbacks and weaknesses prevailing in the system.

The faculty maintains a Business Communication Unit and the university maintains the Career guidance Unit. In addition The Ministry of Cultural Affairs maintains a cultural Centre in the university. The university also maintains a Sports division in the university. The coordination among these units seems minimal. Students taking part in activities conducted by these units seem seldom. These units as well are ill-afford to conduct regular programs due to lack of funds and facilities.

4.4 Extent and Use of Student Feedback

The lecturers are very much enthusiastic to get the feed back from the students of their teaching performance. This seems, has helped the lecturers in the department for their academic improvement. The present practice is to get the feed back from the students by the lecturer himself for each course they conduct during a semester. There is a well developed questionnaire in the department in this respect. In addition to the feed back got through the formal questionnaire, the lecturers also get a verbal feedback while the session is being conducted. There was documentary evidence to show good responses with positive remarks made by the undergraduates in this connection. Field tours and social events have made opportunities for both teachers and students for discussing some of their academic problems informally. This method also seems a good practice adopted in the department.

Implementing a formal student feedback mechanism being
ties in order to maximise the benefits for both teachers
be strengthening with the existing leadership and
management in the department.

4.5 Postgraduate Studies

Initiations have been taken to introduce a Postgraduate in Commerce program and Senate approval has already been obtained for the same. Developing detailed course outlines and other details are yet to be completed. The department seems show a lethargic attitude towards this aspect. The Department of Commerce had been one of the oldest and a well recognized department in the FMSC and eminent and erudite personnel with high reputation have been serving in this department. The department yet claims for the same reputation and the capacity presently, available to take any challenge in the department cannot be underestimated at any cost. On the other hand, market potential is greater for a Postgraduate B.Com degree, it seems never late to grab the market if appropriate and progressive steps are taken with a positive approach.

The academic members serve in the other postgraduate programs conducted by the other departments/institutions/faculties and the universities. The academic contributions made by the lecturers in the department in terms of compiling books, research articles, are at an acceptable range.

4.6 Peer Observation

There is a strong understanding among the academic members about the importance of having a Peer Observation as a powerful tool for improving the quality of teaching. It was observed that the overall attitude of the academic staff members about the peer Observation is positive. Therefore an attempt has been made recently to develop a mechanism for Peer Observation in the department. A formal evaluation sheet has been developed and evaluation has just started. Apart from this, moderation of question papers and second marking of answer scripts by a senior academic is continuously being done. Senior staffs have a keen interest to guide and supervise the junior staff in almost all the academic activities. In respect of the Visiting lecturers, Head of the Dept is keen to observe their academic delivery through an appointed coordinator which is worthy of stating. Review team was convinced that the teaching materials prepared by the junior staff often subjected to review by senior staff members. In order to maintaining the quality of the documentary work, i.e. various proposals, progress reports, brochures and even notices are subjected to the close supervision of the senior staff in the department before they are brought to the notice of the parties concerned.

4.7 Skills Development

The B.Com degree offered by the Department focuses to in build the required skills to produce a multifunctional work force through their graduates. Most of the soft skills, technical skills and intellectual skills are targeted to develop among their graduates. The curricular of the first two years has inclined to develop most of the technical, and language skills. Presentation and leadership skills are encouraged through teaching and learning strategies. Commerce Society established in the department plays a significant role in this sphere.

is available to learn most of the required skills: i.e. IT, inadequate. Com 4612/4012 Research Project is a Major/Optional course in the third and the final year. This is one course which is available for the students to demonstrate their analytical skills. But, a minimal number offer this course as it is an optional course. There are only 03 (7 ½%) IT related courses in the entire 04 year program. These 03 courses are scheduled for three semesters in the 1st and the 3rd years.

The teaching of English Language as well is scheduled only for the early three semesters of the common program and there is hardly any opportunity available for the weaker students to pick up their language skills. The Business Communication Unit has to cater for 5000 students in the FMSC. The Business Communication Unit has a big role to play in this sphere and a proper recognition is needed given to this unit through providing funds and other required facilities to enhance the quality of the service they render. The efforts taken to develop a variety of soft skills, among students and the commitment of the staff of the unit seem worthy of praising. It seems that, a close coordination among the activities conducted by the Career guidance Unit, Cultural Centre, Sports Unit is mandatory.

4.8 Academic Guidance and Counseling

Academic guidance and counseling seems available at the faculty level and there are student counselors appointed representing few departments in the faculty. It seems that these student counselors perform a routine job when the students come to them with problems for redress or for some consolation. Academic guidance and counseling seems rather broader in its context. This seems lacking in the faculty and this may affect the undergraduate academically and socially in performing his/her studies in the university.

The department appoints teachers to provide the required academic guidance through assigning a manageable number (15 to 20) of students for each teacher. The students are made aware of their teacher to whom they are assigned and the times they are available for discussion. This is displayed on the doors of the room of the each teacher as well.

The students in the first two years (common program) seem hardly go to these teachers as the students are restricted by their senior brothers/sisters to go to the teachers and the senior students wish, them to be treated as mentors. Practically, the senior students especially the second years are the mentors of the junior students. When considering the students joining the B.Com department in particular, they are confused from the time of joining the program because of the common program which runs for two years and the students do see a teacher of the department only towards the end of the 2nd year. The time slot set a part in the 03 days orientation program to address the students is only 30 minutes and this time slot is hardly utilized effectively by any department as the students are with an un-absorbing mind set during this period.

A faculty handbook is made available to the undergraduates and it seems made available to them in the middle or late in the year. Around 20% undergraduates actively take part in extra curricular activities. A need for a proper academic counseling program seems a mandatory requirement in all respect. Prominence given by the university to the sports Unit and the Career Guidance Unit seem negligible and demands immediate attention.

ing the visit by the Review Team and as per the facts to those eight aspects under review are as follows:

Aspect Reviewed	Judgment Given
Curriculum Design, Content and Review	Good
Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods	Good
Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements	Good
Extent and Use of Student feedback, Qualitative and Quantitative	Good
Postgraduate Studies	Satisfactory
Peer Observation	Good
Skills Development	Good
Academic Guidance and Counselling	Satisfactory

5. CONCLUSIONS

The strengths/ good practices and the weaknesses of each of the eight aspects considered in the subject review process are summarized bellow.

1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review

Strengths/Good Practices

1. The curriculum has been designed to cover a wide range of subjects in the field of Commerce and other related areas.
2. There is a practice of revising the curriculum at least in five years time. The curriculum is being reviewed to suit the proposed 1+3 program design
3. The curriculum has been designed to have 120 credits. .
4. There is an opportunity to obtain a practical training that gives an exposure to the real world of work.
5. Steps have been taken with the proposed curriculum design, to increase the number of specialization courses from 15 to 22
6. The programme is conducted in English Medium.
7. Studentsø requests and views of the industry have been taken into account informally, in designing the curriculum.

Weaknesses

1. The number of specialized courses in Commerce is in-adequate 16 out of 40 (40%) with the existing program
2. Less preference shown by the students to go for COM 4012/4612 Research Project
3. Inclusion of dummy subjects under electives which are really not in existence
4. Not at all electives available for students in almost all four years.

In view of the number of strengths and their impact on the improvement of quality, relevance and weaknesses, our judgment on this aspect is 'GOOD'.

ent Methods

1. Methods of teaching, learning and assessment contribute to achieve learning outcomes.
2. Application of different teaching methods.
3. High academic commitment demonstrated by the academic staff in the department
4. Students are facilitated with field visits, guest lectures, and training.
5. Use of continuous assessments and end semester examinations with a variety of assessment strategies.
6. Good interrelationship between students and teachers
7. There are some books (which are supplementary) written by some academics.
8. There is a good system of records management developed and maintained by the current Head of the Department.
9. Course manuals prepared for all the courses in the common program and made them available for all the students

Weaknesses

1. Teaching being mostly teacher centered
2. Poor learning environment prevailing especially during the common program
3. Lack of e-learning facilities in the department

Judgment is 'GOOD' with regard to this aspect.

3. Quality of Students, including Student Progress and Achievement

Strengths/Good Practices

1. Students joining the department with a high "Z Score"
2. Having positive attitude among students about the program
3. Higher degree of employability of the graduates
4. Higher level of English Language competency among students towards the end of the program
5. Increasing trend with regard to the number of students who passed out with good passes

Weaknesses

1. Greater dropout/failure rate
2. Poor learning environment prevailing in the department in relation to curricular and extra-curricular activities

Judgment is 'GOOD' with regard to this aspect.

4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback

Strengths/Good Practices

1. Structured questionnaire method adopted by the department to get the student feedback
2. Practice of student representatives participating in the Faculty board meetings.
3. Close teacher student relationship maintained during the specialization program
4. Practice of open door policy that allows students to meet any academic and also the Dean and Heads to discuss their grievances.

comprehensive scheme to monitor the quality of the teachers.

Judgment is 'GOOD' with regard to this aspect.

5. Postgraduate studies

Strengths/Good Practices

1. Having a qualified experienced set of lecturers in the department who are capable of facing any challenge
2. Initiations taken to introduce a postgraduate program
3. Long standing reputation the department has gained in the past

Weaknesses

1. Undue time taken to develop the required course materials

Judgment is 'SATISFACTORY'.

6. Peer Observation

Strengths/Good Practices

1. Having an exemplary set of senior teachers to be followed by the Junior staff members in the department
2. Cordial relationship maintained among the senior and junior staff members
3. Long standing Practice of question paper moderation and 2nd marking done by a senior staff member of the same department

Weaknesses

1. Non-availability of a professor in the department

Judgment is 'GOOD' with regard to this aspect.

7. Skills development

Strengths/Good Practices

1. There is a strategy for skills development as part of the curriculum development.
2. The Department has introduced practical training, and continuous assessments strategies in order to recognize and develop skills among students
3. Students have been given opportunities to learn computer, communication and presentation skills
4. Opportunities are available for the students to organize academic activities through Commerce Society

Weaknesses

1. Non-availability of skills modules for at least very important courses.
2. Less opportunities available for the students to do their practical sessions especially in the IT field

Judgment is 'Good'.

1. A student counselling programme is available in the university for which members are appointed representing the departments/faculties
2. Practice of having personal tutors to help solving problems faced by students in their learning process.
3. There is a detailed handbook giving most of the details of all the degree programs conducted by the FMSC, made available to all the students in the faculty.

Weaknesses

1. Non existence of formal and regular meetings summoned by the Senior Student Counsellor
2. Non-availability of records management system for reviewing the practice of student guidance and counselling
3. Unawareness among the student counsellors about their role as a student counsellor
4. Lack of training and the role of the counselling being confined to a restricted period of time (at the commencement of the 1st year)
5. Aversion created among the senior teachers towards Student Counselling
6. The poor payment made to student counsellors which dilutes the dignity of the post

Judgement is "SATISFACTORY" for this aspect

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made by the Review Team for further improvement of the program being offered by the Department as the Review Team felt they will be useful:

1. Introduce more elective courses to offer from the Department of Commerce.
2. Make Research Dissertation (COM 4012/4612 Research Project) compulsory for all the students in order to develop critical thinking and ability to work independently.
3. Introduce viva voce examination as a means of evaluation of the Research Project.
4. Collaborate with the ELTU (attached to the FMSC) in designing curricula for English courses and make arrangements to improve English language skills among weaker students.
5. Offer IT related courses write through the degree program to develop ICT related skills.
7. Develop the curriculum structure taking into consideration the final product the department intends producing and then design the profile of the product through identifying courses and the content to be included in those courses, and then develop the Intended Learning Objectives and Teaching & assessment strategies.
8. Offer teaching methodology courses for all the academic members of the department with a view to improve teaching methods.
9. An alumni association is needed established in the department
10. An initiative to encourage the staff members to do research with the undergraduates will help developing a research culture in the department
11. A well designed academic counselling program will be helpful if made available for the Undergraduates all through out the degree program

ed resources shall be provided for the Business
MSC and the Career Guidance and Sports units in the
students

13. Steps may be taken to coordinate activities conducted by the Career Guidance Unit, Cultural Centre and the Business Communication Centre in the faculty
13. Steps may be taken to provide space for the students to do their readings and practice their presentations and other academic related activities
14. The titles of the subjects may be changed as follows
COM 3305 Economic analysis for managers as Managerial economics
COM 3306 Research Methodology in Commerce as Research methodology
DSC 2401 Statistical Analysis for Managers as Business Statistics
15. Clarify elective, Major, minor and optional courses. These terminologies are used with little definitions attached to them. The readers get confused with the jargon

Day 01 – Dec. 07

08.30 ó 09.00	Private Meeting of Review Panel with QAA Council Representatives
09.00 ó 09.30	Discuss the agenda for the visit
09.30 ó 10.00	Meeting with the Vice Chancellor/Chairman, Internal QA Unit/Dean/Head of the Dept./Head Faculty QA Cell. etc. (working Tea)
10.00 ó 10.30	Tea
10.30 ó 11.30	Department Presentation on the Self Evaluation Report
11.30 - 12.30	Discussion with the staff of the Department
12.30 ó 01.30	Lunch
01.30 ó 03.00	Observing Departmental Facilities
03.00 ó 05.00	Meeting with Department Academic staff (Working Tea)
05.00 ó 06.00	Meeting with undergraduate Students (Final Year)
06.00 ó 06.30	Brief Meeting of Reviewers

Day 02 – Dec.08

08.00 ó 10.00	Observing Lecture (3 rd year)
10.00 ó 11.00	Observing Documents (working Tea)
11.00 ó 12.00	Meeting with undergraduate year II, III and IV
12.00 ó 01.00	Lunch
01.00 ó 02.00	Presentation ó Practical IT
02.00 - 03.00	Observing Documents ó working tea
03.00 ó 04.00	Observing Lecture ó Year III
04.00 ó 05.00	Meeting of Reviewers

Day 03 – Dec.09

08.00 ó 09.00	Observing Documents
09.00 ó 09.30	Meeting with Student counsellors
09.30 ó 10.00	Tea
10.00 - 11.00	Students Presentation Year III
11.00 ó 11.30	Meeting with Non-academic staff
11.30 ó 12.00	Reviewers Private discussion
12.00 ó 12.30	Brief reporting - Head and the staff of the department
12.30 - 01.00	Lunch

Annex 2. LIST OF PERSONS VISITED

- Vice Chancellor of the University of Sri Jayewardenepura
- Dean of the Faculty of Management Studies and Commerce
- Head of the Department -Commerce
- Academic Staff of the Department of Commerce
- Non Academic Staff of the Department of Commerce
- Undergraduate Students of Year II, III, and IV
- Librarian and Senior Staff Members of the Library
- Acting Director Sports Unit
- Officer Career Guidance Unit
- Officer Cultural Centre



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SIONS OBSERVED

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Annex 4. LIST OF FACILITIES OBSERVED

- Department staff members' rooms
- Department Premises
- Faculty Lecture halls
- Faculty IT/Computer laboratories
- University Library
- Resource Centre of the Department
- Cultural centre, Sports Unit, Business Communication Unit, Students' Canteens

Annex 5. LIST OF DOCUMENTS OBSERVED

- Faculty hand book
- Student evaluation forms
- Student attendance list
- Lecturer's time tables
- Lecture Materials/ Course Manuals/handouts
- Minutes of the Faculty Board, minutes of the department meetings
- Question Papers, Marks sheets
- Students Dissertations
- Internship Training Record Book