

# **SUBJECT REVIEW REPORT**

**DEPARTMENT OF  
PLANTATION MANAGEMENT**



***FACULTY OF AGRICULTURE &  
PLANTATION MANAGEMENT***  
**WAYAMBA UNIVERSITY OF SRI LANKA**

23<sup>rd</sup> to 25<sup>th</sup> January 2006

**Review Team :**

Prof. K.D.N.Weerasinghe, University of Ruhuna

Prof. Morley P. de Silva, University of Ruhuna

Dr.(Miss) Aruni Weerasinghe, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

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## **Introduction**

The review team consisted of Prof. K.D.N.Weerasinghe (Professor of Agricultural Engineering, University of Ruhuna ), Prof. Morley De Silva (Professor of Botany, University of Ruhuna) and of Dr. (Miss) Aruni Weerasinghe (Senior Lecturer, Rajarata University). Each reviewer took the lead responsibility for different aspects of provision while all contributed to the writing of the report and making judgments in the eight aspects. Prof. Weerasinghe served as the review chair.

The review process of the Department was conducted during the period of 22<sup>nd</sup> January – 25<sup>th</sup> Jan 2006.

On 22nd Morning the review team had a meeting with the Dean of the Faculty, Prof. S.J.B.A. Jayasekera at the Dean's office along with the Head of the Dept. Prof. N.E.M. Jayasekera, Dr. Mrs. M.N.D. Fernandopulle, Dr. W.J.S.K. Weerakkody, Dr. (Mrs.) T.M.C.P Gunasekera and Mr. K.G.M.C.P Gajanayake. Prof Colin Peiris, Quality Assurance Specialist and Dr. J. L. Rathnasekera, Consultant on Quality Assurance, introduced the members of the review team to the faculty members.

The Dean of the Faculty briefed the members on the history of the faculty, its present status and future development plans. The Head of the Department Prof. N.E.M.Jayasekera, then made a presentation which summarized the information that had been compiled in the self evaluation report covering information pertaining to the structural and organizational aspects of the department, organization of teaching programs, curricula revisions, evaluation procedures, teaching and learning processes, research programs, post graduate activities etc. The review team then met with other members of the staff and had the opportunity to discuss different aspects of the quality assurance program.

Review team wishes to thank the Dean of the Faculty, and the Head of the Department for the excellent arrangements and the cooperation and hospitality extended to them throughout the review process. The reviewers also thank all members of the academic staff, technical and non academic staff and students who helped them in numerous ways to carry out the subject review during the three days.

### **1. THE PURPOSE AND AIMS OF THE SUBJECT REVIEW**

The purpose of the subject review is to evaluate the quality of education in both the undergraduate and post-graduate programs offered by the Department of Plantation Management of the Wayamba University, focusing on students' achievements in both undergraduate and post-graduate programs. It is aimed at examining and reviewing the academic standards set for the programs and the effectiveness of the curriculum in delivering the intended learning outcomes described in the self evaluation report. It is also aimed at examining the suitability and effectiveness of assessment methods in measuring the students' learning outcomes relevant to the programme.

During the review visit to the department, the following eight aspects were separately studied including laboratory and computer facilities.

- Curriculum Design, Content and Review
- Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods
- Quality of Students including Students Progress and Achievements
- The Extent and Use of Students Feed Back, Qualitative and Quantitative
- Post Graduate Studies
- Peer Observation
- Skills Development
- Academic Guidance and Counseling.

The reviewers used the self-evaluation report as a guidance. The information related to the above 8 aspects were collected by having lengthy discussions with the Head of the Department, Members of the academic staff, selected group of undergraduate students, non-academic staff, by examining the documents provided by the department, observation of the facilities, laboratories, lecture theaters, computer unit, library, class rooms, and field training sites which are used for the training program: peer observation of teaching process in class rooms, lecture theaters and in a laboratory was also conducted.

## **2. BRIEF HISTORY OF THE UNIVERSITY, FACULTY AND THE DEPARTMENT**

Wayamba University was initially established in 1991 in Kuliyaipitiya, as an affiliated University college especially to serve the North Western Province, with two divisions, viz. Home Science and Nutrition at Kuliyaipitiya and Agriculture, at Makandura. The two divisions were initially affiliated to Kelaniya and Peradeniya Universities respectively. In 1996, the two Units were merged to form the Wayamba Campus of the Rajarata University with two faculties, viz. Faculty of Agricultural Sciences and the Faculty of Applied Sciences. The Faculty of Agricultural Sciences had three Departments at the inception viz., the Dept. of Plantation Management, Horticultural Sciences and, food Technology, & Agricultural Engineering.

On 01<sup>st</sup> October, 1999, the Wayamba campus was restructured to form a new University, “The Wayamba University of Sri Lanka” which comprised of four faculties.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation management and the Faculty of Livestock Fisheries & Nutrition, were located at Makandura while the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Business Studies and Management were located at Kuliyaipitiya.

The Faculty of Agriculture and Plantation management at Makandura lies 18 km away from the main campus. The Faculty comprises of 4 departments, viz. the Departments of Plantation Management, Horticulture and Landscape Gardening, Agri. Business Management, and Bio-technology.

At the time of this review, the Faculty had 21 academic staff members, (21 permanent and 11 temporary), 22 non- academic staff members and 309 students.

The Mission of the Faculty of Agriculture & Plantation Management of the University of Wayamba is to develop innovative, trained manpower and their

capabilities in Agriculture to fulfill national and global needs through undergraduate and external degree programmes , research and outreach programmes.

The Vision of the Faculty is to achieve excellence in Agricultural Education, research, technology and training for developing human resources to meet regional national and global needs.

The objective of the study programme is to produce well-informed agricultural graduates having the capacity to solve problems, ability to work in teams, to be innovative, creative and possess entrepreneurial skills in agricultural enterprises.

The Faculty offers a B.Sc. (Agriculture) programme for the students who gain direct entry to the Faculty on the basis of their performance at the G.C.E. (Advanced Level) examination. The annual intake of the Faculty is 65.

Students who gained admission to the Department of Plantation management comes from the general pool of students entering the Faculty of Agriculture through the centralized admission procedure operated by the UGC based on the results of GCE Adv. Level examination. The number of students, who chose the Plantation Management as the field of specialization varied from 10 to 17 over the years 1998 to 2003.

The reviewers are of the opinion that the department runs with the difficulties associated with the infrastructure facilities, in respect to buildings, very limited laboratory facilities, and availability of non academic staff. However the conveniently positioning of the Faculty along with the Horticultural research Center, Dept of Agriculture, surrounding industrial zone, closer proximity to CRI, are the added advantages that the faculty have. This advantage however is not being fully utilized at present. The recommendations and suggestions which are given in the report are made after taking those factors also in to consideration.

The Department of Plantation Management has 7 permanent academic staff members, a professor, 5 senior lecturers and a probationary lecturer and 8 members in the visiting staff.

The Department possesses a lecture hall with 30 seating capacity, limited infrastructure in terms of laboratories, and limited technical staff to avail a strong academic base. However the review team noted the enthusiasm and the dedication of the Head and the staff who made use of all available resources to carry out the undergraduate training program, with limited facilities to maintain the expected learning outcomes and the skill development of the students.

The students have the option to specialize in Plantation Management, Horticulture and Landscape Gardening, Agri. Business Management, or Bio-technology, after completing the 4 semesters of the general study program of 92 credits. Students have to follow four more semesters of specialized study in the respective Department of study, during which they conduct a research project in the 5<sup>th</sup> semester equivalent to 12 credit hrs, and undergo in-plant training in the industry lasting one full semester.

The Faculty also conducts an external degree program of three-year duration for the employees of the plantation sector, who have gained sufficient experience in

plantations after passing the G.C.E. (Adv. Level) examination or an undergraduate diploma in Agriculture.

### **3. AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES (extracted from the self evaluation report submitted by the Department)**

#### **3.1. Aims**

Aims of the Undergraduate programs (internal and external) of the department of Plantation Management are to conduct core courses to achieve the general objective of the faculty to produce innovative skilled manpower for the agriculture through undergraduate education and provide opportunities for undergraduate students specializing in plantation management to develop technical and managerial skills in plantation management by:

- a) Offering theoretical and practical knowledge in accordance with the curriculum of the B. Sc. (Agric.) degree course of the Faculty.
  - b) Organizing field visits to crop research institutes, plantations and allied enterprises to gain knowledge in agronomical and processing technologies
  - c) Arranging in-plant training in a relevant institute or plantation to acquire all necessary skills in a real plantation environment
  - d) Arranging practical classes, expose students to lab techniques and instrument handling.
- (ii) Provide opportunities for students to do their research projects to develop their skills in problem identification, selection of appropriate methodology, data analysis, scientific writing, presentation and defending results.
- (iii) Provide basic knowledge in resource economics and develop an awareness of ethics and responsibilities of sustainable management of energy, soil, water forest and other natural resources
- (iv) Improve technical and managerial skills of the already employed manpower in the plantation sector through outreach/external programmes.

#### **3.2. Learning Outcomes**

General learning outcomes stipulated in the program of activities in undergraduate graduate syllabus of the department are

- a. Learn and understand the basic agronomic concepts, analytical tools, computer applications, software handling and principles of economics and management During first two years.

- b. Learn in detail the agronomic and post-harvest processing aspects of all traditional and prospective plantation crops, through specialization courses during last two years,
- c. acquire advance knowledge on management concepts and tools such as planning and auditing, marketing and resource management and their application in plantation management.
- d. develop a range of transferable skills such as clear observation, problem identification, data analysis using statistical packages, critical evaluation, interpretation of results and effective communication during the research project period. Develop confidence to apply these skills in real job situation.
- e. Through in-plant training, it is expected to acquire
  1. technological skills and managerial experience in real plantation environment
  2. skills on maintaining day to day records, identification of practical problems in the field, factory and management process of the plantation.
  3. problem solving skills by identifying the causes of the problems above (e.2) and suggesting remedial measures.
  4. acquire presentation, communication and defending skills by presenting their experience gained during in-plant training at an audience comprising of academic staff, students and invited outsiders.
  5. soft skills such as inter-personal skills, communication skills etc. by interacting with all grades of employees of the place where students do their in-plant training.
- f. In addition to those on successful completion of programmes offered by the department students would be able to work in English language and be computer literate and gain theoretical knowledge and practical experiences necessary to pursue further studies in the global frame work of education.

To achieve the listed learning out comes, the students are given the opportunities through the core courses offered for all undergraduate students, Special Courses offered for students not specializing in plantation management and special courses for students specializing in Plantation Management.

#### **4. JUDGMENTS ON THE EIGHT ASPECTS REVIEWED**

The findings of the review team and discussion of good practices, strengths and weaknesses of each of the eight aspects of provision and recommendations of the reviewers are documented below. The overall judgment was arrived after summarizing judgments of all aspects of provision.

## **4.1 Curriculum Design, Content and Review**

### **4.1.1. Curriculum Design and Content**

The core program of two year duration offered by the department provides all students admitted to the Faculty of agriculture with an adequate coverage of subject matter in the area of plantation management with required knowledge and relevant practical skills.

Advanced courses in plantation management are offered during the first two semesters of the third year, followed by an industrial training in the final semester which provides good subject knowledge and skill requirements expected by the plantation sector.

During the first two years of the degree program, the workload on the students who follow the plantation management course is equivalent to 95 credit hours excluding the time allocated for English. Furthermore all the courses are 4 credit hr. courses except one ( Introduction to Bio Technology). During the subsequent three semesters, the workload is only 64 credit hours and majority of the courses are 3 credit hour courses except four courses with the duration of 4 credit hours. After the discussion with the students and the members of the academic staff, the review team is of the opinion that critical analysis of the syllabus is needed to make a positive rearrangement to reach a fair distribution of course material during all four years of the study program while reducing the total credit hours (165 hrs). A reasonable adjustment in the first year is strongly recommended, considering the time needed by the new students to orient themselves to the new environment and to allow sufficient time to attain a fair level in English. An amalgamation of some courses into a single course (eg. Irrigation and Machinery Engineering, PM 2120 of 4 credits) was also noted.

The research project during the 4<sup>th</sup> year provides a valuable learning experience in research methodology, data collection, interpretation and critical evaluation of a chosen topic. The presentation of the research findings in a general forum and publication of the research findings as full papers in the proceedings of the annual research forum is a commendable practice. During the 7<sup>th</sup> Semester, students have to conduct a research program along with three class room courses. If students could devote full time engagement in the research program at least during the first few months of the establishment of their research trails, it could help to improve the productivity of the research program.

The reviewers are satisfied that the learning outcomes of the modules are reflected in the curriculum, which would facilitate employment prospects in the plantation sector. It was noted that modern methods of teaching, multi media presentations and audio visual equipment are in the class rooms and are used to achieve the learning outcome.

### **4.1.2. Curriculum Review**

There is hardly any evidence to observe that the curriculum has been reviewed systematically with stakeholder participation. However, new subjects have been included in order to improve relevance, employability and current needs based on the



suggestions of peers and experts. The review team strongly feels that this important activity should occur at regular intervals.

In general the curriculum content of the degree program reflects adequate academic standards and in the opinion of the reviewers, enable the students to achieve the intended learning outcome of the plantation management in the form of knowledge and understanding, intellectual and transferable skills.

#### **JUDGMENT:**

Considering the above facts, the review team is on the opinion that the overall achievement under this aspect is considered as “**SATISFACTORY**”

### **4.2 Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

#### **4.2.1 Teaching and Learning Methods:**

Teaching at the Dept. is assisted with the conventional form of black board as well as with overhead projectors and multi media projectors. Multimedia facilities can be obtained on request from the central pool at the Faculty and it was observed that the lecturers make use of the facilities adequately. Face to face discussions with students occur at practical classes, tutorials, seminars and field visits. The reviewers observed the conduction of lectures (eg. PM1208-Principals of Soil Science), tutorial classes (eg. 3262-Estate and Financial Management) and practical classes. (eg. PM 1208-Principals of Soil Science). There was good clarity in the presentation of the subject matter in the lecture classes. The lectures were also substantiated with relevant hand outs. However the reviewers believe that the observed poor quality of the tutorial classes and the practical classes was due to lack of adequate peer guidance and organization weaknesses. The central computer facility at the campus provide nearly 100 computers to the students of the two Faculties at Makandura and students have adequate provisions for e-education. With the recommendation of the relevant lecturer, students can get print outs. The computer center is open from 8.00 a.m. to 7.00 p.m. and on request till 10.00 pm on week days. All students of the Plantation Management carry out a research project during the 3<sup>rd</sup> year which is of 9 months duration under the guidance of one or more supervisors out of whom one is essentially a senior academic of the department while the other(s) is from an outside institution. There is 6 months in-plant training during the final year.

The Library facilities to students are provided through the Central library which stores around 6000 books including a fair collection of books on Plantation Management and related fields in the lending section and in the reference section. The scheduled opening hours of the library are adequate for students to enable efficient library usage. The usage of the library was observed to be generally satisfactory at the time the review team visited the library. The catalogue of books is presently being computerized. A new library building is ready for occupation and it is envisaged thereafter to offer more reading space and broaden the library services.

Guidance on the overall learning procedure was reported adequate according to the students whom the reviewers interviewed. Much of the academic guidance came to the students through the orientation program, students' guidebook and other brochures published by the University and the Faculty and other face-to-face interactions with the academic staff during the study program, which according to students occurred

freely whenever the necessity arose. Departmental Notice Boards announced important events and other academic schedules. The time allocated for the orientation program at the commencement of the academic program was one day. The duration of the intensive English language course which is offered to strengthen the English knowledge of students, since all programs are conducted in the English medium, has been curtailed from 3 months to one month due to the tight academic schedules. In order to maintain a good standard of English for successful learning, it is compulsory for students to obtain English proficiency by passing English Foundation Levels 1 and 2 before the degree can be awarded.

#### **4.2.2. Assessment Methods**

The Department adopts both formative and summative assessment methods. The end-semester examinations form the major assessment method adopted in the department and in general in the Faculty. There is an interest to introduce the Continuous Assessment methodologies but the Faculty has not yet opted for it due to logistical reasons. The mode of evaluation is communicated to students in advance by the Head of the Department or the course coordinator of a course unit. Theory knowledge of students and their critical skills are tested through papers of 3 hours duration based on Multiple Choice Questions, structured and essay form questions. Practical assessment tests are also held for all practical components at the end of the practical class. The methodology adopted is an assessment of practicals through assignments, spot tests and a written paper based on the practicals. The major summative assessment form is the research project and the in-plant training program. A panel of examiners appointed by the Faculty Board assesses both continuously. Students present the outcome of their research findings at the annual general students' research symposium (AGRES), which provides an open forum for students of all Faculties. A panel of judges comprising of academics and research scientists from outside institutions evaluate their research findings. The research papers are published in the proceedings of the symposium jointly by the students and their supervisors. The publication is made available at the commencement of the symposium. There is strong evidence for maximum participation of students at all planning stages of this event. The reviewers appreciated this very much as it enhances the development of managerial skills and leadership capabilities of the students in addition to motivating them for research..

The marks allocation for the in-plant training includes maintenance of the diary (40%), report (30%) and the presentation (30%). In the case of the research project, marks are allocated for conduct and performance of the project (40%), research paper (30%), and the paper presentation at AGRES (30%). Credit is the rating of a course unit, which is equivalent to 15 lecture hours and 30 practical hours assigned for a course unit. The marks allocated for courses, which include practicals, will be weighted in proportion to the number of units of practicals and theory in that course, so that two practical units (credits) are equivalent to one unit (credit) of theory. A credit total of 145 are needed to successful completion of the plantation management program. The exact credit distribution among the course units is conveyed to students through the publication on curriculum given to students at the commencement of the study program. The Final Grade Point Average (GPA) is the credit-weighted arithmetic mean of the Grade Point Values. The grades range from A (a grade point of 4.0) to F (a grade point of 0). A student has to obtain at least a D grade to be considered as to have passed in a particular course unit. All course units that a student

has registered for shall be taken into account in calculating the Final Grade Point Average ( FGPA) at the time of awarding the degree.

**JUDGMENT:** Having evaluated the teaching, learning and assessment methods, the reviewers are of the opinion that this component could be rated as **SATISFACTORY**.

#### **4.3 Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements**

Reviewers observed that the quality of students entering the Wayamba University is quite variable. The majority of students came from the Western and the Sabaragamuwa provinces. During the period when Wayamba campus was affiliated to the Rajarata University there had been more students from the Northern, Eastern and North central provinces as well. Meeting with the students indicated that many of them were ambitious and had fairly good English speaking ability.

The offered Plantation Management program was found to be only moderately popular among the students opting for a Degree as only around 20-30% of all registrants selected Plantation Management for their specialization. There is some observable gender imbalance within those specializing in Plantation Management. The reviewers observed more male students specializing in Plantation Management and attributes this imbalance to the higher and strenuous practical component in the program during the 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> years. The failure rates and the drop out rates are very minimal (less than 2%). 4 batches of students have passed out of the Faculty until now but none of them had been able to secure either a first class or second class upper division pass. Around 40 – 50 % students however secured second class lower division passes. Those students who perform well at examinations have the possibility to win a few of the very limited number of special awards available within the Faculty (eg. Nestle gold medal). Employment prospects of past students had been very satisfactory. Many have secured good positions, especially in the plantation sector. The in-plant training brings them in direct contact with the private sector which opens up viable employment avenues for the plantation management students. It was brought to the notice of the Reviewers that one student has been able to patent two methodologies for producing plant pots, bricks and paper out of refused tea dust during his in-plant training. The Head of the Department referred to a similar achievement by a female student in producing cheese spread.

Most of the passed out students however had gone for state employment with the introduction of the Graduate Scheme for the sake of higher job security but unfortunately as a result these young people may not have the opportunity to utilize those special skills and knowledge acquired during the course.

**JUDGMENT:** Having evaluated the quality of students including progress and achievements, the reviewers are of the opinion that this aspect could be rated as **GOOD**.

#### **4.4 The Extent and the Use of Student Feedback; Qualitative and Quantitative**

The review team noted that student evaluation of the courses is done at the end of the course by requesting the students to express their views. The department is also adopting a formal course and teacher evaluation procedure by the students since the year 2005. In this process the teacher distributes a form and obtains the students' feed

back on several aspects such as the organization of the course, stimulation of the interest on the subject, encouragement of discussion, use and the quality of the reference material, punctuality of the teacher, aims and the objective of the course, comprehensiveness and coverage of the syllabus and the quality of the available learning resources.

There is no evidence for analyzing students' feedback qualitatively and quantitatively. It is recommended that such an analysis is carried out by the Head or the Deans' office and the feedback is provided to the teacher after the releasing of the results of the particular course.

Students provide some feedback at the Faculty Board meetings as well. The review team was also informed that the students provide the feedbacks through informal meetings with the teacher.

However, although the students' feedback has highlighted issues such as delay in the release of results, it appears that no action has been taken to rectify the issue, probably due to the constraints related to the few members of the academic staff, available.

Students expressed satisfaction with the action taken to purchase library books even though the number of copies available in the library is not adequate. Students are highly satisfied with the available facilities in the computer unit for teaching and learning activities and effective communication through internet facilities. The review team also commends the facilities available in the computer unit, its excellent management and the enthusiasm and the devotion of the academic and academic support staff managing the unit.

**JUDGMENT:** When the above points are considered the review team is of the view that this aspect could be judged as **GOOD**.

#### **4.5 Postgraduate Studies**

The department has not initiated any postgraduate programmes due to the limited facilities in the faculty. The graduates passing out from this faculty have registered at the Postgraduate Institute of Agriculture for their postgraduate studies.

Among the twenty-one academic staff members in the department, only one member is supervising a M.Sc. research project while another member is involved in a research project leading to his M..Phil. degree. Apart from these, there are no other research activities conducted in the department. The reviewers having observed the on-going research activities in the Research station of the Dept. of Agriculture which is situated on the adjoining land feel strongly that through a strong commitment for post-graduate research and a genuine interest for collaboration with mutual benefits, joint research programs of national relevance leading to post-graduate qualifications should be initiated as early as possible. The Dean of the Faculty and the Head of the Department assured the reviewers that they would consider the suggestion seriously and take necessary steps for implementation as early as possible.

**JUDGMENT:** Considering above facts, the review team is of the opinion that this aspect could be rated as **SATISFACTORY**.

#### 4.6 Peer Observation

It was revealed during the visit that the department is not practicing regular effective peer observation. Some peer observation occurs at the practical sessions as well as during field assignments. However, staff members who have followed the staff development programs, get their lectures observed by the peers on a voluntary basis. The Head of the Department expressed his willingness to give serious consideration to this aspect as early as possible. The reviewers also took into consideration the dearth of human resources to carry out this activity at the Department.

**JUDGEMENT:** Having considered the above facts, the review team is of the view that this aspect could be rated as **SATISFACTORY**.

#### 4.7 Skills Development

The students get opportunities to develop their subject specific skills during the first two years by field practicals, field visits, e-education and some laboratory practicals. During the third and fourth years of their study programs, students get the opportunity to develop their plantation management and technological skills through visits to the major plantation crop research institutes and six months in- plant training in relevant plantation industries/estates or in other relevant organizations. The nine months research project allows students to acquire and enhance their analytical skills, transferable skills and communications skills. The research symposium organized at the end of the research project will further enhance their skills on scientific writing, presentation and organization skills.

In addition to subject specific skills, they gain IT skills through the introduction to different levels of compulsory computer application courses in the curriculum such as, Information Technology, and Advanced Computer Application Programmes using the well-equipped computer laboratory in the faculty.

The students gradually develop their English language proficiency by exposing themselves to various levels of English language courses as compulsory intensive English, Foundation English I and II, English Academic Writing I and II and Business English, which is optional.

In addition to the undergraduate teaching in the faculty, the department is involved in the teaching programmes conducted by the National Institute of Plantation Management (NIPM).

One of the recent achievements in the department is the launching of the joint programme for the award of an external B.Sc. degree in plantation management with NIPM. These two activities allow the development of necessary skills needed for plantation management.

A weakness observed by the reviewers is that the facilities in the laboratories are still in preliminary stages and many equipment for basic teaching are lacking in the department. This need to be addressed as early as possible.

**JUDGEMENT:** Considering the above facts, the review team judges this aspect as **GOOD**.

#### **4.8 Academic Guidance and Counseling**

Two senior student counselors are appointed to the faculty to guide students in academic matters. In addition, course coordinators help students to resolve any academic problems. In addition peer group leaders have been identified among the students who have been trained to identify those who do not perform well in their studies to closely discuss the students' personal problems and report to counselors when serious problems have been identified. The students receive guidance on how to overcome the personal problems, examination fears, and financial difficulties. The department has established a "student scholarship fund" to help those students who face financial difficulties. There is preference given to them when hostels are assigned.

Majoring students are addressed by individual supervisors and the Head of the Department for special guidance when they commence their specialization projects.

However, student counselors have not undergone any form of training on formal counseling, except for the two day workshop conducted by the University Grants Commission. Counselors however have developed some useful links with other help oriented organizations such as "Alokaya" and Family planning organization. Counselors brought to the notice of the review team that they face problems such as lack of suitable space to discuss students' problems and also the availability of very limited funds to conduct counseling related workshops.

**JUDGMENT:** Having considered all aspects of academic guidance and counseling available in the Faculty/Department, the reviewers are of the view that this section could be rated as **SATISFACTORY**.

### **5 CONCLUSIONS:**

The good practices, weaknesses and judgment of each aspect considered in the subject review could be summarized as follows

#### **5.1. Curriculum Design, Content and Review:**

##### **Good practices**

- Provision of adequate knowledge and skills in plantation management.
- Incorporation of Research project into curriculum provides valuable learning experience in all aspects of research.
- Annual Research Forum is a positive form of motivation for research.
- Intended learning outcomes are identified.
- Contents are adequate in depth

##### **Weaknesses**

- No systematic curriculum revisions
- No flexibility in selection of course modules.

- Employers, alumni and students are not consulted at the department level in designing and revising the curriculum
- Heavy work load (169 credits), (95 credits), and compactness of syllabuses especially during first two years, repetition of course contents in some courses

## **5.2. Teaching, Learning and Assessment Methods**

### **Good Practices**

- Adequate use of hand outs and audio-visuals during the conduction of lectures.
- Good central computer facilities
- Adequate academic guidance in learning procedures
- Sufficient library facilities
- Development of managerial skills of students through AGRES
- In-plant training enhances job-opportunities and practical skills

### **Weaknesses**

- Curtailment of the Intensive English Language program
- Absence of Continuous Assessment Methods

## **5.3. Quality of Students including Student Progress and Achievements**

### **Good Practices**

- Students highly motivated
- Very low failures and drop outs
- High rates of employability

### **Weaknesses**

- Program of study only moderately popular
- No visible efforts to address gender imbalance.
- Lack of distinction at final examinations through good honors passes

## **5.4. Extent and Use of Student Feedback, Qualitative and quantitative**

### **Good practices**

- Introduction of a formal teacher and course evaluation through students
- Good IT facilities

### **Weaknesses**

- Lack of quantitative or qualitative analysis of students' feedback
- Low follow up action on students' feedback

## **5.5. Postgraduate studies**

### **Good Practices**

- Interest for development of collaborative research with other organizations to develop into post graduate qualifications
- Motivation of students for research

**Weaknesses:**

- No Postgraduate programmes have been initiated.
- Academic research activities are in low profile.

**5.6. Peer Observation****Good Practices**

- Interest shown to introduce this practice in a more vibrant manner since 2005.

**Weaknesses:**

- Still practiced at a low profile
- Few staff members have undergone staff development programs

**5.7. Student Skills Development****Good Practices**

- Regular field practicals, field visits and e-education may enable students to develop their academic skills.
- In-plant training and research project give opportunity for students to develop and enhance their management, technological, communication, analytical and transferable skills.
- Students are able develop their IT and English language skills by different levels of relevant courses in the curriculum.

**Weaknesses**

- Departmental laboratories are under developed.

**5.8. Academic Guidance and Counseling****Good Practices**

- Sufficient academics involved in counselling
- Establishment of some links with organizations directly involved in counseling

**Weaknesses**

- None of the counselors have undergone a formal counseling training.

**OVERALL JUDGMENT**

The summary of the 8 aspect judgments are as follows:

A. Curriculum design, content and review:	satisfactory
B. Teaching, learning and assessment methods:	satisfactory
C. Quality of students, including student progress and achievements:	good
D. Extent and use of student feedback:	good
E. Postgraduate studies:	satisfactory
F. Peer observation:	satisfactory
G. Student skills development:	good
H. Academic guidance and counseling:	good

**Overall Judgment - *Suspended***



## **6. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- i. Restructuring and reallocation of curriculum and course materials.
- ii. Establishment of curriculum committee with stake holder participation.
- iii. Incorporation of continuous assessment methodologies
- iv. More organized peer observation
- v. Introduction of computer assisted learning.
- vi. Establishment of collaborative research links with research institutions, initiate postgraduate programs by research, establish institutional mechanisms for research.
- vii. Strengthen links to career guidance unit.
- viii. Improve laboratory facilities.
- ix. All existing cadre positions to be filled, specially the vacancy for technical officer
- x. Improve academic guidance and counseling.
- xi. Introduce more student centered teaching activities.

## **7. ANNEXURES**

**ANNEXE: 1****AGENDA****Day 1 : 23<sup>rd</sup> January 2006 (Monday)**

09.00 a. m –09.30 a.m.–	Welcome meeting with the Dean and Head of Department
09.30 a. m –10.00 a.m.–	Discuss the agenda of the review
10.00 a. m –10.30 a.m.–	Tea Break
10.30 a. m –11.30 a.m.–	Department Presentation of the Self Evaluation Report and Meeting with Department Academic Staff
11.30 a. m –12.30 p.m.–	Discussion
12.30 p. m –01.30 p.m.–	Lunch Break
01.30 p. m –02.45 p.m.–	Observation of Department Facilities
02.45 p. m –03.45 p.m.–	Observe Teaching a Practical Class Group II (Principles of Soil Science at Soil Science Laboratory)
03.45 p. m –05.00 p.m.–	Meeting with students
05.00 p. m –06.00 p.m.–	Brief meeting of Reviewers

**Day 2: 24<sup>th</sup> January 2006 (Tuesday)**

09.00 a. m –10.00 a.m.–	Observe Teaching a Tutorial Class (Estate & Financial Management at Magnolia Hall)
10.00 a. m –10.30 a.m.–	Tea Break
10.30 a. m –11.30 a.m.–	Observe Teaching a class (Principles of Soil Science at Hall No. 01)
11.30 a. m –12.30 a.m.–	Observe Documents
12.30 p. m –01.30 p.m.–	Lunch Break
01.30 p. m –02.45 p.m.–	Meeting with Academic Support, Technical and Other Non-Academic Staff
02.45 p. m –03.45 p.m.–	Observe Teaching a Practical Class Group III (Principles of Soil Science at Soil Science Laboratory)
03.45 p. m –04.45 p. m -	Observing other facilities (Library, Computer Service Unit, Field etc.
04.45 p. m –05.15 p. m -	Brief meeting of Reviewers

**Day 3: 25<sup>th</sup> January 2006 (Wednesday)**

09.00 a. m –09.45 a.m.–	Academic Guidance and Counseling Core Aspect Meeting
09.45 a. m –10.15 a.m.–	Tea Break
10.15 a. m –10.45 a.m.–	Observe Teaching a class (Principles of Crop Physiology at Hall No. 01)
10.45 a. m –11.15 a.m.–	Reviewers Private Discussion
11.15 a. m –12.15 p.m.–	Meeting with Head and Staff for Reporting
12.15 p. m –01.15 p.m.–	Lunch Break
01.15 p. m –05.00 p.m.–	Report Writing

**ANNEXE: 2**

## LIST OF DOCUMENTS

Past question papers – moderated & scrutinized

Marks / result sheets

Prospectus: Wayamba Campus, Rajarata University  
Interim syllabus 3<sup>rd</sup> Year course  
Interim syllabus  
Wayamba University

Research: AGRES Proceeding - 2001  
AGRES Proceeding - 2002  
AGRES Proceeding - 2003  
AGRES Proceeding - 2004  
AGRES Proceeding – 2005  
Student's Research Proposals  
Cashew Research Proposal  
Characterization  
Cashew cultivars

Outreach programme: NIPM National Diploma in Plantation Management- Agric science component  
NIPM- Planter Trainees  
Induction course  
B.Sc. in Plantation Management (External)  
Year 1 Semester 1-7 modules  
Tea exhibition

Student orientation programme - handouts  
- Brochures  
- curriculum

Corporate plan

Inaugural convocation

Students feed back / teacher evaluation - Dr. T.M.C.P. Gunsekara 04 files  
- Dr. M.N.D. Fernandopulle 01  
- Prof. N.E.M. Jayasekara 01  
- Mr. H.A.W.S.Gunathilaka 01  
- Mr. K.G.M.C.P.B. Gajanayake 01  
- Mr. D.C. Abesinghe 01

Module feed back - Dr. Fernandopulle 01

Students feed back on evaluation

Assignments - Marketing Plantation Crop Products - 05  
- Export Agricultural Crops  
- Agro forestry

