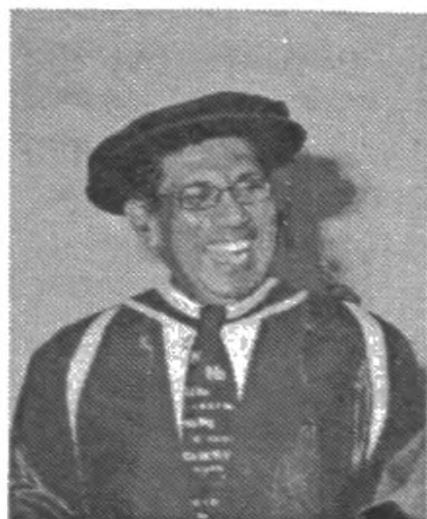


Report of the Honorary Dean/CCS

A Right Royal Celebration to herald the passing out of the highest ever number of Graduate Chemists (as the Silver Jubilee Batch) and DLTC Diplomates.

Professor J N Oleap Fernando, *C Chem; C. Sci.*,
Honorary Dean/ College of Chemical Sciences



It is with a deep sense of accomplishment and satisfaction that I present to you the report of our progress since the third Convocation held on 9th February 2007.

On this joyous occasion we are indeed happy & privileged to have in our midst a representative from our sister body in the

UK-the Royal Society of Chemistry (RSC)-as Chief Guest at this historic Convocation. Mr. Stanley Langer, the International Affairs Officer of the RSC has been to Sri Lanka several times and is well aware of our activities. RSC has been assisting our Graduateship programme in numerous ways from its inception; our examination papers are moderated & answer scripts are re-examined by academics from the UK under the co-ordination of the Registrar of the RSC. The RSC was one of the earliest organizations to recognize our Graduate Chemists by accepting our Graduateship qualification as an exempting qualification for admission to the corresponding grade of membership in the RSC. Thank you very much, Mr. Langer, for your presence & the Convocation Address that you delivered this morning.

S.Thomas' College Mt. Lavinia came to our rescue in the early eighties by providing a suitable venue to conduct our Graduateship Programme in Chemistry and in particular the practical component. The entire programme was conducted there for 25 years until we built & equipped Adamantane House at Rajagiriya in 2005. Without that assistance, we would have found it extremely difficult, if not impossible, to continue with the Graduateship Programme and graduate even the first batch. Therefore we are deeply thankful to S. Thomas' College for coming to our rescue at a very crucial time and we are happy to acknowledge our gratitude by having her present Warden, Dr David Ponniah, as Guest of Honour to share in our happiness as our Silver Jubilee batch ceremonially passed out this morning Thank you very much, Dr Ponniah, for your kind presence & the silver jubilee Greetings extended to us today.

Lack of adequate space to cater to the very large numbers of students who have enrolled for both the Graduateship & DLTC Programmes at Adamantane House have compelled us to continue conducting some lectures and practical classes at our Mt. Lavinia Campus at S.Thomas' College premises at Mt. Lavinia.

The need will become even more acute when, very soon, we commence building operations for the essential extensions to Adamantane House perhaps necessitating the shift of some more classes to Mt. Lavinia while the operations continue. We are thankful to Dr Ponniah for kindly agreeing to tolerate us for a further period until our space requirements are hopefully met after the extensions are completed.

25th output of Graduate Chemists.

The coming of age of the College of Chemical Sciences with the silver jubilee output has been coincidentally accompanied by the best ever results in our history! The largest number ever of 52 Graduate Chemists including 7 first classes, 15 second uppers, 7 second lowers and 7 third classes have been produced. While we continue our journey as the largest single producer of Graduate Chemists in Sri Lanka, our average annual output over the past 6 years has increased to 37. When the third cycle of our development that commenced in 2005 (with our shift to Adamantane House and a revised course structure & course content) results in the passing out of the 27th batch in 2009, we anticipate that this average annual output will reach 45. I am happy to report that we are now experiencing lower attrition rates with Adamantane House occupied and used by increasing numbers of students throughout the week. We now experience a University type of atmosphere at Adamantane House!

New Graduateship Programmes: 2007/2011 and 2008/2012

The 2007 Graduateship Programme at Colombo commenced last September with an enrollment reduced to 85 due to the postponement of GCE (A/L) Examination to August. However we decided to advance the 2008 enrollment from September 2008 to March 2008 in order to enable students who have just received the results of the A/L Examination to join us without undue delay. Appropriate arrangements are being made to consequently service two groups of overlapping first year (Level 1) students during 2008. The consequent result would be that we will be producing eight batches over the seven calendar year period 2005 to 2011. The Graduateship Programme conducted at the Kingswood College Campus in Kandy commenced in January 2008. It has now been decided for various reasons to enroll a batch at Kandy every year rather than in alternate years but transfer the students to Adamantane House for the subsequent three years.

Commencement of Research/Project Work as part of the Graduateship Programme

I am also happy to report that with the opening of the HD Gunawardhana Instrument Centre in November 2006, 9 students who are graduating today exercised the option to undertake research /study projects in lieu of a written paper. We are satisfied with the progress in this regard in the very first year of operation of this course. A very welcome research culture is thus being developed in the College and increasing numbers of students are being encouraged to exercise this option: The first CCS Research Session that is being held tomorrow will enable the research findings of some of our students to be formally presented publicly.

Diploma in Laboratory Technology Programme

The 33rd batch of DLTC diplomates who were admitted to Adamantane House in November 2005 and had their entire programme administered and conducted entirely by us from that time onwards has passed out ; thus a record number of DLTC diplomates received their awards today exceeding the previous highest of 34 in 2002.

Licentiate Chemists

For the first time in our Graduateship Programme, provision has been made to enable students to exit the programme after the 2nd or 3rd years of study with an Advanced Diploma in Chemistry or Licentiate Chemist designation respectively. The five Licentiate Chemists who received their medals and certificates today represent the first set of students who were able to exercise this option. However, the Examination Regulations permit those who exit the programme in this manner to re-join the programme and continue upwards if they so desire. We would encourage them to do so.

Practical Courses

Throughout the past three decades during which the Graduateship Programme was conducted, we have always been able to conduct and complete lecture programmes and the relevant theory examinations even before the expected schedule. However the increasing number of students prevented the commencement of practicals for most students before their third year of study. However with the availability of more laboratory space at Adamantane House, we were able to minimize this delay so that the 26th batch who are passing out later this year (2008) have even completed all their practical examinations at the end of their third year in 2007.

Laboratory space available at Adamantane House now enables practical classes to be conducted even on week-days. Despite student numbers increasing very rapidly since our shift to Adamantane House, we were able to provide practical classes to many students in their second year (level 2) last year. We have gone

one step further this year and have now been able, to use the laboratory space available at Mt. Lavana to provide a revised practical programme for a large number of level 1 students as well in the current year. Early completion of practical classes in this manner also has the concurrent salutary ability to give students more time to pursue the research / study project in their final year.

Recruitment of full-time academic staff to the College

We have been able to recruit one more full time academic (Dr Vinitha Thadhani) to our CCS staff during the course of the past year. Consequently we now have two full time academics, the other being Dr. Sisira Weliwegamage, who has completed three years with us. Prof. S. Sotheeswaran, the Visiting Professor of Organic Chemistry, continues to be with us full time but for only part of the year. In order to provide an even better service to our students, we must recruit more full time academic staff to the College. We now have attractive CCS salary scales which have been recently formulated and publicised. We look forward to the recruitment of more academic staff in the near future and in particular wish to invite University academics on sabbatical leave to join us.

Meanwhile, we have taken steps to recruit as many as seven Teaching Assistants to support the conduct of academic work such as practical classes and tutorials. This includes five of our graduate chemists.

Recognition by Northumbria University in the UK

Northumbria University (in Newcastle on Tyne, UK) considered the course content and course structure based on our revised structure and have decided to accept the two year Advanced Diploma in Chemistry awarded by the College as adequate to proceed to Northumbria to carry out one more year's study there and obtain a B. Sc Honours Degree in Applied Chemistry, which programme usually requires three years of study there. The formal letter of recognition was handed over to the College authorities by their International Project Manager recently.

This recognition is the very first opportunity through which a two year successful pursuit of our Advanced Diploma (which is midway in our Graduateship Programme) is formally accepted in lieu of the first two years of study in a UK university to obtain a three year B.Sc Honours degree. The consequential economical advantage of obtaining a UK degree after one more year's study there is quite apparent and this option is now available to our students.

Silver Jubilee Raffle

A very successful Silver Jubilee Raffle was conducted in order to collect funds for the Graduate Chemist Silver Jubilee fund. A sum of about Rs three million has accrued to the fund as a result. Nearly 100

prizes were awarded on the results of the raffle that was drawn during the Christmas party held on 21-12-07. This fund has been established to award more prizes, scholarships & bursaries as well as fund various celebratory events in 2008 connected with the passing out of the 25th batch of Graduate Chemists.

Lecture by Graduate Chemist

Mr. S.J Sarathkumara (Senior Product Development Chemist: Nova Pharmaceutical Australia Pvt. Ltd) who was one of the four Graduate Chemists to pass out from our first batch in 1984 and was also the first Graduate Chemist to obtain a M.Phil degree as well as the Kandiah Memorial Award for postgraduate research, delivered a public lecture on "Brief Over-view of the Pharmaceutical Industry and its Relevance to Sri Lanka" on 22nd December at Adamantane House.

Training seminars / courses organised by the College

1. A training seminar on "Solid Waste Management" was held at Galle Face Hotel on 13th June 2007.
2. A two day course on "Sustainable Use of Water Resources in Sri Lanka" was held at Adamantane House on September 20 & 21 2007 (this was conducted for and on behalf of the College of Past Presidents & Board of Trustees).
3. A training seminar on "Lipids and your Health" was held at Adamantane House on January 18th 2008.

Extra Curricular Activities

We are pleased to note that our College students are increasingly getting involved in many activities outside the formal Curriculum. These include the Annual Christmas Party of the Institute, Navarathree Programme, Sports Day and Fresher's Day. A Musical Show "An Evening of De Lazzma 2007" was held on December 14th 2007 at Maris Stella Indoor Stadium, Negombo to collect funds for such activities and other social action work.

The College also organized a Debating Competition amongst students at various levels on 9th and 16th December 2007. This initial endeavour proved to be a resounding success and enabled our students to portray their debating skills publicly. The College team that has been identified as a result of that competition will meet similar teams following special Chemistry programmes in the Universities of Colombo, Peradeniya, Kelaniya and Ruhuna very shortly. Valuable prizes will be awarded to the winners.

Conclusion & Acknowledgement

I wish to acknowledge with grateful thanks the receipt of a number of Scholarships & Prizes that have been donated over the years at all levels for our Graduateship Programme. There are more prizes that are still available for donation/endowment particularly on account of the increase in the number of optional

courses now being offered at Levels 3 & 4 under the revised Course structure; we welcome offers for those prizes as well. Meanwhile, in the absence of a specific donor, the College will donate a nominal prize for every theory course that we conduct at every level.

Today is indeed another red letter day in the history of our College. Nobody, I am confident to say, would ever have imagined in 1979, when we started this programme, that three decades later we would be passing out such a large number of Graduate Chemists out of a purely indigenous effort devoid of any direct support from the state; a Convocation of this type would have not been even in the distant horizon! We are therefore extremely proud of this great achievement by our professional body of Chartered Chemists of Sri Lanka. **Our successful efforts in these directions and similar activities by other bodies & organisations have to be an eye-opener for planners, bureaucrats and politicians to take a serious & pragmatic look at Sri Lanka's human resource development potentials and recognize that any worthwhile expansion of personnel qualified at a tertiary level can only come through efforts such as ours outside the regimented and highly politicised state sector.**

What is also very significant and satisfying is that a very large number of our Graduate Chemists are increasingly pursuing post-graduate programmes both locally and abroad and doing so very well. However, I cannot but fail to indicate that we have not had adequate help & assistance towards the work of the Institute of Chemistry Ceylon from many of our past Alumni. Our Graduate Chemists now number 519 & represent almost half the membership of the Institute. It is high time that more of our Graduate Chemists begin to recognize that the Institute & the College are their academic parents since the future progress and sustainability of both the Institute and the College will have to increasingly depend on their support. Our Graduate Chemists should consider it a pride, duty & obligation to take on the positions of office-bearers of the Institute.

They should also increasingly take on the academic administration of the College activities. With increasing outputs of Laboratory Technology Diplomates, it is perhaps time that they too involved themselves more with the work of the Institute particularly since a new grade of Technician membership has once again been made available to them.

I must take this opportunity to thank the large number of persons, many of whom are our own members, who continue to support the work of the College as academics, examiners and teaching assistants, whether full-time or visiting and also provide financial support as & when the need arises. Their continued support together with the very ready help and cooperation we get from the entire staff of the Institute and College will no doubt enable us to go forward with even greater strength and vigour!