

Geoweek 2021: In-line with the 25th Anniversary of the Faculty of Geomatics-Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka



The Faculty of Geomatics (FOG) is one of the eight faculties of the Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (SUSL) and was established in the year 2004. It is the successor to the Department of Surveying Sciences, which introduced the Bachelor of Science (Surveying Sciences) Degree Program in 1997. This was the first time in the history of the University system in Sri Lanka, that a degree program in this scientific discipline was introduced by a University, fulfilling a much felt need of the country. The Degree Program is a four-year course leading to an honors degree in Surveying Sciences, subsequently becoming the first such degree awarded in Sri Lanka.

Presently, the Faculty consists of two departments; (i) Department of Surveying and Geodesy (SUGEO), and (ii) Department of Remote Sensing and GIS (RSGIS), and offer five areas of specialisation as (i) Surveying and Geodesy, (ii) Hydrographic Surveying, (iii) Land Management, (iv) Remote Sensing, and (v) Geographic Information System. There is a high demand for our Graduates in the government and private sector in Sri Lanka, as well as overseas, and we are proud to state that the employment rate among the past Graduates are almost 100%.

The vision of the FOG is to be the Centre of Excellence for teaching, training, research and application of Geomatic Sciences for the sustainable development of Sri Lanka.

International Accreditations

The degree program offered by the Faculty of Geomatics is accredited by the Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors (RICS) from 2014. Additionally, the specialisation degree in Hydrographic Surveying has also been recognised by the International Board on Standards of Competence (IBSC) for Hydrographic Surveyors and Nautical Cartographers in Category B level (FIG/IHO/ICA-CatB) as of 2015. Moreover, the faculty is an Academic member of the International Federation of Surveyors (FIG) since 2015.

Launch of the 25th Anniversary

The FOG will be celebrating its 25th birthday on November 27, 2022, and we are planning to have a year-long line of activities to commemorate. To start off the event, we will be launching Geoweeek 2021, the first of its kind, on November 29, 2021.

Our activities for the Geoweeek 2021 will kick-start by introducing the Journal of Geospatial Surveying (JGS) to the sScientific and Industrial Community, another first in Geomatics in Sri Lanka. JGS is a peer-reviewed journal that publishes Scientific Research and Technical dDevelopments in the field of Geoinfomatics and Surveying, with the goal of providing a forum for Sri Lankan and international scholars to publish high-quality articles on current issues in the field. The FOG is a proud partner of LBS2ITS – Curricular Enrichment delivered through the Application of Location-based Services to Intelligent Transport Systems – co-founded by the Erasmus+ Program of the European Union, which is based on a consortium of three EU and four Sri Lankan Universities. It will build a fully immersive and integrated LBS teaching and learning experience applied to smart transportation systems. The expectation is for an innovative digital learning environment supporting synthetic and real-world learning experiences. With LBS2ITS, the FOG will have access to a smart classroom and physical resources like additional GNSS receivers. Hence, we will be opening our Position and Navigation Lab so that it is accessible for Students and Researchers alike.

We have always been maintaining good relationships with the industry, and Sri Lanka's first Virtual Trade Exhibition in Geospatial Industry, lasting three days, will becommencing under the banner of Geoweeek 2021. The objective of this venture is to get all professionals who are directly and indirectly involved in Geospatial science, under one roof, to showcase their latest products and technologies. We believe that the benefits would be immense, not only for Professionals but for the public as well. During our entire program, we will be having slots for industry-related talks and updates.

We will then open up Geoweeek 2021 to our stakeholders with a series of panel discussions on topical themes, the first of which will be "Technology and Surveying: Will the Surveyor Become Extinct?". With the introduction of robotic instruments, UAVs, and other technologically advanced data collection methods, many feel that the profession 'surveyor' is becoming redundant. As the leading Academic Institution having access to these cutting-edge technologies, we are ready to answer this question scientifically, without undue speculation. Geotalk will be our second discussion, where we are having a session with invitees from Asia, Europe, Australasia and key stakeholders from Sri Lanka.

This forum is for discussing common global and regional issues, and learning from each other through experience and best practices. There are many Academics, Professionals and Institutions in Sri Lanka, who are using different Geospatial tools. We believe that by opening up a forum for everyone engaged in this versatile industry, it will be the starting point of building strong, inter-collaborations. Thus, our third and final session will be "TheMeeting Point: We, Geospatial People". We will gather the Academia and the industry together, under one umbrella for this discussion.

The research component of Geoweeek 2021 is running under the banner of International Conference of Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka (ICSUSL) 2021, and will consist of four

sessions, namely; (i) GIS and Mapping, (ii) Air and Ground Based Imaging for Earth Observations, (iii) Positioning and Navigation and (iv) Space Borne Imaging for Urban and Rural Environments. International Researchers and Academics are being invited as plenary speakers for each of the four sessions, and there will be a number of key note speakers invited by the organising committee of the ICSUSL 2021. The FOG, under Geoweeek 2021, will be collaborating with the international and local partners in the industry to hold workshops to enhance the knowledge of the user community.

Key People Involved

Geoweeek 2021 is the brain-child of PGV Abeyratne, Dean - Faculty of Geomatics and Dr. G.S.N. Perera, Dr. Ranmalee.Bandara and Dr. P.G.R.N.I. Pussella took the joint responsibility of making it a success. Within a few days, the challenge was taken up by both the students and staff alike.

In fact, the logo for Geoweeek 2021 was designed by Hasitha Bandara, a fourth year undergraduate of the FOG, who is also the winner of the logo design competition.

This event is sponsored by the industrial leaders in the Geospatial sector, and other related industries.

Geoweeek 2021, launched to commemorate the 25th anniversary of the Faculty of Geomatics, will be the first stepping stone of an annual event that will gather the academia, the industry and the public under one domain.