

US Road Show at the Hilton

American University Exhibition a huge success

by **Rochelle Palipane Gunaratne**

Crowds thronged to the first ever United States Embassy-supported American University Exhibition, which took place on September 5 and 6 at the Hilton Colombo.

The stalls consisted of American representatives from 22 universities and institutes of higher education across the US.

The exhibition provided ample opportunity for prospective students and their parents to obtain a wealth of knowledge regarding university

admissions, financial aid/scholarships, student visa procedures and the rudiments of living and studying in America.

The purpose of organizing the American University and Road Show was attributed to the ever increasing number of students applying for studies in America; "US universities are showing an unprecedented interest in students from Sri Lanka," said Ambassador Robert O'Blake, who insisted that the anxiety surrounding student visas was irrelevant as a *bone fide* student, having the necessary credits and financial stability, will not be rejected.



Education Minister Susil Premjayanth addresses the exhibition's launching ceremony, on his left Deputy Celyinco Education Group Upali Vitharana, US Ambassador Robert O Blake, and Dr Punarjeeva Karunanayake, CEO of ANCL Holdings.

The event was the largest, gratis opportunity for the public to learn about higher education in the US, directly from universities, US Embassy staff and qualified education advisors from the Fulbright Commission.

Ambassador Robert O'Blake said that the success of this initial venture will pave the way for an annual exhibition which is clearly a silver lining for students opting for the completion of higher studies overseas specifically the US, as it

remains the number one destination for foreign studies globally, and equally famed for its excellent education system.

A visa consul from the American Embassy said that the misconceptions with regard to student visas are irrelevant; "the students need to be accepted by an American University, show financial strength and prove his/her bona fide quality in order to make the process easier." He also went on to say that American Embassy officials hold seminars regularly at the Fulbright Commission, regarding visa procedures for the benefit of prospective applicants.

The United States has over 4000 institutions of higher learning offering more than 900 programmes of study. The American University Exhibition and Road Show was hosted in conjunction with ANC Education Holdings in order to promote the diversity and availability of an American higher education to all qualified Sri Lankan students.



Ambassador Blake lights the traditional oil lamp



Ambassador Blake clarifies a point to a visitor



Minister Premjayanth visits the Western Reserve University stall



Leighton Meester
Gossip Girl scene-stealer Leighton Meester got her fashion on this season, attending everything from the Calvin Klein 40th Anniversary party to the Prada film premiere. At Julie Haus, Meester wore a bright chiffon dress from the designer (right), then kept up the theme for DVF in saffron ruffles (far left). Later in the week, the fashionista hosted a Kira Plastinina party in a menswear-inspired look (center) from the young Russian designer.



Becki Newton
Ugly Betty beauty Becki Newton is clearly as style-obsessed as her character—making the scene at the Intermix anniversary party in Alexander Wang (far left), the Dolce & Gabbana book signing (right) and the Marc Jacobs after-party (center). At the latter two events, the petite star showed off her shape in fashion-forward numbers from her hosts' collections.



Emma Roberts
Nancy Drew leading lady Emma Roberts showed a sophisticated grasp of style in a needlepoint-embellished dress from Ruffian (right), at the Intermix party, a sweet Charlotte Ronson ensemble (center) for the designer's show and a pumpkin-hued tunic over jeans (far left) at the Kira Plastinina party.



Molly Sims
Las Vegas star Molly Sims had a winning formula for fashion week: drop-dead dress paired with a cute clutch. Sims hit the Julie Haus show in a bright yellow number from the designer (far left), added a Tod's clutch to her La Perla dress for a Saks Fifth Avenue affair (center) and then accented her Fashion Rocks frock with a shell-shaped silver bag (right).



zoe Saldana
Star Trek star Zoe Saldana got a leg up on Fashion Week in stem-baring styles from New York's finest designers. The actress wore a ruffled sapphire dress (far left) to Lela Rose, then swung by the Diane von Furstenberg show in a mini-tiered frock (center). At the Dolce & Gabbana book signing, Saldana kept her legs in focus in baggy Bermudas and a tailored vest.

Fashion Week's It Girls



Nicole Richie
Super stylish Nicole Richie show-hopped in leg-baring outfits accessorized with the same pair of strappy velvet Pierre Hardy sandals. Richie wore a cobalt and black DKNY ensemble (center) for the line's 20th anniversary show and then used a plain white tank as a base for her Day 4 jaunt from Proenza Schouler (right) to Marc Jacobs (far left).