



NSU NEWS

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North South University

Center of Excellence in Higher Education

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With the pandemic showing no signs of ceasing, the NSU community has braced itself for another online semester. This Fall, freshmen were initiated into their university life through a comprehensive online orientation program. Mr. Md. Tazul Islam, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, was present as the Chief Guest of the Orientation. The Honorable Chair of the Board of Trustees, Mr. M.A. Kashem, graced the Orientation as the esteemed Special Guest. They both spoke of NSU's significant contributions at the national and international levels and invited the freshers to begin making their own contributions.

NSU continues to seek ways to overcome the current difficulties and help in any way it can. This semester, the NSU Authority has extended a generous pandemic tuition fee waiver to all students while granting full-tuition waivers to students whose families have been hit the hardest. NSU's unprecedented series of measures to ensure that education remains uninterrupted during such harrowing times recalls the ongoing pioneering spirit that set the foundations for this university 28 years ago. Today, now among the best universities in Asia, NSU continues to take care of its community. We laud the NSU Authority for their generosity.

Mr. M.A. Kashem, one of the pioneers of this university, has been tirelessly working as the BOT Chairman during these trying times. In this issue, we take a closer look at his visions and dreams for the university. He shares his aspirations for NSU, both short and long-term.

We are honored and excited to be once again guided by such an experienced visionary. This issue also features an interview with Professor Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, the newly appointed Dean of the School of Business and Economics. We hear from him his experience watching the transformation of NSU.

NSU has been steadily adapting to the virtual space while engaging the community between orientations, webinars, and other academic events. H.E. Mr. Naiko Ito, the Japanese Ambassador to Bangladesh, joined in a webinar organized by NSU's Office of External Affairs; political stalwarts and thinkers joined the Vice-Chancellor in a discourse on the U.S. presidential debate, and a scholarly panel discussed the effect on SDGs of the ongoing pandemic. The community commemorated Mental Health Day and came together to spend an evening discussing poetry with a poet from "across the seven seas."

This issue of NSU News brings all this news and more as we continue "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield."

Stay home, stay safe.

-Editor



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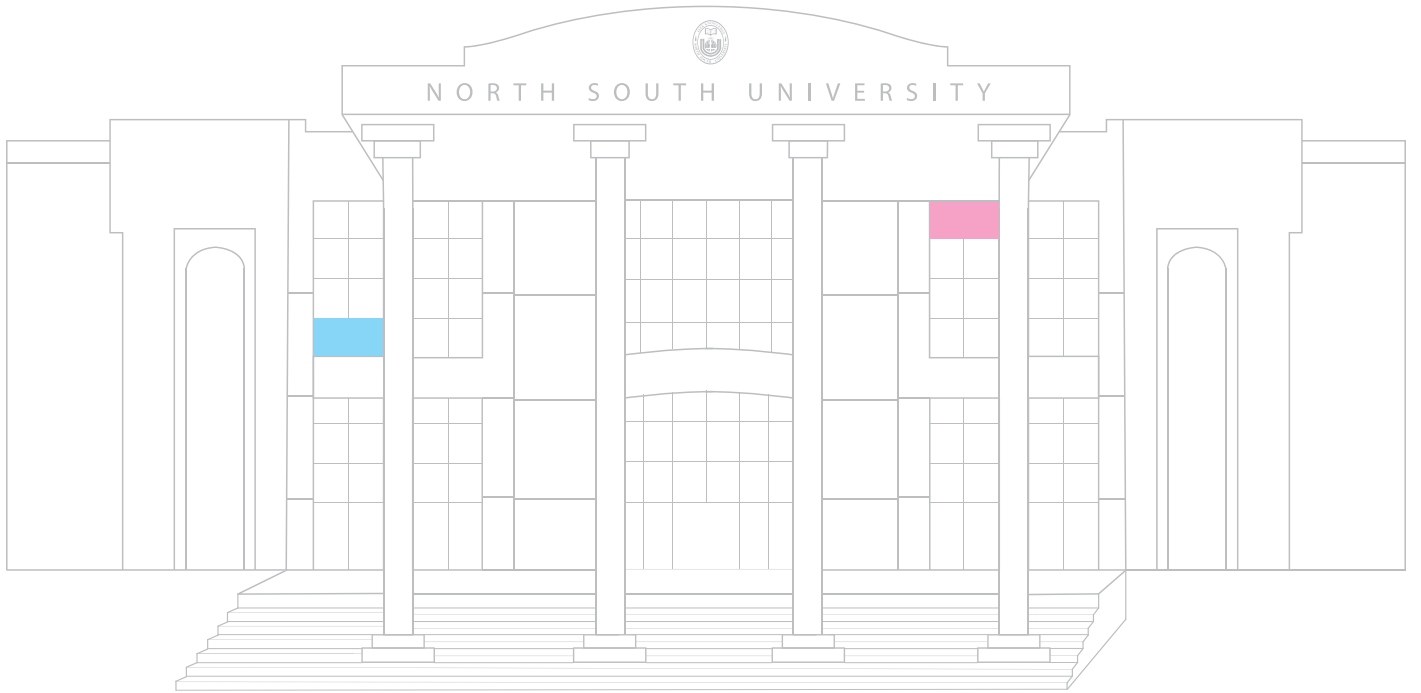


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Father of the Nation



North South University
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

Fall 2020 Orientation Held Online



Mr. Md. Tazul Islam, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chair, BOT, Mr. Benajir Ahmed, Member, BOT, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, along with other dignitaries at the Fall 2020 Orientation.

The Orientation Program for Fall Semester 2020 for new students was held on October 27. Given the pandemic situation and WHO protocols, a fully online orientation program was held. This event, held each semester, is a big event for the freshers of NSU. The online infrastructure did not seriously hamper the elegance and dazzle of the orientation program, and this time it was better organized than ever.

The online Orientation Program focused on introducing the freshers to the culture of NSU as well as an approach to study here, where they will be trained to become future leaders in their professions. It also focused on developing senses of belonging, diversity, and inclusivity, as well as presenting information to

assist students in transitioning and adjusting to university life in the COVID-19 era.

Mr. Md. Tazul Islam, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Local Government, Rural Development and Cooperatives, was present as the Chief Guest at the Orientation. Honorable Lifetime Member and Chair of the NSU Board of Trustees, Mr. M.A. Kashem graced the Orientation as the esteemed Special Guest. Mr. Kashem gave an intense motivational speech for NSU's latest incoming class. He said that "all students of NSU are making significant contributions in their respective fields. They are participating in decision-making processes at the national and international levels. Be it financial, political, environmental or any other sector, the students

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The Way Forward: The Vision of Mr. M. A. Kashem



In the presence of Mr. Obaidul Quader, MP, Honorable Minister, Ministry of Road Transport and Bridges, Mr. Nasrul Hamid, MP, Honorable State Minister, Ministry of Power, Energy and Mineral Resources and other esteemed dignitaries, Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chair, BOT, receiving a token of appreciation from Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU.

Introduction

Immediately after he assumed office as Chair of the Board of Trustees of North South University on July 1, 2020, Mr. M. A. Kashem, an accomplished industrialist and business leader, held online meetings with the faculty members of each academic department to exchange views and share ideas.

The first of the string of meetings took place on July 6 and the last was on October 6. In these meetings, Mr. Kashem talked about the way NSU was founded, his ideas of a university, the interpersonal relations that he would like to see on and outside campus, and the future growth of the university. Serious academic issues were interspersed with

amusing and delightful exchanges when he mentioned the rich and varied experiences of his long life that he has gathered while working in Bangladesh and foreign countries. He emphatically pointed out some actions that each department should pursue to bring qualitative changes to the future development of the university.

Some common themes were present in all the meetings held with 16 different departments. These are detailed here to acquaint the readers with the views of Mr. Kashem, one of the pioneers of private university education in the country.

Founding of NSU

Mr. Kashem, in association

with a group of businessmen, philanthropists, educationists, and bureaucrats, pioneered the establishment of private universities in Bangladesh. The founding of North South University was not an easy task. Mr. Kashem approached approximately 100 people for funds but only 16 of them responded. A major hurdle was the absence of an act dealing with the establishment of universities in the private sector. They succeeded in getting the Private University Act 1991 passed in the Parliament through lobbying the Members of Parliament. Initially, uncertainty shrouded the future of North South University, including uncertainty about the ability to pay faculty members, but strict financial discipline, high academic standards, and the capacity and willingness to take the university forward helped to overcome this and to sustain the long-term growth of the university.

Motivation for Founding a Private University

The private sector has always played an important role in providing education at the primary, secondary, and college levels in Bangladesh. University education had traditionally been an affair of the public sector. However, things started to change due to several factors in the late eighties and early nineties. With the liberalization of the Bangladeshi economy, a small but dynamic private sector began to emerge in the industrial and commercial sectors in the early eighties. An acute shortage of skilled manpower to serve the private sector engaged in international business hindered the growth of private sector business. Very few graduates had skills in written or oral communication in English. A large number of students left the country to pursue higher education, causing a drain of scarce foreign exchange resources. A significant proportion

of these students did not return to Bangladesh, causing brain drain. Private sector leaders saw establishing a private university as an opportunity to provide Bangladeshi citizens with requisite skills, combat brain drain, and stem leakages of hard-earned and scarce foreign exchange from the country. Besides, parental anxiety is less for children studying from home than for children studying abroad. It may be noted that parental worries for children living away from home are universal, as is captured in Polonius' advice to his son on the eve of leaving for Paris in Shakespeare's famous drama Hamlet.

The vision of Higher Education in Bangladesh

NSU was modeled on the university education system of the United States of America because of its familiarity with some of the education entrepreneurs and its demonstrated success in making the US economically, scientifically, and technologically the most advanced country in the world. The academic programs at NSU were structured on those prevailing at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, USA. NSU thus became the pioneer in Bangladesh in introducing a four-year undergraduate program in university education. It was only natural to use English as the medium of instruction to create the human resources required by the expanding modern segment of the economy. The university was to become the center of excellence in higher education in Bangladesh by emphasizing teaching excellence. To ensure teaching excellence, three things were emphasized: First, only those with excellent academic backgrounds and terminal degrees in relevant disciplines from North American universities or the equivalent were to be recruited as faculty members. Second, better-

quality students were selected through stringent admission tests. Third, modern physical facilities, a modern library, and well-equipped laboratories and classrooms were also considered essential to quality higher education. Besides, state-of-the-art logistics needed to be provided to the faculty to help conduct classes and carry out research.

Research is considered an essential component of university education at NSU. Both faculty members and students conduct research. Faculty members carry out research either individually or jointly, targeting publications in peer-reviewed journals and conference presentations. Journal publication is a requirement for faculty promotion at all levels, and in many cases, this provides a key motivation for research. Master's students research as part of their degree requirement, and some students' research work gets published in refereed journals as a joint publication with their respective supervisors. Undergraduate students also research some cases as part of their degree requirements, but those cases are less likely to get published. It is worth mentioning that NSU encourages faculty research by providing an extra increment for three years' sustained research productivity. It also provides teaching assistants to reduce their workload and research assistants to assist in conducting research.

Education at NSU is not limited to teaching and research only; NSU also wants its students to learn outside the classrooms and labs. NSU currently sponsors 21 vibrant student clubs covering a variety of interests where students can pursue their passions and interests with other like-minded students. Club activities not only provide students a break from classwork but also equip students with skills such as skills in communication,



Honorable Minister of Education Dr. Dipu Moni, M.P. with Mr. M.A. Kashem, Chairman BOT, NSU.

time management, teamwork, leadership, community work, event organizing, fundraising, planning, and knowledge of ministerial and dignitary protocol to shape their future life and career. The club events are funded by NSU as well as external sponsors. Students learn the art of raising funds for good causes. NSU cultural events in many cases turn into family events where BOT members and their spouses enjoy the performances with faculty members, staff, and students.

NSU knows that world-class facilities and faculty members are not necessarily enough to achieve the goal of becoming the center of excellence in higher education in Bangladesh. Negative distractions can interfere with studies or the peaceful campus environment. The university maintains a strict security system comprised of electronic surveillance as well as security guards to prevent any activities that constitute a violation of NSU's code of conduct such as drug consumption, smoking,

disruption of academic activity, sexual harassment, inciting lawless activity, vandalism, and theft.

Recognition of the Contribution of Faculty Members

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees recognizes the indispensable contribution of the faculty members to the advancement of North South University. NSU grew from 137 students and a few teachers in 1992 to about 25,000 undergraduate and graduate students and about 1,000 faculty members today, in addition to a support staff adequate to provide efficient and effective services. Sixteen departments and one institute offer 23 undergraduate and 14 graduate programs under four schools, the School of Business and Economics, the School of Engineering and Physical Sciences, the School of Life and Health Sciences, and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. NSU is rightfully proud of its 25,000 alumni spread all over the world

who are engaged as successful professionals or pursuing graduate studies at reputed universities. It gives Mr. Kashem immense pleasure to see the success of NSU students in their professions as well as at foreign universities.

Interpersonal Relations at NSU

The Chairman laid great emphasis on the right type of interpersonal behavior one would expect from faculty members. Negative behaviors should be discouraged and positive behavior should be encouraged and practiced. Examples of negative behavior include mocking one's country or university from which an academic degree has been attained, disparaging others based on their gender, religion, or research/teaching area; taking credit for others' work, research fabrication, research experiment sabotage (any form), and vilifying a colleague before colleagues/parents/students. Examples of positive behavior include appreciating good work,

saying encouraging words, collaborating, warmly greeting others, and respecting the opinions of colleagues. Negative behavior hurts others, affects the work environment, and reduces productivity. Positive behavior, on the other hand, pleases colleagues and promotes academic collegiality. Faculty members are expected to have a positive attitude towards colleagues, students, the administration, the institution, and the founders of the institution culminating in a happy family environment at NSU. It is of note he did not conceal his dislike for negative behavior in some departments.

In this context, the Chairman appreciates the good work of faculty members in smoothly conducting online classes during the COVID-19 pandemic and making uninterrupted academic progress of the students possible, and he expresses his desire to invite the faculty members and their families to a dinner event once the pandemic eases.

Future Plans of NSU

The Chairman of the Board of Trustees is elected for one year and hence he can plan activities that can be implemented during his leadership period. Being a visionary, however, Mr. Kashem will not only propose ideas implementable before June 30, 2021 but also, and more

importantly, initiatives that will give the university a new direction in the future. New departments and institutes, new programs in existing departments/institutes, and updating curricula are already in the works.

New Departments and Institutes

In the foreseeable future, NSU expects to establish a Medical Research Institute, a Nursing Institute, a Medical College, and a Hospital at the new Purbachal campus along with residential facilities and a stadium as well as a Department of Media and Communication and a Department

The COVID-19 pandemic has pointed out the need for a strong health sector in every country of the world including Bangladesh. In this context, the introduction of a Master’s Program in Health/Hospital Management in the Department of Public Health in collaboration with the School of Business and Economics and an undergraduate program in Public Health have become important to supply the needed manpower to the health sector.

Television and Radio Station

NSU will need to establish a television station and a radio station where the students and faculty members can participate in different programs. In the future, it will work as a laboratory for the Media and Communication Department.

Research and Publication

The Chairman of the Board was upset to see large sums being spent on laboratories with

few visible results. He laid great emphasis on research in all the meetings. He took great pains to point out the reasons for this new emphasis on research, the type of research to be undertaken, and his strategy for promoting research at NSU.

NSU has traditionally focused on teaching excellence to produce graduates who will be successful in their careers and life. The current BOT Chair envisions NSU now taking the next step to becoming



Mr. M.A. Kashem with delegates from ACBSP.

of Construction Management.

New Programs

NSU is well-positioned to introduce Ph.D. programs in some disciplines that are strong in research and/or have an especially high proportion of Ph.D.-holding faculty members capable of supervising Ph.D. dissertations. An initiative to offer a Ph.D. jointly with foreign universities having an MoU with NSU, such as Manchester University, UK, is a good option.

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Webinar on US Presidential Election 2020 and Asia-US Relations



Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, Professor Dr. Ali Riaz, Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University, USA, along with other dignitaries speaking at the webinar.

The South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) and the Department of Political Science and Sociology (PSS) at North South University held a webinar titled "U.S. Presidential Election 2020 and Asia-U.S. Relations" on October 31.

The webinar began with the welcome speech of Dr. Md. Harisur Rahman, Assistant Professor of the Department of PSS. The panelists of the webinar discussed the U. S. presidential election and the electoral process, the election's impact on Asia-USA relationships, and the future shape of Asia's rising geopolitics.

Dr. Mahbubur Rahman, Associate Professor, discussed the American election. He said

that if any allegations of fraud arise after the election, there might be a possibility of social unrest in the United States. Dr. Ali Riaz, Distinguished Professor at the Department of Politics and Government at Illinois State University, USA, shed light on the U.S.-China relationship. According to him, Asia is now the heart of the global economy. He spoke about how China's emergence as a global superpower is a concern both for Trump and Biden.

Dr. M. Sakhawat Hussain, Senior Fellow of the SIPG, talked about the impact of the U.S. election on South Asian geopolitics. Former Ambassador Munshi Faiz Ahmad said that both Trump and Biden are on

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Interview with Professor Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, Dean, SBE

Professor Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury has been appointed as the Dean of the School of Business and Economics (SBE), North South University (NSU), on October 2020. He previously served as the Vice-Chancellor of Primeasia University from 2017 till 2020 and Pro-Vice-Chancellor of Eastern University from 2014 till 2017. Apart from that, he served as Professor at the SBE of NSU from 2005 till 2014. Dr. Chowdhury has been working in the education sector for more than 32 years. He is an acclaimed academician with huge teaching and research experience and pioneered in academic administration at the leading business schools in both the home and abroad.

NSU News: Where did you pursue your higher education, and when did you first join NSU?

I have completed my Ph.D. in Industrial Engineering from Northeastern University, Boston, USA, in 1999 and MS in Operations Research from Northeastern University, the USA, in 1996. Earlier, I completed a Bachelor of Science and Master of Science in Statistics from Jahangirnagar University in 1986 and 1987, respectively. I joined NSU in 2005 after serving a couple of years in the USA and Canada.

NSU News: What were the challenges that you faced initially after joining NSU? How did you tackle them?

In 2005, there were only about 35 faculty members in the School of Business, most being senior lecturers. When I became the Director of the BBA program a year later, NSU was progressing much in terms of the increasing number of students, generating revenue, and the quality of education. About 80% of our students at the time belonged to the School of Business. All of this was great, but companies were hesitant to hire private university graduates in the marketplace. NSU was known

at the time, but it didn't command the brand value it does today among corporate Bangladesh. So, in order to penetrate the job market and expose our student's talent to the leaders of industries, and prove that our students are no less than the public university counterparts, I took the challenge to place our graduates in the top corporations being the Director of Career and Professional Development Services (CPDS later named as CPC). This provided the much-needed platform for academic-industrial

Under the banner of CPDS, I organized the National Career Fair (NCF) about 8 or 9 times. I changed its name from Job Fair to Career Fair and made a logo for it to develop and market it as a brand. Our objective was to provide services to the students of our country, not just our students, so they become interested in building their careers. The NCF became popular throughout the country and iconic for NSU. An education institution cannot be cloistered and isolated. We had to be courageous



Professor Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury, the Dean of School of Business and Economics, North South University.

engagement we see in developed economies. On campus, we tried to engage our students heavily in extra-curricular initiatives and club activities to allow them to explore their potentials. Many of our students are highly capable and have many unique interests. Within a short span of time, NSU students were able to nurture and showcase their leadership and entrepreneurial superiority.

NSU News: Can you tell us a bit more about Career Services? How did it help to change the perception of private university graduates among companies?

and generous enough to exceed the limits of our perimeters. That is what leadership is about; that is what pioneers do. NSU has always been a place for both.

Shortly after, students were getting responses from the job market and even outperforming many others from top-notch institutions. Hence, NSU graduates were recognized as being distinctive, innovative, and able to work under any kind of pressure. That's how even a small decision can grab a nation's job market.

NSU News: Tell us about your academic programs. How did

NSU's BBA program and other departments achieve their success?

The BBA program of NSU has been heavily following the North American curriculum designed by pioneering faculty members working with universities like the University of Chicago and the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign. So, it attracted students with a strong academic background. We have students from English medium schools and also students from Bengali Medium who are truly good and ready to take on challenges. Our screening process is also rigorous. It is designed to identify students with an analytical frame of mind, sound decision-making and problem-solving capabilities, and those who are articulate and possess other soft skills. We were firm believers in cultivating an open mindset where different ideas can be discussed and brought to the table. That gave NSU SBE students extra skills because our teaching was always designed for giving them opportunities to present things, conduct case studies, improve writing skills, etc. Teachers were also motivating students to meet their expectations.

By this time, interest in NSU was gaining tremendous momentum due to the standard of education, facilities, and training our students were receiving. Of course, we were also generating revenue and reinvesting the surplus for the growth and expansion of the university. This newly built state-of-the-art campus in Bashundhara is a testimony to that. We have a huge capacity now, and since then, our expansion and development have increased a lot. We could attract more students and thus even help other departments to stand out. So, the contribution of the SBE toward other disciplines is enormous. The SBE program has many GED curricular requirements, so it allowed departments like English, Law, Sciences, and Environment to grow as well.

NSU News: NSU happens to have

one of the toughest grading criteria in the country; tell us something about that.

NSU is the first university in the country to introduce a letter grade system (relative grading system) in the correct way. We also tried to instruct all our teachers how to segment the students so that the top few students get an A grade, and so there is a distinctive difference between the last A grade student and the first A- grade student. This works wonders for students as it provides them with a sense of "proportion" and "direction" vis-à-vis their peers. It makes them competitive and open to constructive criticism, and always willing to learn. This grading system is the toughest and is followed by all the world-renowned universities. NSU is following the criteria very efficiently in the implementation stage, aligning all offered courses. Faculty members are engaged in identifying the best students while teaching a class and grouping them into different categories.

NSU News: What has been your experience managing the school?

I was the longest-serving Director of the BBA Program and Director of CPDS and worked as Dean SBE for about three years in NSU. Because I got this opportunity to work at NSU for such a long time, I was able to identify a lot of issues in the process. I am a very process-oriented person and a firm believer that in the input phase, if quality students are taken into the university, then in the output phase, the target, which is to produce good graduates, would be possible. As educators, we need to emphasize on the transformation or conversion phase, which is to align best teaching methods with quality faculty members to teach in class. This conversion phase includes providing good teachers, proper infrastructure, and opportunities beyond the classroom by bringing in guest lecturers, people from corporate, and the industry, and having them provide advice and



valuable insight to students. A business school cannot function as an island but rather functions as a continent.

NSU News: Tell us something about the NSU curriculum. How is NSU maintaining international standards?

The initial NSU curriculum was designed and developed by highly professional faculty members from the USA, and on a regular basis, NSU has been updating its curriculum to meet and address real-world needs. We installed a high-quality outcome-based education (OBE) curriculum in our program, which kept our students under pressure managing things by the deadline and managing stress. Time is the most precious currency for our students. NSU has never had a relaxed system. It has always been tough for the students and faculty members to complete a semester. Since semesters run back to back, it teaches students to handle large volumes of work in a short span of time. It makes them efficient and confident in finishing any assigned duties within the deadline. This is proven in many respects that our academic rigor and overall program pressure are relatively high compared to other institutions in the country. There are not many differences in the academic system or our implementation process of NSU with globally reputed universities.

NSU News: How does NSU prepare its students for the competitive job market?

At NSU, we prepare our students to go beyond curriculum-based

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Faculty Orientation Program at NSU Held Online



Professor Dr. Ismail Hossain, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, NSU, addressing the new faculty members of NSU at a virtual orientation program.

The New Faculty Orientation and Development Program, organized by the Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) at North South University for Fall 2020, took place from October 29 to 31. This time this program was held on Google Meet due to COVID-19. A total of eight departments welcomed their new faculty members in this event.

The inaugural session of the program started with a welcome speech by IQAC Director Professor Dr. Nazmun Nahar. The event was honored by the presence of the Deans from the School of Business and Economics, the School of Engineering and

Physical Sciences, and the School of Humanities and Social Sciences. They all talked about the significance of the program and how programs like these help incoming faculty members get acquainted with their new organization. Professor Dr. Ismail Hossain, the Pro-Vice-Chancellor, added his thoughts about the role of morality in teaching. He shared some very thoughtful insights about teaching and also praised the efforts of the IQAC group for creating this workshop. Normally, this program involves the physical presence of all the new faculty members. They get to walk around the campus

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OEA Hosts Web Seminar on Higher Studies in Japan

North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA), on October 6, held a web seminar in association with the Embassy of Japan in Bangladesh to provide interested students a broader and clearer view about higher study opportunities in Japan. The informative and interactive seminar featured H.E. Naiko Ito, the Japanese Ambassador to the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh, as the Chief Guest and Dr. Katherine Li, the Director of the OEA, as the Session Chair.

Other panel speakers included Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Education Adviser, Embassy of Japan, Dr. Abdul Khaleque, a former student of Kumamoto University Medical School and now Director of the Office of Admissions and Professor of Biochemistry at NSU, and Dr. Murad Hossain, a former student of the Niigata University of Pharmacy and Applied Life Sciences and now Associate Professor in the Department of Pharmaceutical Sciences at NSU. The program was hosted by Ms. Samina Alam Miti, the International Affairs Officer of the OEA.

The event started with warm greetings from Ambassador Naoki Ito to all the speakers, organizers, and audience members. He said, "I hope that we will be able to recruit those promising and capable students to go to Japan

and further strengthen our bilateral partnership. It might be difficult to imagine studying abroad amid this pandemic, but I am sure that there will be plenty of opportunities and wider possibilities for young students once we overcome COVID-19. I would hope that you make the most of the opportunity and make your future career very successful. Please think about studying in Japan after COVID-19." He congratulated Bangladesh for stepping into the 50th year of its diplomatic relationship with Japan in 2021 and mentioned that Japan is offering a great number of scholarships to Bangladeshi students who are interested in studying in Japan on the occasion of the 50th anniversary of Bangladesh. Ambassador Ito hoped this opportunity would improve the strength of the diplomatic relationship between Japan and Bangladesh and increase the interest of Bangladeshi students to pursue higher studies in Japan.

The Session Chair of the event, Dr. Li, also conveyed a warm welcome to the guests and participants and thanked Japan for always being an excellent friend of Bangladesh from the very beginning. Over the last five decades of the Japan-Bangladesh diplomatic relationship, more than 4,200 Bangladeshi students have received higher education from different Japanese universities in various academic fields. Dr. Katherine Li added, "I can speak from my own experience in Japan. If you would like to go to Japan as a student,



H.E. Mr. Naiko Ito, the Japanese Ambassador to the Peoples' Republic of Bangladesh.

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News on US Presidential Election 2020 Cont'd...

the same boat in targeting China's dominance. Dr. Raj Kumar Kothari, a Professor of Political Science from India, discussed the Indo-U.S. relationship and mentioned that even if Joe Biden comes to power, the relation between India and the U.S. will be strengthened because, without India, the expansion of U.S. relations in Asia is not possible. Professor Shahab Enam Khan of Jahangirnagar University said that

Trump took the U.S. away from world policing, and Trump is the first U.S. president elected for the U.S. only, not for the whole world. Mr. Shahidul Haque, Senior Fellow of the SIPG, discussed Biden's foreign policy. He said that Biden will bring about a fundamental change in U.S. foreign relations by drawing on more democratic, humanitarian, and human rights-friendly perspectives.

After the valuable discussions,

Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of North South University and Chair of the event concluded the webinar. Professor Sk. Tawfique M. Haque, Director of the SIPG and Chair of the PSS Department, moderated the webinar. North South University through this event played an active part in discussing international politics.

Fall 2020 Orientation Held Online Cont'd...

of NSU are the market leaders in all. The coronavirus pandemic has affected all sectors largely, including the education sector. However, NSU is continuing all their operations at full throttle and adapting to the new normal."

All the department Chairs were also there presenting their departments via their speeches.

They focused on the research facilities and educational excellence of their respective departments. Deans of different schools, senior officials, teachers, students, and guardians were also present during the online program.

Over one thousand students received the opportunity to enroll in the undergraduate programs of

sixteen departments under four different schools. The top students were awarded scholarships based on the merit of their previous academic excellence. NSU also announced its waiver, which totals 20 percent, including the deduction of activity fees, to all the freshers as well as to all existing students.

OEA Hosts Web Seminar on Higher Studies Cont'd...

there are many opportunities to study, to learn Japanese, and even to get a job. Japan is actively looking for qualified employees in their workforce and they are generous enough to help to train people in learning the language, culture, and skills to make it possible for you to work in Japan."

The two NSU professors present at the event Dr. Abdul Khaleque and Dr. Murad Hossain shared their study experiences and daily life as foreign students in Japan and encouraged students to consider pursuing post-graduate

studies, Ph.D.s, and research at Japanese universities. The latter portion of the event was allocated to scholarship and application information and a question-and-answer session. This session was conducted by Dr. Kaosar Afsana, Education Adviser, Embassy of Japan. She provided general information about scholarship opportunities and application procedures and answered questions from the interested students on these and other topics.

For over five decades, Japan has been providing government

scholarships to more than 4,200 Bangladeshis. In 2019 alone, more than 120 Bangladeshi students received a government-funded scholarship and are now studying in Japan in various academic fields. The scholarship application opens twice a year in mid-April (Embassy recommendation) and October (University recommendation). Many students of NSU are now encouraged to look further into pursuing higher education in Japan.

Factors Causing Disruption in Achieving SDGs in Post-COVID Bangladesh



Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor, NSU, and other dignitaries sharing their insights at the webinar.

In a webinar titled “Build Back Better: How Bangladesh Can Address UN SDGs in a Post-Pandemic World,” the presenters agreed that now is the time to adopt appropriate and long-term strategies to deal with the challenges of achieving the SDGs posed by COVID-19, as the virus has already created enormous difficulties in the health sector as well as increasing poverty and economic and gender inequality. This is why careful consideration has to be taken to avoid a lack of trust between the state and civil society; strong collaborative and combined efforts are needed to tackle these new challenges.

The webinar was jointly organized by the Center for Peace Studies (CPS) of the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG) at NSU and the University of the Sunshine Coast of Australia. The webinar started with a welcome speech by the Adviser of the CPS, Dr. Katherine Li.

The speakers of the webinar also said that it is essential to ensure good institutional governance and to initiate reforms in many sectors to deal with post-COVID-19 challenges in Bangladesh. In this context, Dr. Debapriya Bhattacharya, a Distinguished Fellow of the Center

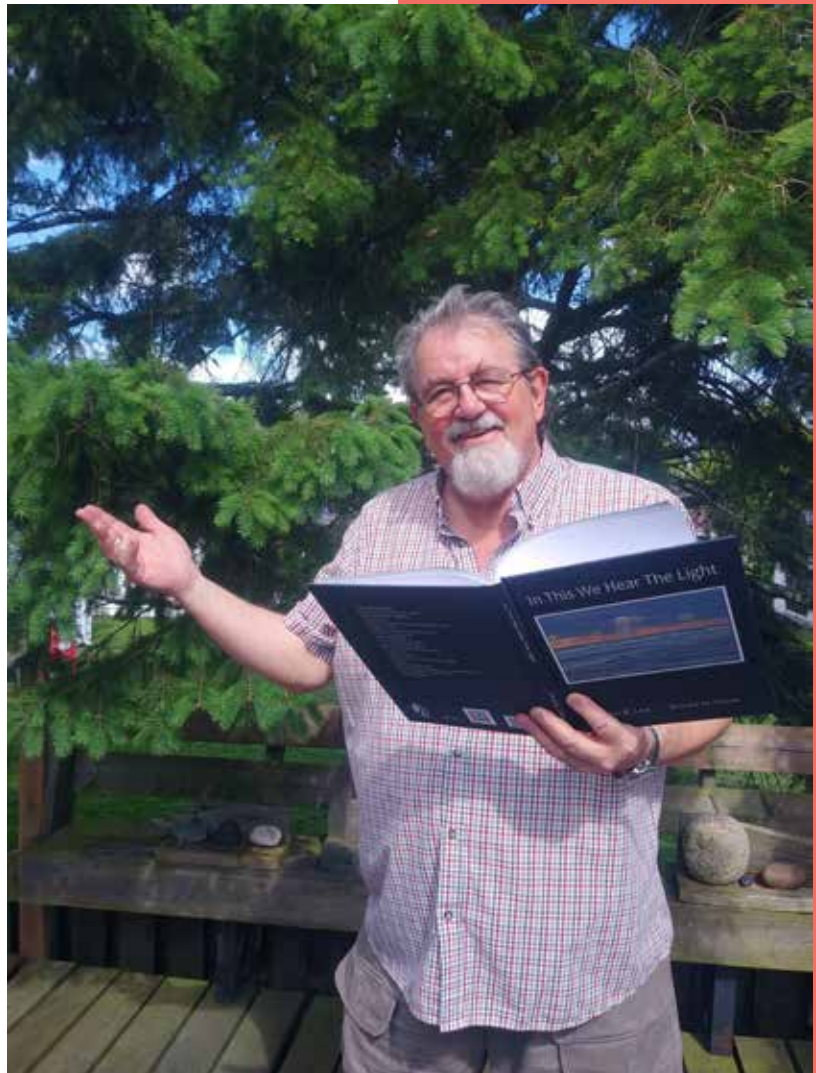
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An Evening with Richard Grove, Poet Laureate of Brighton, Canada

On October 7, the Department of English and Modern Languages (DEML) hosted a 90-minute webinar over Zoom with Canadian poet Richard Grove. The webinar was attended by many of the teachers of the DEML. Poet, fiction writer, sculptor, painter, photographer, editor, and publisher, Richard Grove is the current Poet Laureate of Brighton, Ontario. He has been writing poetry, fiction, and memoirs for over decades and has had over 100 of his poems published in periodicals and over 30 anthologies from around the world. Including his poetry and photography, he has 20 titles to his name. Grove's photography and digital paintings have been on the cover of more books and periodicals than any other Canadian artist. His art has been featured in over 20 exhibitions in different countries. In short, he is multi-talented and prolific.

As the title of the webinar was "The Process of Writing Poetry," the poet conducted a brief workshop on how to write poetry. His wife, Kimberley Grove, also a poet, gave a brief introduction to her husband's works. Grove began his workshop and then read from some of his works. Later, she also joined in the discussion. The first topics of Grove's workshop were free verse and editing and the first component dealt with how to grow a poem from a single line. It was extremely interesting how he developed a political poem on Cuba from a simple line "A

dog walked down a street." Next, he worked on the use of metaphors and how to develop them in a poem. The last and final component was on letter poems. This was followed by a



question and answer session and more poem reading.

Richard Grove, Poet Laureate of Brighton, Canada.

World Mental Health Day Commemorated



Dr. Mahjabeen Haque, Chair of the Department of Counseling Psychology, Dhaka University, along with the distinguished speakers discussing issues regarding mental health at the webinar.

“When an individual feels sad, restless, or tired and is unable to perform daily activities for more than two weeks, they should consider seeking help from mental health professionals,” said Dr. Mahjabeen Haque, Chair of the Department of Counseling Psychology at the University of Dhaka in a webinar commemorating World Mental Health Day. NSU’s Office of the Proctor and Student Counseling Center jointly organized this webinar on October 28; it was attended by students, faculty members, and staff. The speakers of the webinar discussed various manifestations of mental health issues in youth and how to successfully deal with them. Another speaker, Kamal Ahmed Chowdhury, Associate Professor of Counseling Psychology at the University of Dhaka, mentioned that

is usually identified by family, friends, and peers before the patient can understand the need for professional intervention. They can encourage the patient to seek support from professionals.” Musharrat Hossain, Senior Lecturer at the Department of English and Modern Languages, shared her experience with students’ struggles to cope with new environments.

The speakers also praised the work of the Student Counseling Center at North South University, which has been giving holistic service to help students deal with depression, anxiety, and other issues. The event was moderated by Zohora Parvin, Head of the Student Counseling Center. In the welcome speech, the Acting Proctor of NSU, Dr. Abu Noman M. Atahar Ali, mentioned that the NSU Authority, including the Board of Trustees, gives the highest priority to the mental

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Information Session with Macquarie University, Australia

North South University's Office of External Affairs (OEA) hosted an information session with Macquarie University, Australia on October 28. The interactive session was streamed on the official NSU Facebook page of the OEA. The main speaker of the event was Mr. Tanveer Shaheed, Associate Director, Global Engagement and Business Development, Macquarie University. Mr. Abdul Mumin Evan, Lecturer, Marketing and International Business, NSU, and Mr. Alkayet Hossain, Country Coordinator (South Asia), Macquarie University, also attended the event as Guests. The session's goal was to enlighten interested students about the application process, offered courses and programs, and scholarship programs of Macquarie University.

The event started with Mr. Tanveer informing the audience briefly about educational opportunities for international students in Australia and specifically at Macquarie University. He mentioned that the Australian government's education policy is favorable for international students; thus, Australia has become over time

one of the most prominent hubs for international students. Among several highly-ranked and highly-qualified universities in Australia, Macquarie University is one of the best and one of the top choices for international students interested in pursuing studies in Australia. The university is one of the top 200 ranked universities of the world according to the QS



World University ranking 2021. Fortunately, North South University has an affiliation with Macquarie University; this affiliation allows NSUers to enjoy several advantages regarding applying and studying at Macquarie. Mr. Tanveer mentioned that Macquarie University will offer 25% scholarships for NSU students who fully meet the academic requirements of their chosen program. Mr. Tanveer also

Mr. Alkayet Hossain, Country Coordinator (South Asia), Macquarie University, speaking at the information session.

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Faculty Orientation at NSU Cont'd...

and get a guided tour. This time, though, they were introduced to the campus online, still they received a very warm welcome to their new jobs.

Spanning two days, the program consisted of various meetings focusing on the standards and guidelines of NSU, university rules and regulations and discrimination, biasness, and harassment, effective teaching using Outcome Based Education, and conducting research. There were additionally

sections on the use of library resources and the health and wellness care available at NSU.

The program finished with a humble expression of gratitude from the directors and organizers of NSU's IQAC. The participants and new faculty members in return expressed gratitude toward the NSU authority and the IQAC for organizing the orientation program. They are looking forward to starting their new journey at North South University.

Disruption in Achieving SDGs in Post-COVID Bangladesh Cont'd...

for Policy Dialogue, said that "We will have to adopt a strategy where we would have to ensure the overall protection of the people emphasizing economic growth at the same time." He also said that a strategy of "don't leave anybody behind" has to be followed all the time.

The Resident Representative of UNDP Bangladesh, Mr. Sudipto Mukerjee, emphasized the social safety net of the marginalized people of the society. According to him, "the activities of achieving the SDGs in the post-COVID-19 world will have to be environment-friendly, unbiased, and inclusive."

In this context, Dr. Tapan Sarker from Griffith University mentioned that the government should adopt a long-term and cooperative-based initiative, while Professor Salahuddin M. Aminuzzaman of the SIPG said that COVID-19 exposed the lack of trust in various health service providers; therefore, the entire health sector will have to undergo reform.

As the environment is one of the integrated and essential agendas of the SDGs, Dr. Sharif A Mukul of the University of the Sunshine

Coast of Australia mentioned in this regard that environmental issues have to be prioritized while addressing SDG-related issues in post-COVID-19 Bangladesh.

A Senior Fellow of the SIPG, Mr. Shahidul Haque, said that the interests and rights of the people have to be prioritized while addressing the SDGs in the new-normal period: "There has to be an initiative for global dialogue if needed to address the challenges in a better manner."

In his concluding remarks as the Chair of the session, Professor Atiqul Islam, Vice-Chancellor of NSU, mentioned how COVID-19 has put a vast number of students in a challenging situation; thus, prioritized efforts must be taken to address such problems. He also emphasized the ethical education of students.

The audience for the seminar was comprised of faculty members from various universities and members of various development organizations. The Director of the SIPG and the Coordinator of the CPS, Dr. M. Jashim Uddin, was also present at the webinar, and Dr. Bulbul Siddiqi was the moderator.

Mohammad Sadat Hamid: A Footballer and Student of NSU

At the age of 20, Mohammed Sadat Hamid is not only pursuing his Bachelor's Degree in Business Administration at North South University with an admirable academic record but also aiming to build his career in the world of football, after signing a professional contract with Mohammedan Sporting Club, Dhaka (MSCD)--a top-tier team in the Bangladesh Football Premier League--earlier this year.

A lot of hard work is required to balance full-time studies at the country's best private university and the athletic activities integrated into the training at MSCD.

He stands firm with confidence and determination and manages to bring out the best of both worlds. From attending online classes twice a day to commuting to Motijheel from Banani four times a week for practice, he does it all with a smile on his face.

During his early school life, no one could predict what the future would hold for this supposed daydreamer who was often written up at school for either falling asleep during classes or distracting his classmates.

Sadat did not score well in any of his subjects, which was a growing concern for his teachers, but by the time of his O Levels, Sadat managed to turn things around and achieve good results, also earning him a Daily Star Award. After completing his A-Levels, he applied to and then was accepted by NSU.

Football remained his passion and, in his way, he sought out ways to make his mark on the field by joining various

tournaments with underground teams.

Since joining MSCD, he has been attending online classes while simultaneously attending every match, every tournament, and every practice session,

NSU's English Department.

His grandmother Rani Hamid is a National Award-Winning International Female Chessmaster, and his grandfather, Lt. Col. M. A. Hamid, is an author and National Award-Winning sports



NSUer Mohammad Sadat Hamid, a center back player at Mohammedan Sporting Club.

regardless of the time or location.

Sadat's father, Md. Kaisar Hamid, is the Ex-Captain of Bangladesh's National Football Team and a National Award Holder; his mother, Shahnaj Sultana Kaisar, is a reputed novelist and faculty member of

organizer.

Sadat, the youngest of his siblings who are pursuing their goals in different fields, is determined to accomplish his dreams with admirable energy and commitment.

The Way Forward: The Vision of Mr. M. A. Kashem Cont'd...

a research university on par with other renowned global institutions. The quality of faculty members that NSU recruits, the funding that it can afford for research, and the infrastructure provide a fertile ground for quality research. Currently, the quantity and quality of research vary across departments and centers. In recent years, an upward trend has been observed in both quantity and quality of research, but it is a pity that NSU spends much less on research than some other private universities. NSU needs to accelerate its rate of advancement in research.

The focus of NSU will be applied research, breaking ground across different disciplines such as Social Sciences, Applied Sciences, and Business and Economics, and creating value in the form of ideas and applications that will benefit the country and the world. The global trend is institutional research marking the way forward. NSU will also have to adopt this philosophy of moving forward to keep pace with the rest of the world. The need has arisen to shift focus to the future path ahead rather than getting stuck in the present. NSU has passed the 29 years since its birth all the while steadfastly maintaining its reputation as the leader in higher education in the private sector in Bangladesh. However, complacency leads to stagnation, and hence our visionary Chairman wants to walk the extra mile and take NSU to that point where, from being a globally recognized, top-ranked teaching institution, it will become a globally recognized, top-ranked research university.

To make this transition to a research university and achieve recognition as a research university, some relevant and effective strategies have been mentioned:

▶ Emphasizing that all faculty members are required to do

research.

- ▶ Maintaining a higher proportion of Ph.D. faculty members across all departments.
- ▶ Encouraging faculty members to teach based on contemporary research findings, including their research, in addition to delivering book-based learning.
- ▶ Professors and similarly ranked faculty members encouraging and mentoring their juniors to pursue Ph.D. degrees from globally renowned universities.
- ▶ Collaboration with professional bodies resulting in more research activities.
- ▶ Offering various types of incentive schemes such as:
 - a. Reduction in course load to faculty members who have maintained a consistent track record in active research. Ensuring these privileges are only accorded to deserving cases.
 - b. Adequate funding of prospective research projects. In case of limitations of the NSU CTRG, the Vice-Chancellor can approach the Chair of the BOT to channel funds towards such ventures. The NSU BOT will welcome such initiatives.
 - c. Faculty members will have the opportunity to approach the Vice-Chancellor in case of other constraints in the path of effective research. The Vice-Chancellor can then approach the Chair of the BOT to facilitate the release of necessary resources.
 - d. Rewarding fruitful research projects, like offering monetary prizes to students and research scholarships to faculty members for successful research endeavors.

Interview with Dr. Abdul Hannan Chowdhury Cont'd...

classroom teaching; rather, our focus is to convert them to become innovative thinkers with creative mindsets through outcome-based learning. SBE crafted its curriculum in line with the latest industry trends, standards, and practices, and we believe communication, people, social, and personal skills are essential. Our faculty members demand extra things from the students even though students are always very serious about learning and gaining subjective knowledge. The classroom environment is very competitive as the assumption is that the students need to bring new knowledge from their surroundings.

NSU prepares its students for the leadership role in corporations, industries, and businesses wherever they want to work after graduation. The university's goal is to transform its graduates to be all-rounders and responsible individuals who can make better decisions. All sorts of leadership competencies and necessary skills are provided through

student engagement in co-curricular and extra-curricular activities. Students eventually become challenge takers who can multitask and juggle multiple things together. This is something that we are unique at compared to other universities, giving them a competitive edge in the job market. NSU graduates can be found worldwide doing exceptionally well, getting jobs in Fortune 500 companies.

NSU News: What is next for the School of Business and Economics?

In 2015, the School of Business and Economics (SBE) became the first to receive American accreditation for its programs in Bangladesh by ACBSP. The goal of the SBE is to excel in teaching and cutting-edge business research, produce the best business leaders, and contribute to the business sector of the country. Recently, SBE has gained prestigious CABS, UK membership, and CABS will support the development and promotion of teaching faculty, advance the quality of teaching,

contribute to public relations to support student recruitment and student satisfaction, and help to meet different accreditation standards. SBE is currently working towards achieving AACSB and SAQS accreditations. NSU SBE always wants to be relevant, adaptable, and malleable in the marketplace.

SBE will attempt to preserve its distinct position in Bangladesh in its experience to students through teaching by the best faculty members in the country, enhanced experiential learning, and leading curricula designed to meet individual and industry needs. SBE's vision is to be the best business school that implements global standards in business and economics education within our regional context to develop a productive workforce of next-generation thinkers and leaders of business societies.

NSU News: Thank you very much for your time and generosity.

Thank you.

World Mental Health Day Commemorated Cont'd...

well-being of students, and the Student Counseling Center was established to provide much-needed support to the large student body of the university.

The event featured two presentations: one on the

services of Counseling Center, by Mohammad Shaphawat Hossain, and the other on care for caregivers, by Masuma Sumi.

The World Mental Health Day webinar was followed by a question and answer session

where Zohora Parvin answered questions from students.

The event concluded with a success story of a client, followed by a vote of thanks from Musharrat Hossain.

Information Session with Macquarie University Cont'd...

mentioned the accessible and innovative technologies that can assist students at Macquarie University, particularly as the global pandemic has shifted most, if not all, classes online. Moreover, the one-semester study program of the university is offered with a 50% scholarship for NSUers. Mr. Tanveer also informed the participants that Macquarie University, Australia,

offers a double Master's program for students and encouraged the students to go for the double Master's program if convenient. During the latter portion of the event, Mr. Evan and Mr. Alkayet, both alumni of North South University and Macquarie University, shared their experiences studying in both the universities. They encouraged current NSUers to consider

Macquarie University as a choice while planning on pursuing higher studies in Australia.

Both of them mentioned the Australia-based NSU alumni organization, Aussie NSUers, as a great supporter and shelter for new Bangladeshi students in Australia. They advised NSUers to contact the organization while studying or staying in Australia.



North South University
Center of Excellence in Higher Education

Bashundhara, Dhaka-1219
Phone: +880-2-55668200, Ext. 2003
Email: rahman.bhuiyan@northsouth.edu
<http://www.northsouth.edu>