



**Office  
of External  
Affairs**

# THE BRIDGE

## The Official Newsletter of the Office Of External Affairs

**ISSUE 6 | NOV-DEC '18**

### *Editor's Message*

Welcome back! This is our sixth issue of The Bridge. As you will find, the OEA has been busy during the last part of 2018. Between visits by international delegates to NSU for the purpose of exploring possible collaboration opportunities by the Institute of Indian Management Calcutta (IIMC), the Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST) and Yunnan University (YU) and visits by Professor Atiqul Islam to China for the 13th Annual Confucius Institute Conference and Tianyuan University, we have lots of collaboration negotiations in the making. We also organized a bunch of great workshops that hopefully you were able to attend. As usual, we include fascinating interviews taken with an international faculty member, an NSU alum and an international student. We hope you will enjoy reading this issue of The Bridge.

*Editor*

Dr. Katherine Li

*Reporters*

Tahmina Akter Sonali  
Sara Tasin

*Illustrator*

Haidaruzzaman Sujon

*Photographs*

Public Relations Office

## Runa Sarker, Dean of IIMC visits NSU

Collaboration meetings between IIMC (Indian Institute of Management Calcutta) and NSU (North South University) were held from 2nd to 4th November, 2018. During the meetings respected Dean Runa Sarker shared some of the best practices followed at IIMC. The topics included a description of their faculty-centric administration, the tradition of strategic thinking retreats, the post-graduate certificate program in Health Care Management and also some other courses in the domain of public policy including urban management. She also highlighted their centers for research including the Management Centre for Human Values, the Centre for Development of Environment and Policy, the Case Research Centre, the Finance Research and Trading Lab, etc. Afterward, she talked about the proposed 'Amitava Bose' Laboratory for Economic Analysis and Policy, the main focus of which is consulting and research as well as a desire to do more work with an international impact. The meeting was followed by a discussion about possible areas of collaboration with NSU, which include:



- Setting up of an India Studies Center at NSU in collaboration with IIMC for joint research.
- Promoting faculty exchange programs - it may be possible to explore whether IIMC doctoral students could teach full courses at NSU (across a period of 4 months), as part of the exchange program as part of the teaching practicum for the students.
- Starting collaborations with the IIMC Case Research Center.
- IIMC could also design a faculty development program for the NSU SBE.
- There are 2 journals (Journal of Human Values - Sage and Decision - Springer) that are produced at IIMC, for which a joint issue could be produced between the two institutions.
- The two institutes could consider joint conferences, perhaps on climate change, or public policy, or marketing. (IIMC has similar conferences with the Stern School of Business at NYU and Princeton.)
- A dialogue series could be established on issues between the two countries (e.g., border issues) and briefs could be produced for the governments from both sides. It could start with academics and then bureaucrats could be invited.
- Such a dialogue series could be organized under one of the Centers at IIMC, and the coordinator of the center could be approached to initiate these ideas.

Then, Prof. Runa also discussed the matter of AACSB accreditation. However, since the accreditation process is still nascent at NSU, the role for IIMC is not clear yet. At a future stage, when there is some progress on accreditation, IIMC would be happy to provide advice and recommends that the accreditation team visit IIMC for a day to see and understand the work of an accreditation office.



# Macquarie Delegation Team Visits NSU

On 11 November 2018, a Macquarie delegation team, led by speakers David Harrison (Director, International), Mr. Tanveer Shaheed (Regional Director, South Asia & Middle East) & Mr. Riasat Hussain (Country Manager, South Asia) visited NSU. The purpose of this visit was to arrange a study tour of a group of NSU business students to come to Macquarie in March 2019. Here the respective speakers gave a presentation titled, "Study Tour Program for North South University at Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia." The presentation proceeded with a discussion about the advantages that Australia has in store for NSU students, which includes: favorable Australian Government policies like visa processing, post-study work visa as well as work while studying there. Then they shed light on students' safety and lifestyle issues mentioning the low crime rate at Australia. They also explained how Australian universities are ranking among the top positions of world-class universities. In addition to this they also informed the students about their high pay scale, work opportunities and an overview of Australian weather. Next, they presented the background of Macquarie University. Macquarie University was established in 1964. The campus spans 126 hectares/ 311 acres. The total number of academic and professional staff is 3,500. Macquarie now teaches almost 45,000 students from over 100 countries and 10,500 international students. It has 184,000 alumni in more than 140 countries.

After giving an overview of their campus, they described more about the study tour program. They planned for a 12-day study tour which they believe will benefit NSU business students who will come to learn about various leadership and management principles. They will get a chance to gather knowledge on various business aspects like accounting, marketing mix, financial risk management, strategic human resource management, cross cultural management, Asian business environment, entrepreneurship skills, and so on. After this brief discussion the delegates ensured the students of NSU that Macquarie would not charge anything for the study tour. Students would only have to pay for their living, airfare, food and miscellaneous costs.







# NSU Delegation Team Visits Taiwan

On 13 November, 2018 the Dean of School of Engineering and Physical Sciences (SEPS), NSU, Dr. Arshad M. Chowdhury, and the Director of Office of External Affairs, NSU, Dr. Katherine Li paid a visit to Yuan Ze University, Taiwan. The international visit took place after receiving an invitation from Professor Cheng-Pu, Chief, Global Affairs Office. It was a two-day visit. On the first day both NSU delegates gave an overview of NSU and its research focus. Several members from the International Office and Department of Engineering of Yuan Ze University were present. Afterwards a presentation was given to the international students at Yuan Ze University about NSU's study abroad opportunity. During that presentation over lunch several students showed interest to come to NSU in the international student lounge. After that the NSU delegates had a campus tour through all the labs of the Department of Electrical Engineering, as follows: the Antenna Measurement Lab, the Multimedia Processing, the Telemedicine Lab, the IoT and Maker Lab, the Department of Electrical Engineering, and the Wireless Mobile Computing Lab. There NSU team met the professors who run the labs and the students who work in these labs. Through these lab visits they came to know that NSU students could get vast opportunities to carry out research in those labs. This visit was followed by a roundtable meeting during which a possible collaboration of joint faculty research, faculty exchange and student exchange between these two institutions might be possible. Afterwards, the whole group had a dinner in a traditional restaurant.



On the next day, they visited Far Eastone Telecommunications Company. There they heard about the Research and Development (R & D) of the Technology and Telecommunication. Next, they visited the Moldex 3D company where they learned how 3D printing works. They also explored opportunities for NSU students to do internships while availing studies. The Dean of SEPS saw a lot of scope for NSU students regarding the R & D sector at Yuan Ze University.

# Seminar on Admission & Scholarship Opportunities in Australia

On 19 November, 2018 the NSU Office of External Affairs hosted an event titled "Admission & Scholarship Opportunities in Australia: A Case Study on Murdoch University." Dr. Ariful Hoque from Murdoch University, Australia was the speaker of the seminar. Faculty members and postgraduate students from NSU were invited to attend. The main focus of the talk was to make the students aware of each and every detail of how to avail scholarships at Murdoch University, Australia.

He started his speech by introducing the audience to the three categories of universities in Australia, according to their rating. They include, 1-3: bottom level, 4-7: less expensive level and 8-10: expensive level. During his talk, he also mentioned that Perth has 38 universities. Dr. Hoque said that students should choose wisely from these three categories as per their ratings. In his presentation he described postgraduate programs at Murdoch University along with the living cost in Perth and the visa processing rules. He said that any student availing a postgraduate program would be eligible to work for 20 hours per week part-time. This would help them pay 50% of their tuition fees as well as help them to bear their living costs. Afterwards, he mentioned a state sponsorship opportunity. In this process any blood relative living in Perth could sponsor the tuition fees of a particular student. The skill migration list was also mentioned by him.



And later in his talk he asked the students to have a look at this list and get acquainted with the subject for which they are applying. About the requirement of eligibility, he said that students applying for postgraduate programs should have a minimum CGPA of 3.00. The IELTS band score should be 6-6.5. But before applying for the visa, students have to demonstrate ability to finance their living cost for 1 year with 6 months of maturity. The amount ranges from 35-40 lacs BDT. There are advantages for students who would be applying for 2 years master's program. After the successful completion of the degree they could get a 2-year postgraduate visa and a full-time work permit for 2 years in Australia. He ended his speech by elaborating on the PhD programs that the university offers for international students. He encouraged the faculties and postgraduate students present in the seminar to apply for the PhD program.

## Seminar by British Council on the Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan (CSFP)

On 25 November, 2018 a workshop on the Commonwealth Scholarship by the British Council was held at NSU. The aim of the workshop was to provide information and tips regarding Commonwealth Scholarship schemes and application procedures from Commonwealth alumni at NSU. The target audience of the workshop was mainly senior graduate students, postgraduate students and faculty members (lecturer level) of NSU. Professor Dr. Biswas Karabi Farhana, from the Department of Environmental Science and Management, NSU, inaugurated the workshop. Later on, the Head of Higher Education & Regional Manager, South Asia Commonwealth Scholarship and Fellowship Plan, British Council, Md Towhidur Rahman, gave his speech on overall scholarship programmes. He talked about the Scholarship schemes. This gave the audience a broader look at how they could avail the scholarship opportunity. He also talked about the application process and timelines. He ended his speech by discussing the alumni association and their activities.



Ms. Sirazoom Munira, a part-time faculty member of North South University talked about the Commonwealth Shared Master's Scholarships. In her speech she detailed the procedures of how this scholarship could be availed. She herself was an awardee of the Commonwealth Shared Scholarship. So, from her own experience she encouraged the audience to avail this opportunity. She introduced the audience to the application process, then she gave a brief on university selection. She concluded by giving some tips and guidance to all present. Afterwards, Professor Dr. Biswas Karabi Farhana, from Department of Environmental Science and Management, NSU, spoke about the Commonwealth PhD Scholarships. She was awarded a Commonwealth Scholarship for doing her doctoral study. At the beginning of her speech she inspired the audience to pursue this scholarship. She also shared some of her personal experiences of availing this scholarship. She directed the students to some websites which would guide them in the future to know more about the process. She also talked about the university selection steps for this scholarship and gave some tips and guidance. Finally, another Commonwealth alumna of NSU, Ms. Raisa Bashir, Lecturer, Department of Environmental Science and Management hosted the question answer session and ended the workshop.





## Master Class on Innovation & Entrepreneurship with Imran Fahad at North South University

On 26 November, 2018 Innovation Hub Bangladesh in partnership with the Office of External Affairs (OEA) of North South University organized a Master class on Innovation & Entrepreneurship at North South University. This collaborative ideation, learning and maker space was held to enable students and educators to have future opportunities to join with entrepreneurs, business leaders, local government officials, alumni, and educational partners. The idea was to co-create and realize the power of human innovation through cross-pollination of education, business and community talent immersed in the best of startup culture. Founder & Chairman of Innovation Hub Bangladesh, Mr. Imran Fahad – who is also an alumnus of NSU – conducted the intensive master class workshop on the future of digitalism. This workshop was conducted for about 100 attendees. The future of digitalism theme covered Innovation Design & Process thinking, future of payment systems, Youth & Entrepreneurship, Innovation in Business, Blockchain Technology & Artificial Intelligence (AI). Mr. Imran Fahad is the President of Alumni Association School of Engineering & Physical Science (AASEPS) of North South University & also the Founder of NSU ALUMNI CLUB (An Upcoming Exclusive Networking Platform for North South University Alumni).



In his speech he described Innovation Hub Bangladesh initiatives and ongoing activities to empower youth in Bangladesh and at the same time tell them about an Incubation Program where ideas are turned into entrepreneurship. He believes through this kind of affiliation they will be able to represent Bangladesh in a stronger manner as an innovation-friendly country towards the world.

## Seminar on Studying in Canada with Representatives from the Canadian High Commission



On 27 November, 2018 NSU's Office of External Affairs hosted an event titled, 'High Commission of Canada Presents EduCanada Information Session'. Ms. Corinne Petrisson of Commercial Affairs and Trade Commissioner and Mr. Quazi Golam Farhad, Trade Commissioner and were invited. Mr. Golam Farhad started the event with a speech about higher studies in Canada. In the beginning of his speech he discussed various opportunities and facilities that Canada offers to international students. He introduced the event saying a world of possibilities await them for education in Canada. At first, he encouraged NSU students to apply for higher education in Canada. He said Canada offers a world-class education to students from all over the world. On top of that, students have the freedom to select what they want to learn in a rewarding career.

It is believed that this will open enormous possibilities for Canada in future. He said that almost 10% of Canadian universities rank among the top 200 of world universities. Furthermore, he added that the secondary schools and postsecondary institutions of Canada are being recognized in top international rankings. The students repeatedly score high on various international tests. Their teachers are highly qualified and they create a learning environment that inspires creativity and intellectual development. He further spoke about the Canadian universities performance rate which is 38% of all research and development in Canada.



He further spoke about the Canadian universities performance rate which is 38% of all research and development in Canada. Canada produces 2.8% of global scientific research, nevertheless it is a home to just 0.5% of the world's population. He detailed what facilities Canadian universities offer to the international students like wired libraries, Olympic-quality sports facilities, public concert halls and art galleries, etc. Then he said that Canada ranks first for alumni employment among 16 countries. Having this remarkable achievement, international students in Canada are often eligible to work both on and off campus during their studies. In this regard students were asked to visit the website link [www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work.asp). This gives students the opportunities to go beyond academic education. In fact, many programs are designed in collaboration with potential employees and offer work placement opportunities to students.



For more details [www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-postgrad.asp](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study/work-postgrad.asp) can be visited. Following, Ms. Corinne Petrisson delivered her speech and introduced students to various links to websites that would help students gather more knowledge about studies in Canada. Her speech guided the audience about pursuing study permits. She also provided a link to the website in this regard and asked the students to visit [www.cic.gc.ca/english/study](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/study). Canadian universities also offer various scholarship programs based on merit to international students. These kinds of programs help the students to pursue their studies at a comparatively lower cost. Students can explore the websites to get broader knowledge about this at [www.scholarship.gc.ca](http://www.scholarship.gc.ca). The event ended with handing over of the crests to the guests by the Dr. Katherine Li, Director of Office External Affairs NSU.

## VC Professor Atiqul Islam Chaired a Presidents' Forum at the 13th Confucius Institutes Conference

Vice Chancellor Professor Atiqul Islam chaired a Presidents' Forum session at the 13th Annual Conference of Confucius Institutes held in Chengdu, located in the province of Sichuan, China from 3-5 December, 2018. The Confucius Institute Conference is the largest annual gathering of Confucius Institute stakeholders, attended by the leaders of all hosting universities of Confucius Institutes across the world, leaders of partner universities in China, high officials of the Confucius Institute Headquarters and the Chinese government as well as the Chinese Directors and Local Directors of Confucius Institutes and Confucius Classrooms. This is the central platform where the activities of Confucius Institutes (CIs) are collectively discussed and directions and suggestions about future planning and operations of CIs are given from the concerned authorities. This year, more than 1,500 representatives from 154 countries gathered to share opinions and suggestions for the development and reform of the Confucius Institutes, demonstrating the characteristics of the Confucius Institute's big family: "inclusive, innovative and colorful". The Vice Chancellor of North South University (NSU), Professor Atiqul Islam, Dr. Zhou Weiwei, Chinese Co-Director of CI at NSU, and Dr. Md. Mahmudur Rahman Bhuiyan, local Co-Director of CI at NSU attended the conference.







The theme of the 13th CI conference was “Reform and Innovation for Development, Joining Hands to create our Future Together.” During the two-day conference, two special forums, eight presidents’ forums and 20 workshops were held. The NSU Vice Chancellor, Professor Atiqul Islam chaired a president’s forum titled, “Professionalization of the Directors and Teachers”. He also gave a presentation on the Professionalization of CI Directors and Teachers in South Asia. In his presentation and speech as the session chair, Professor Islam shed light on the barriers that limit the professionalization of CI directors and teachers in South Asian within the global context and offered specific recommendations to overcome those barriers. Among his recommendations were:

- First, the term of Chinese teachers should not be less than 2-3 years.
  - Second, both of the host universities of CI could organize pre-job and on-the-job training programs for CI teachers and directors, which may meet local needs in South Asian countries by integrating their academic resources.
  - Third, the partner universities could establish online resource-sharing platforms and provide distance education support.
  - Fourth, the local host universities could strengthen logistical support for Chinese teachers by offering them consultation on local life and support on visa affairs and, thus, could relieve the teachers’ regarding life and work in a foreign land.
  - Fifth, there should be more economic incentives to increase the local Chinese language teachers’ pool.
  - Finally, a local teacher internship base could be established at the host universities to facilitate the development of CI teachers.
- Professor Atiqul Islam’s recommendations were highly recognized and appreciated by the other experts on the panel.

# NSU Delegation Visits Tianyuan College, China

On 07 December 2018, Prof. Atiqul Islam, Vice Chancellor of North South University, Bangladesh, visited Tianshi College (Tianyuan University) in Tianjin, China. After visiting its new campus, Prof. Atiqul Islam, along with Prof. Zhang Junxi, President of Tianyuan University, Prof. Ran Qiming and Prof. Sun Jiancheng, Vice Presidents, discussed possible two-way international exchanges and academic cooperation between the two universities, and the development of education both in China and Bangladesh. A preliminary consensus was reached.

President Zhang Junxi gave a detailed introduction to the International Development Plan of Tianyuan University to Prof. Atiqul Islam, who stated that North South University was in line with the international development plan of Tianshi College in seeking international cooperation needs. At the meeting, Prof. Atiqul Islam and representatives of Tianshi’s young faculty exchanged experience on international teaching methods. After the meeting, President Zhang Junxi presented Chinese characteristic souvenirs to Prof. Atiqul Islam. Finally, on the last day Professor Atiqul Islam visited some attractions in Tianjin.





## Delegation Team from Kunming University Science and Technology (KUST) Visits NSU

On 09 December, 2018 a delegation team from the Kunming University of Science and Technology (KUST) led by the Vice President, Kunming University of Science and Technology, Mr. Yi Jianhong visited NSU. The members of the KUST delegation team included the Chairman of School Committee, School of International Education, KUST, Ms. Shen Ling, the Director of Research Institute of International Education & Culture, School of International Education, KUST, Ms. Peng Jianling, the Director of Overseas Cooperation Office, School of Information Engineering, KUST, Mr. Wang Jian and the Director of Overseas Exchange Office, School of International Education, KUST, Ms. He Yan.

From NSU, the Vice-Chancellor of NSU, Professor Atiqul Islam, Pro Vice-Chancellor (Designate) Professor Gias U. Ahsan, the Director of Office of External Affairs, Dr. Katherine Li, the Director of Career and Replacement Center, Dr. M. Khasro Miah, the Director of Research, Professor Norman Swazo, the Treasurer of NSU, Prof. Gour Gobinda Goswami, the Co-Director of the Confucius Institute, Dr. Md. Mahmudur Rahman Bhuiyan, the Chinese Co-Director, Dr. Zhou Weiwei and other respective personnel were present at the event. The main foci of the event were as follows:

First, they talked about having a few two plus two (2+2) program between NSU and KUST. They mostly focused on engineering programs because KUST has a very strong engineering school which they think might benefit the students of NSU. For the program NSU students would be able to study for two years at NSU and then go to KUST for the last two years of their undergraduate programs. Second, they talked about their sports and cultural festival which they organize every year. They invited NSUers to join this festival in 2019 as a way to get acquainted with KUST. Thirdly, they focused on their strong Alzheimer Disease research. In this regard they said that they have a large lab with to work with primates. Next, NSU delegates talked about the research projects that they are working on. One is "The Build Road Initiative" (BRI). This project is something that China is developing in big ways including education. They started talking about how we think about this BRI in educational institutions like universities. The BRI is not only an infrastructure project but also an economic opportunity for many countries from China to Europe. As China is coming to Bangladesh and investing in factories, infrastructure projects, they cannot speak Bengali and generally they do speak a lot of English. In the MBA and EMBA programs more and more Chinese students are studying at NSU as they work here in Dhaka in various Chinese organizations. So, the Chinese people want to learn Bengali. That's another initiative from the Chinese Govt. As they go through the countries involved in the BRI, they will learn the local languages. They are not forcing people to learn Chinese rather they feel the need to learn the local cultures and languages.

They want NSU to be able to support their language learners to learn Bengali. They plan to them start learning Bengali in China and then come to NSU for their third year. In this regard, KUST also wants to start their Bengali program with the support of NSU. According Dr. AQB Rahman Bhuiyan, Chairman of the Department of English and Modern Languages (DEML), he is currently working to develop the curriculum, because now NSU has almost 15 Bengali language teachers. Afterwards, they discussed other areas where cross-cultural research could be pursued collaboratively including: Sociology, Anthropology, Ethnic Relations. This led to a rich discussion about the Public Policy Governance (PPG) program. NSU members of the meeting explained that NSU has a very well-developed Master's program in PPG. Students from Nepal, Bhutan, Sri Lanka, and Norway come to NSU to study PPG. The possibility of a one plus one (1+1) program at the Master's level was explored for engineering students. They could study for one year here and one year there in Computer Science and Engineering toward a dual degree. One Master's degree with both universities' names on it. The KUST team suggested Artificial Intelligence and Robotics (ARI) as a key area. They have a strong research center there at KUST for AI/AR. Another thing they discussed was the faculty projects for AI/AR robotics for joint collaboration. Not only our graduate students but also our faculties could get involved in collaboration work. The delegates also offered the students of NSU the possibility of a direct Master's program at KUST. And finally, they offered several options for undergraduates to do a traditional study abroad program meaning they would go there for one semester to KUST to have a study abroad experience and then come back to finish their degree at NSU.





## Delegation Team from Yunnan University, School of Foreign Languages Visits NSU

On 10 December, 2018 a delegation team from Yunnan University, School of Foreign Languages came to visit NSU for a meeting. At the beginning of the meeting they said that they wanted to prioritize NSU students by giving scholarships for BA, MA and PhD levels and mentioned that they are looking for some 25 students for this scholarship opportunity starting from Fall 2019.

Next, they talked about sending their third-year students to NSU to learn Bengali language and culture. Once again both parties talked about the Belt Road Initiative (BRI). They feel enthusiastic to support students from Bangladesh to attend their annual boot camp in China. This is another way to get acquainted with Chinese culture and language. Last year they took 600 students from Bangladesh for the boot camp. Last year the Coordination Officer, Office of External Affairs, Ms. Tasnia Azmeri Madiha and the International Affairs Officer, Office of External Affairs, Ms. Samina Alam Miti also participated. They had to sit for an interview organized by the Confucius Institute (CI), NSU. After getting selected their cost was a mere 35,000 BDT for the boot camp. Other costs were supported by the Chinese Government. They explained that it was a 14-day program which included Chinese classes, heritage site visits, co-curricular activities, etc.

The meeting continued and the delegates said they wanted to build a new momentum of South - South collaboration due to the drastic change in the International education system from past to present. Now people don't find it easy to move to the USA, UK or Canada. So collaborating with neighbors in the region seems practical. In this regard China is offering degrees not only in Chinese but also in English. An exchange program was explored between NSU and Yunnan University which could include faculty members from NSU going to Yunnan University to teach English and Bengali for a semester or preferably for a year. YU would send their faculties to NSU for training while pursuing their PhDs in Bengali. Afterwards they talked about holding a yearly inter-disciplinary forum which could include the South Asian Institute of Policy and Governance (SIPG), International Relations, History, Politics and Economics. All of this concluded in a robust discussion about how to set up an MOU between the two universities by 29 March, 2019.



## Seminar on “Diffusion Kernels in Protein Location Prediction, Disease Progression Modeling, and Big Data Analysis” MOU finalization

On 18 December, 2018 the Office of External Affairs (OEA) arranged a seminar titled, “Diffusion Kernels in Protein Location Prediction, Disease Progression Modelling, and Big Data Analysis”. In this program Dr. Ananda Mondal, who is an Assistant Professor in the School of Computing and Information Sciences at Florida International University (FIU) was invited as the guest speaker. Dr. Mondol is a researcher in Big Data Analytics, Machine Learning with Special Interest in Deep Learning, and Bioinformatics. Prior to joining Florida International University, he was an Assistant Professor of Computer Science in the Department of Mathematics and Computer Science at Claflin University, South Carolina from 2012-2018. His presentation had two basic components. Number one was the teaching experience at Florida International University and second was his research. In his speech he







He told students about the broader scopes and opportunities that FIU gave him in his area of research and how delighted he feels teaching at FIU. Afterwards a question answer session was held among the guests present. In this session various topics were discussed such as Protein Location Prediction, Nuclear and other different components. To elaborate these topics, he used a Chemistry and Physical Science Model. He also told the audience how he relies on this phenomenon during his research work. Afterwards he talked about the Diffusion Kernels in Prediction Model. Logistic Regression Model for Prediction was also discussed. Among various topics, Model Formulation was one he shed light on. Students and faculty members from different backgrounds were present and asked various questions. He also informed the students that Diffusion Kernels is a Cancer Progression at Protein Network Level. His visit laid the groundwork for collaboration between NSU and FIU.

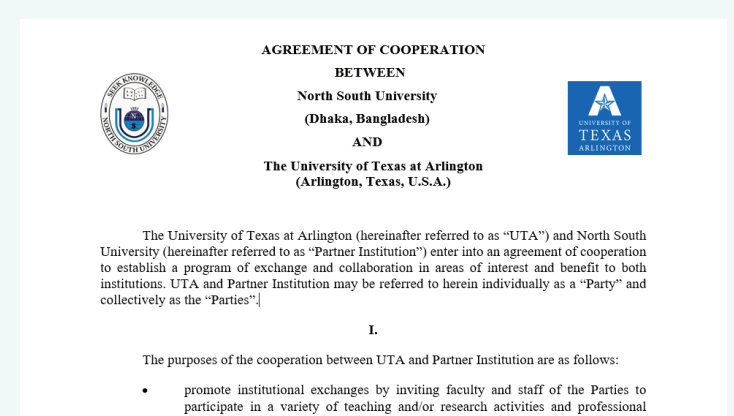
## New Mexico Tech (NMT) and NSU Discuss a New Joint Degree Program on Engineering & Mathematics

On 20 December, 2018 a talk was given by Professor Dr. Anwar Hossain from New Mexico Tech. The meeting took place at NSU on the topic titled, “New Mexico Tech and Discussion about a new joint degree program on Engineering and Mathematics”. Prof. Hossain was met by the Chair of Department of Mathematics and Physics, Dr. Partha Pratim Dey. They discussed several topics. Firstly, Dr. Dey proposed a joint Bachelors Program in Mathematics between the two institutions (NMT and NSU). This talk was followed by the possible credit hours distribution in School of Engineering and Physical Sciences (SEPS) under departments like CSE, EEE, and ETE. Both the representatives discussed the possible fields that could be achieved through this conjunction. They also proposed that NSU and NMT should match their course outlines. Dr. Dey from NSU offered that once NSU received the outline that NMT follows that then they would design their courses according to this. After that Dr. Hossain an overview of NMT. Both sides believe that this program sharing will help the students of NSU to get a double major in both Math and Computer Sciences despite being a student of Computer Science and Engineering (CSE). Finally, Dr. Hossain asked Dr. Dey to send them their plan. After that they will start working on it. He said that this collaboration of combining majors may take 2 years to complete. The meeting ended with a fine lunch.



## NSU Signs a New Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with University of Texas – Arlington (UTA)

This MOU materialized, after more than a year of discussion, after the Director of Student Recruitment for the College of Engineering at University of Texas Arlington (UTA), Ms. Lin Larson visited NSU on 18 September 2018. After seeing the good facilities that NSU has to offer, she was convinced that UTA might have relationship with NSU. She thought that if their students came to NSU and NSU students went to UTA that the curriculum on both sides would be equivalent. So, she went back and talked to the Dean of International and finalized the MOU. NSU Alumnus Sajib Datta was also instrumental in negotiating the MOU.





## International Faculty Feature

FEB 19

*Dr. Sebastian Groh is a 2013 Stanford Ignite Fellow from Stanford Graduate School of Business and holds a PhD from Aalborg University and the Postgraduate School Micro Energy Systems at the TU Berlin where he wrote his doctoral thesis on the role of energy in development processes, energy poverty & technical innovations. He published a book and multiple journal articles on the topic of decentralized electrification in the Global South with an explicit focus on Bangladesh. In 2014, Dr. Groh founded SOL share, acting as its CEO since then and is an Assistant Professor in the Business School at North South University in Dhaka (Bangladesh). On behalf of SOL share, he received numerous awards, among them the Inter solar Award for Outstanding Solar Businesses, the UN Momentum for Change Award, both in 2016, the 2017 Start-Up Energy Transition Award by the German Energy Agency (DENA) and the UN DESA Powering the Future We Want USD 1M Energy Grant, along with Grameen Shakti. In 2018, SOL share was named the world's best energy startup and was added to the World Economic Forum's list of the most innovative startups around the planet. Dr. Groh became an Asoka Fellow in 2018, and was voted on the list of the 100 most influential social entrepreneurs across the world.*



**Interviewer:** From your bio, we can see that you studied in several different countries. What differences did you experience in each of the places? What influenced you to come to Bangladesh, specifically North South University?

**Sebastian Groh:** This would be Germany, Spain, India, El Salvador, and the US. When I started out at Mannheim University in Germany, which is really famous for its neo-liberal educational approach to business & economics and basically feeding the next generation of investment bankers (at least in the pre-Lehman times), I thought I had it all figured out. And in fact, I did end up working part-time on Europe's biggest trading floor. But the day which changed everything, when I listened to a talk at my university on the topic of Doing Business with the Poor, I was intrigued and from then on, my path shifted. Instead of going to an Ivy League University for graduate school, I decided to dive into developing economics and what better way than to explore the world and study in a developing country. This is how I ended up studying in Pune in India and in San Salvador (El Salvador). Only later during my PhD did I take up my coursework at Stanford GSB as well as Harvard Business School. The same desire brought me to Bangladesh to figure out how Bangladesh managed to successfully disseminate close to 5 million solar home systems (more than all other countries in the world combined, including Germany). So, I came here in late 2013/ beginning of 2014, just with the beginning of the Hartal, as a researcher. The potential I found here and the early signs of an awakening start-up ecosystem in Dhaka made me call my PhD supervisor telling him, that I will only return once for my defense, otherwise from now on I will stay in Bangladesh! I always loved teaching, so I coincidentally was offered a position at Eastern University, from there I moved onto IUB, and finally to NSU.

**Interviewer:** What are the differences that you notice in the teaching paradigm of NSU and other universities?

**Sebastian Groh:** I have limited experience as I am exclusively teaching in the MBA program and have hardly taught in any other country than Bangladesh. Also, I have to admit I am bit in love with the teaching paradigm of Harvard and Stanford. Class participation is so important to their learning model that 50% of a student's grade is based on it. Therefore, most of my students here at NSU know what a cold call is and feels like. I am very glad that I have the flexibility here at NSU to try out different models to evaluate class participation while still keeping fairness and inter-class comparability intact. I strongly believe in the paradigm of NSU to bridge the Global North with the Global South and do everything I can to live that bridge a bit more every day. However, independently of South or North, with the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution, the education system will have to go through dramatic changes all over the world. Preparing students for jobs that don't exist today is a daunting task. Knowledge-based teaching and evaluation is a thing of the past. As Jack Ma put it: "We cannot teach our students to compete with machines, they are smarter. We have to teach them something more unique that a machine can never catch up with us."



**Interviewer:** What is it like to be an international faculty member at NSU? Can you share some anecdotes?

**Sebastian Groh:** It needs time, and I guess you have to learn the hard way how to maneuver through things but you turn out so much smarter and culturally enriched ;-). And there are some amazing personalities at NSU who helped to push things through which we believe will strengthen the university's reputation.

**Interviewer:** How did you get involved with SOL share, and how do you integrate your entrepreneurial experience and your teaching experience? Does one influence the other?

**Sebastian Groh:** Very strongly. And in fact, I love when students come to my consultation hour and ask for entrepreneurial advice. I think especially teaching in the MBA program entrepreneurial experience can really complement your theoretical knowledge quite strongly and enrich your teaching discourse. At SOL share, we also do have quite a few NSU graduates as full-time employees. In the upcoming semesters I would love to take up a new elective on Venture Finance: From Bootstrapping to Venture Capital. Once you have gone through the exercise in practice yourself it teaches you a lot, which you can pass on! And I love class debates on the SDGs, especially on SDG 7 because I believe I can bring truly international experiences to the table here and the students feel that and become automatically more engaged. And is there any topic which is more suitable to discuss when it comes to bridging the gap between the Global North and South than climate change?

**Interviewer:** What would be your advice for your future students?

**Sebastian Groh:** I like the dynamics in place which I could observe in recent years. At the beginning of every semester I ask each of my students why they are here right now listening to me, and what is the opportunity cost of that? What do they want to get out of a degree from NSU, what are their future ambitions and do they feel that we, NSU faculty, equip them with the right tool-set for that? In part I am getting very sobering responses, however, what I do love is that there is a trend that the old paradigm that demands that I do an MBA, and then I am starting a solid job at a bank because this is expected from me is slowly vanishing as "the only" possibility. To be frank, my heart always leaps a bit when I have students who are, or aspire to be, entrepreneurs. I think this is what the country needs, and what NSU should nurture even more strongly!

*Dr. Groh teaches BUS501 Business Mathematics, BUS525 Managerial Economics and BUS 530 Economic Conditions Analysis to the students of MBA program. The Office of External Affairs is grateful to Dr. Groh for sharing his journey and insights with us.*

## NSU Alumni Feature

*Ehsanul Haque Nitol* was a tech enthusiast from an early start. While he joined NSU in the BBA department, his ambition was always to work in the technology field. With his ambition in tech and marketing, he started to work early in his professional life as a digital marketer at Ogilvy & Mather. Then, he got mixed up with the startup culture which expanded his horizons and interests.

With that in mind, he found the best possible place to work once he graduated, Uber Bangladesh. Although not in Marketing or HR, both of which he had originally majored in, but in Operations. As one of the earliest individuals to work with Uber, he got the scope to work in different fields and areas. As his skills grew and he became more adept to the startup culture, the management was able to rely more on him. He was able to make an impact and contribute on a larger scale which only a few could imagine. Uber helped him to grow a lot and he could not say enough about this place.

While, that was Uber, his second role made him go to a different country, Ireland. This time the company was Facebook. Imagine that a person who four years back could only think about the Marketing field completely shifted to a different field of Operations after graduation. After joining Facebook he was welcomed by the same open and free culture which he has always wanted to work in. The place has been amazing so far with new people to meet, a stimulating place to work and where he learns something new everyday.





**Interviewer:** How did you become a digital marketer?

Ehsanul Haque Nitol: I don't think there is a right answer to this, and specially coming from a novice like me. But what I do understand now is that there is nothing digital to marketing. In marketing – in every phase – if you are using technology to convey a message, that itself should be digital. An understanding of the tech side for utilization at its fullest, of course, helps. As a marketer these days, apart from marketing, analyzing/understanding – or should I say leveraging data should be a key factor.

**Interviewer:** How did you get to do your internship in an International advertising firm like Ogilvy & Mather? What did you learn from doing your internship there?

Ehsanul Haque Nitol: I worked in Digital Marketing for 2 years before I even graduated. Although my interactions were not with many people, I was able to utilize that experience to have a conversation with one of the group account managers at Ogilvy. He understood my interest in Digital Marketing and took me in as an intern after going through a screening in their Digital Services Department. I have learned a lot from Ogilvy & Mather which helped me in my following career. I got to learn from people who were handling clients like BAT, Perfetti, Teletalk, Huawei and many more. Although my main work was with the Huawei team.

**Interviewer:** What is the Startup Culture and how did you find this Startup culture to be different in Bangladesh (NSU) from in Ireland? Any similarities or differences?

Ehsanul Haque Nitol: It's hard to describe it, as my work has been mostly with a fresh company – or a workplace which has transitioned from a startup that still maintains that culture. One thing you comparable, though, is the work life culture. Being abroad, well-being is highly prioritized over everything, else which is mostly disregarded here in Bangladesh.

**Interviewer:** How did you find job at Uber Bangladesh? What skills have you learned from working there?

Ehsanul Haque Nitol: I applied through a friend of mine who was already working there. The first time he reached out to me was during my internship; at that time I didn't want to go ahead with it as I wanted to keep my commitment to where I was at that time. Once I was almost done with it I reached out to him if the role was still open and applied. Then I had to give an interview and exam to get selected. As I got to lead multiple roles based on my experience, which has been very diverse and in different departments. From Facilities to Quality to many more.

**Interviewer:** What helped you most to do your job at Facebook?

Ehsanul Haque Nitol: Everything I did, I believe has contributed to this job in Facebook. To be very honest, I don't know how otherwise to make sense of it. I guess my experience in Marketing to understand community as well as the operational experience I garnered was something the team was seeking.

**Interviewer:** From your experience what would your advice be to other NSU students?

Ehsanul Haque Nitol: CGPA matters, but what also matters is that you have practically enforceable knowledge. So while many students from my university are doing competitions, studying hard, it would be great to gain some real life experience no matter from where they can get it from.



## International Student Feature

*Kinga Wangmo is a graduate student at NSU. She came from Bhutan to pursue an Engineering degree. She is currently enrolled as a foreign student in the Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering in NSU.*

**Interviewer:** Tell us something about yourself.

**Kinga Wangmo:** If I were to introduce myself, I would proudly say I am an NSUer, as NSU defines who I am at this moment. However, to be more specific, I am Kinga Wangmo pursuing a Bachelor's degree in Civil and Environmental Engineering at NSU. I am from the eastern part of Bhutan, but I basically grew up in the western part of the country; so, I basically belong to these two parts of my country.



**Interviewer:** What made you choose NSU as your alma mater?

**Kinga Wangmo:** Previously I had no idea about North South University. I only thought that Bhutanese students came to Bangladesh to do MBBS, so I never thought that I would come here. I only knew that one day I would land up being an engineering graduate. As we came here through scholarship, I had little knowledge about the university before coming here. However, I did some background research on NSU. After receiving the confirmation to join NSU in Fall 2016, I came to know that it is the first private university in Bangladesh. That very information about the university made me realize that the university would obviously be a prestigious university with a high standard of education. I will always be grateful and indebted to the university authorities and our Majesty for bestowing me the opportunity to study at NSU.

**Interviewer:** Can you share some early stories from when you first came to Bangladesh?

**Kinga Wangmo:** Bhutan is a mountainous country so most of the roads there are in a zigzagged manner with lots of twist and turns. So, the first thing that made me worry a lot was the directions. Here every direction seemed the same because of the flatness of the land. I even got lost several times when I first came here and I think many foreigners would be able to relate to this experience of mine. I heard similar incidents from other foreign students as well. I, along with a friend, even got lost while returning from the university for the first time. If it wasn't for our building guard, we might have had to wander a lot to recognize the building, but these incidents will be fond memories on which to reminisce later.

**Interviewer:** As an international student, do you see cultural diversity in NSU? If yes, can you illustrate it a bit?

**Kinga Wangmo:** As an international student, I can really see cultural diversity at NSU. In the beginning it was a bit difficult to cope with the environment here, but meeting with other foreign students gave me the strength to blend in effortlessly well in a short time. I also think that the friendly coexistence of people from different nations on the NSU campus made my life easier. In my opinion, coexistence and interactions of people from diverse cultural background and different walks of life within the four walls of NSU perfectly illustrates the existence of cultural diversity of the university.

**Interviewer:** Where do you see yourself in the future?

**Kinga Wangmo:** I really can't say what the future holds for me but I am hopeful to be someone my parents will be proud of. If possible, I would like to go for further studies after graduating from NSU. For that I hope our department gets accreditation during my stay here, because it might pave my dream of pursuing further studies. In addition, I am hopeful to see myself in a position where I would not have to lean on others but be the pillar others can blindly lean on without a shadow of doubt. As every other being, I also only urge for a happy future but life is a tincture of chocolate and lemon which sours at times but is ultimately sweet. So, I am also visioning a future which would ultimately be sweet.



**Interviewer:** Anything you wish to tell the future applicants of NSU?

**Kinga Wangmo:** For the future applicants of NSU, I would like to simply state a fact that it will never be a mistake to study at North South University, even if you happen to regret your decision due to loneliness and staying detached from family. It would be a sweet mistake you might never want to change. Lastly, I can assure the applicants that safety would never be an issue within the walls of NSU.

## New Talent at the OEA



**Tahmina Akter Sonali**, joined NSU Office of External Affairs as a Guest Worker on 23rd December, 2018. She is also a post-graduate student in NSU School of Business & Economics. Before this she used to work as an IELTS Marker in IDP Education Australia. She has completed her Bachelors of Arts in English from North South University.

On 17th December 2018, **Sara Tasin** joined Office of External Affairs. She joined as a Student Worker, and is currently a student of North South University. She belongs to the Department of Economics and is pursuing her Bachelor of Science in Economics. Sara is currently in her 12th semester and plans to graduate from North South University by 2019. Before joining here, she completed an internship from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Dhaka. In June 2018, she completed her Sub-Executive tenure at The Marketing Club of North South University.