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How Versatile Clubs are Making a Difference at Private Universities



Southeast University Games and Sports Club

For most university students, their clubs or student bodies are like their families. Student organisations, whether they promote cultural activities, volunteering, sporting events or science, are of utmost importance for the ecosystem of an educational institution. The private universities of our country have a strong network of student clubs which bring students closer to the practical side of things, as well as theoretical. Though these clubs have accomplished a lot in terms of skill-building and networking, there remain many challenges that sometimes hinder these endeavours. In conversation with some of the most prominent university clubs in the country, we find out what drives them, what they intend to achieve, and what challenges they face along the way.

Electrical and Electronics Club, United International University

According to the members of the Electrical and Electronics Club, UIU, none of the present or ex-club members are unemployed, thanks to the skills that they have attained here. Former president Mr Jewel speaks enthusiastically about the veterans: “Such is the value of our club that our senior alumni, as well as many of our current members, are employed at places like WAPDA, PWD and WASA.”

At present, the club is 750-member strong, with an executive body comprising 14 talented members, headed by President Shimul Shahriar. Formerly known as the Science and Engineering Club, the Electrical and Electronics Club of UIU is closely affiliated with the Electrical and Electronics Department of the university. Under the supervision of Dr Iqbal Bahar Chowdhury, head of the department, and Dr Inthekhab Alam, faculty advisor, UIU's very own hub for young aspiring engineers is always buzzing with activity. Their study tours, exhibitions, competitions, workshops and seminars include subject matters such as PLC, PCB, electronic circuit design, AutoCAD, embedded systems and solar mini-grid design. UIUEEC is also a proud organiser of the Intra University Project Competitions held annually on campus. Among its many notable achievements, UIUEEC boasts its glorious participation in Techkriti 2018, held at IIT Kanpur, India. In the Robo War Category of the competition, the club secured first position in the Bangladesh zonal round. “One great facility we have is that we can use the department lab for our projects,” says Jewel. Furthermore, he stresses the necessity of internship opportunities for club members, which the university can help provide through liaison with employers.

Entrepreneurship Club, Daffodil International University

Established less than six months ago, the Entrepreneurship Club consists of members who wish to help people with entrepreneurial dreams. Founding President Iqbal Hossain Shemul says, “We look for people with an entrepreneurial mindset because that's the very core of our work.” Most of the members of the club are of the Department of Entrepreneurship—a department that isn't available in most universities—who organise workshops, seminars and grooming sessions to help students from other departments understand the art of entrepreneurship, how to pitch their business ideas to investors and start their journey.

Although quite new, the club has already organised two events in its own campus, namely Funding Your Venture and Future of Entrepreneurship, both of which focused on the ins and outs of entrepreneurship. Organising entrepreneurial events isn't where the club wants to limit itself. They wish to conduct workshops in DIU that would teach students various courses on entrepreneurship that guide them from brainstorming to the end stage of making the business stand on its feet. The only challenge they face, being a

department-based club, is coordinating all the members of the club to attend meetings and discussions, in the middle of working on their own ventures. On the other hand, the chairman, a self-made entrepreneur himself, who's also the club's advisor, provides an admirable amount of support, along with the strong alumni community and the university's PR team who provide campus radio announcements of the club's events.



BRAC University Robotics Club

Robotics Club, BRAC University (ROBU)

“I want people to know that robotics is fun. We want to debunk the myth of engineers being boring, like they show on TV. We want more female participation,” says an enthusiastic Adnan Sabbir, President, BRACU Robotics Club. Driven completely by passion, the club works tirelessly to inspire people's interest in robotics. Besides attending national and international competitions, they organise basic robotics workshops and classes at TARC, BRACU's famous residential campus, and visit schools to encourage the youth. The club specialises in advanced robotics, PCB design and IOT.

Built with nothing but passion, their robot came first in Asia at NASA's Robotics competition, on the year of its inception in 2012. The members of the club built the first Bangladeshi AUV in March 2018 which stood 7th at the Singapore AUV Challenge, with which came its own struggles. While foreign teams managed to get funding of over Tk 50-

60 lac, they had to make do with less than Tk 1 lac. Lack of funding is a never-ending challenge for the club, for which they end up using low-cost components. The praises they received in Singapore for presenting the least expensive robot didn't discount the struggle to find underwater components or a swimming pool for testing.

The club is working diligently on inspiring women to contribute by arranging women-centred workshops, competitions and all-women teams. But alongside these challenges, there remains undying support from the university which never failed to provide financial assistance to the best of its ability. They hope this support will one day pay off and help the robotics community gain more coverage.



ULAB Shangskriti Shangshad Club

Shangskriti Shangshad, University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh

Following the motto of upholding Bangladeshi culture, ULAB's Shangskriti Shangshad is not only the biggest club in the university but also the most diverse one. With the sole focus on Bangladeshi culture, highlighting folk and contemporary Bengali songs, alongside a wide range of dances and Bengali poem recitations, the members are given training on a daily basis by proficient trainers and university faculties through practice sessions and workshops.

Participating in cultural competitions of other universities and arranging intra-university competitions aren't where they want to limit themselves. Rafia Islam, the GS, says, "We focus a lot on fostering the talents of those who have stage fright or are shy. We believe nothing should get in the way of one's chance to flourish through talent." And all of their purposes are fully supported by the club advisor and the officials of the co-curricular office. They plan to represent the club in a greater manner, with all this support.

Media Club, Canadian University of Bangladesh

At many educational institutions, having organisations dedicated to film and media is not very common. Canadian University of Bangladesh not only has a separate Film and Television Department, but also a separate Media Club for budding film enthusiasts. This relatively new club, founded in September 2016, engages students who exhibit interest and talent in photography, filming and handling PA equipment. “As long as you have a passion for media—be it photo, video, or audio-visual—and you have the drive to volunteer for events, join the Media Club.

We have something for everyone,” says Dr Nurul Islam Babul, Advisor, CUB Media Club.

Indeed, the members are always on their toes, enthusiastically speaking of their various training programmes on video editing, filmmaking and photography, as well as exhibitions, workshops, field trips and competitions. This 200-member-strong club provides its members with a unique platform so that they can kickstart their career in television, radio, film or print media. This year, the club is hosting their very first Inter University Mobile Cam Photography Contest, as well as an informative seminar on Virtual Reality. “We take pride in our workshops on almost every aspect of media—from costume design to lighting, from script writing to animation. We have done it all. Some of the most brilliant minds in Bangladeshi media have come to teach our students the inner workings of the media ecosystem of the country,” says a proud Dr Islam, and rightfully so. The students at the CUB Media Club are making their mark by learning from the best in the industry.

Communications Club, North South University (NSUCC)

A warm, cozy atmosphere is the first thing that greets one when they enter the NSUCC club room. Indeed, every single day is a celebration for the members of this club. Previously known as the English Club, the Communications Club still remains affiliated with the Department of English and Modern Languages (DEML) at North South University. This happens to be one of the only clubs to have regularly received support from the university for various competitions abroad, such as the Asian English Olympics, and won many accolades.

Sohana Hasan, Vice President, Logistics speaks of their many Member Development Programmes. “At the moment, we have two such MDPs running; one is the Vocal Project and the other is WordShop.” The Vocal Project is a public speaking platform, while

WordShop is a creative writing session. Ms Hasan speaks highly of veteran members who have helped conduct these events, as well as celebrated writers and poets who have graced these occasions. When it comes to problems, she talks about the lack of sponsors. “Since the club activities are mostly related to English, sponsors cannot fully trust that they would get the best return for their sponsorship.” Other members also speak of challenges regarding getting permission for events and closing event budgets. In future, this promising club seeks more flexibility and cooperation from their institution with regard to these problems. NSUCC is popular for publishing English Matters, their very own magazine. “We here at NSUCC ensure that every student of NSU is groomed to be among the best writers, speakers and individuals of the country,” says Ms Hasan.



Business and Social Entrepreneurship Club, Eastern University

Business and Social Entrepreneurship Club, Eastern University

There is more to education than just attending classes and completing assignments, at least, according to the members of this unique business club. The Business and Social Entrepreneurship Club at Eastern University focuses on developing soft skills in its members to prepare them for their careers. This club is 120-member strong, with a ten-member executive board. Established in June 2013, the Business and Social Entrepreneurship Club is one of the most prominent names within the campus as well as in the most happening business competitions in the country.

General Secretary Abirul Islam speaks highly of the hardworking club members and their enthusiasm to do better professionally. “In today's competitive job market, our club helps students gain the necessary interpersonal skills. We regularly organise business case competitions, business idea competitions and workshops.” He further says, “Our club activities are not just limited to BBA or Economics students, rather everyone from every department is welcome to take part. We have even arranged workshops for young college students, who were really excited to learn from us!” Among their workshops, some prominent names are Brand Yourself for soft skills development, Key to Career Success and Power of PowerPoint.

There are, however, some problems that the club members think should be addressed. One of them is the lack of a designated club room for the members, because of which they face problems in organising regular meetings. In spite of these hurdles, the club has organised many prominent startup idea and business case competitions, such as BizAces and Biz Fest.

Games and Sports Club, Southeast University

The student clubs of Southeast University ensure a connection of either academic or interest between the clubs and the members. They have gained international exposure and brought trophies home. The university's games and sports club very recently brought glory by becoming the champion of a Futsal tournament and earned praise because of their performance at the Faraz Gold Cup.

While the club runs on an undying motivation to take a step forward with every participation in different tournaments, fighting the constant challenges has also become an integral part. The biggest challenge is the lack of budget. The challenges don't discount the support however. Coaches are hired externally to train students and have never failed to show utmost dedication, while the team always reciprocated that. The expense of the coach is completely borne by the university, something the club is grateful for. Guided by the moderator and assistant moderators, both faculty members, the captain and vice-captain, both senior students, take the responsibility to inspire the teams to dream big. Mohammad Imtiaz, Director of Branding, Communication & PR says, “Members firmly believe that the country comes first.” National team players have previously been invited to inspire and motivate students to do more for the country and her people. They're inspired to give back and believe that in today's world, certificates aren't enough.

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