

Vice Chancellor Amin Sarkar's 18th Convocation Speech

In the name of God, most gracious, most merciful, I welcome you all, our honorable chief guest, Mr. Nurul Islam Nahid, MP and Minister of Education; respected Chairman of the University Grants Commission (UGC), Professor Azad Chowdhury; our honorable chairman, Mr. Benajir Ahmed and the members of the Board of Trustees; our honorable convocation speaker, Dr. Randy Beutler, President of Southwestern Oklahoma State University; distinguished guests, proud parents; respected faculty and staff; and most of all our dear graduating students, of whom I am so very proud: peace be upon you all and good morning!

I could not be more pleased to present to the nation and to the world our 2015 class, 2,000 strong, the 18th and largest group to ever graduate from North South University. These fine young men and women are receiving bachelor and master degrees in business and engineering, in science and health, in social sciences and humanities. They are the future of Bangladesh, and, judging from them, our future has never looked brighter. They are now ready, stocked with knowledge in their chosen field and imbued with a sense of social responsibility and a love for their people and their country, to face the world. We at NSU look forward to the bright future our graduating class of 2015 will create for themselves and for all of us.

Ladies and gentlemen, North South University continues to make great strides forward. We have reorganized the university into four schools and 16 departments. The school dean is now an academic leader for improving educational quality while the chair is the manager of the department so that faculty members teach effectively and make intellectual contributions in their teaching disciplines.

We have discontinued faculty overload teaching and raised faculty salaries by 39% to 53% to give them more time and greater resources to contribute to student learning and to research. Now our full-time faculty members teach not more than four classes per semester. We have also discontinued undergraduate teaching assistantships to ensure greater interaction between students and faculty members, as seen in student centered bachelor/master degree-level colleges/universities in the U.S. Our full-time faculty members now have an allocation of their 40 weekly hours to teaching, research and service. For efficiency, recently we replaced the old course selection practice and introduced electronic registration so that students do not have to stand on long lines for long hours. Similarly, we

discontinued the unnecessary practice of face to face interview of all parents and guardians of financial aid applicants. We raised our annual financial support to our students to more than 100 million taka.

Twenty three years ago, our trustees, the top business leaders of the country, founded an American-style university with a broad based undergraduate education in business and economics. Later on, the university added degrees in other subjects/disciplines but not with a broad-based curriculum. Recently, we have modified the existing curriculum to provide a broad-based undergraduate education having significant general education curriculum, in addition to the required competency in a major subject of study. All students will be exposed to courses in the arts and humanities, social and natural sciences, mathematics and computers. They will develop lifelong skill-sets, abilities and knowledge in written, speaking and electronic communication; critical thinking and analysis; ethics and social responsibilities; diversity and tolerance; global perspectives and sustainability.

We have standardized the length of all four-year undergraduate (UG) degree programs to 120 credit hours (with the exception of 130 credit hours in Engineering and Law). We have also standardized the length of master's degrees to 30-36 credit hours. We have developed new UG degree majors in Media Studies, Ethics and Social Responsibility, Entrepreneurship, Supply Chain Management, e-business, Criminal Justice, Organizational Communication, and Homeland Security. Our new MBA concentrations include management of technology, pharmaceutical and health services, e-business, entrepreneurship, and supply chain. The revised curricula for more than 60% of our programs have already been approved by our regulatory body, UGC. We are thankful to UGC for their support in our endeavors, as we continue to wait for approval of the remaining curricula and the new majors and concentrations.

We are currently preparing for the peer-reviewed and voluntary accreditation from the U.S. both for the institution as a whole and for professional programs. Our business programs and our engineering and computer programs are already in the process for ACBSP and ABET accreditation, respectively. We are in the ACBSP candidacy status and hope to be accredited within 2015. Our public policy (MPPG) and public health (MPH) programs are also preparing for NASPAA and CEPH accreditation, respectively. All these positive changes were possible only because of strong support of the trustees and the majority of our faculty and staff.

Our endeavor for accreditation will enhance educational quality and allow our students to transfer credits freely between NSU and American universities and many other prestigious foreign universities. This will allow NSU students to study abroad and students of other countries to study at NSU. It will also significantly enhance the already high value of a NSU degree for both those students who wish to pursue advanced degrees and for those about to enter the job market or to become entrepreneurs. Please bear in mind, this accreditation is a means to achieve our greater mission.

Our mission as an institution has been, is, and will continue to be to do our utmost to help our students become what they themselves and you, their parents and guardians, have always wanted them to be. Our mission is to produce young men and women who are critical and analytical thinkers, life-long learners with excellent leadership and communication skills. Our mission is to produce ethical and socially responsible graduates who champion the causes of diversity and tolerance and who are globally aware and committed to sustainability and social justice.

Ladies and gentlemen, as you can see, we continue to strive for excellence and our students are our focus. I would especially like to thank and to congratulate the parents and guardians and family members of our graduates. You had choices but put your trust in us for better education of your children. You have sacrificed and struggled to give these young people the support necessary for them to succeed, and they have made you proud today. I am fully confident that as they enter the workplace or pursue higher studies or become entrepreneurs in the coming days and years that they will make you, and us, and the country prouder still. May God bless you all!