

## A D D R E S S

### PRO VICE CHANCELLOR

#### DR. SYED FERHAT ANWAR

PRO VICE CHANCELLOR  
EAST WEST UNIVERSITY



Honorable President of the People's Republic of Bangladesh and Chancellor of East West University Professor Dr. Iajuddin Ahmed, Honorable Minister of Education Dr. M Osman Farruk, M.P., convocation speaker Justice Mustafa Kamal, President Board of Directors Dr. Mohammed Farashuddin, Dean of Faculties Professor Abdul Mannan, Registrar Mrs. Firdaus Ali, Chairman of UGC Prof. Dr. M Asaduzzaman, members of UGC, Vice Chancellors and Pro-Vice Chancellors of universities, members of Board of Directors of East West University, members of Academic Council of EWU, members of media, esteemed faculty members, parents and guardians, ladies and gentleman, the graduates, Assalamu Alaikum and a very warm welcome to you all on behalf of the university and on my personal behalf.

Let me first of all congratulate today's successful students for their achievement. Last week, as we were preparing the occasion, I met with a parent who spoke about how her daughter had fallen in love with East West University. She related how she had been first enthused by her conversation with a friend, and how her enthusiasm had built as she continued her life as a student. After I heard the story, I realized how those of us who live nearby fail to appreciate what a wonderful asset we have here, right under our noses.

Maybe it's because we are, in the greater scheme, a young university. This year, we begin the journey of our 8th year. By comparison to many public universities, we are a toddler; by world we are a newborn. So, maybe we doubt that a university at 7 can really be very good. From a short distance, it's easy for us to see our flaws. And sometimes we let those flaws loom so large that they obscure the fact that despite our age, we are building a fine university. So as we begin to celebrate our 8th year of journey, let's step back and take a look at where we've been, where we are, and where we intend to go.

January 10, 1996 EWU got permission from the Government and started operations from October of the same year and opened two departments of Business Administration and English with enrollment of 20 students and 6 faculty members.

The journey started with "Uncertainty". Perhaps it was this uncertainty that has moved us forward to fulfill promises made and to charter new initiatives. We held fast to our mission, never wavered from our course, and strengthened our resolve to achieve even greater successes for this university.

Today, we are an institution that has a clear purpose and a clear mission. We know who we are; we know what we are about; we know our priorities.

The past 7 years have led us not only to focus, but to accomplishments. There is, I believe, ample, even compelling evidence that we are among the best of our kind.

The outstanding achievements of our community of faculty, staff, students, members of Academic

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Council and the members of the Board of Directors bring distinction to the experience directed towards the dissemination and creation of knowledge. I would like to share with you a select number of these.

Our academic offerings are the heart of this institution, and we strengthened them this past year with new programs and structures. Three new departments were opened last year - The Department of Pharmacy, Department of Information and Communication Engineering and the Department of Mathematics & Physics. The enthusiasm and zeal shown by the members of these departments in making their presence felt in the academia deserves congratulation.

Last month, the Board of Trustees approved the Law & Nursing degree program. These programs will fulfill commitment to public and community service. This responds to employment needs and opportunities and will be in the forefront of establishing national standards and educational certifications for the profession.

I want to compliment the Business department for bringing glory to the University almost single handedly in depicting the image of quality in the mind of our community. We are proud today and can claim ourselves to house one of the best Business schools in the country.

As we develop the self-study, we will point with pride to the great strides made this past year in the area of information technology. We hit the information highway at full throttle. We developed an Information Technology Strategic Plan for the University spearheaded by the CSE & ICE department.

The most visible accomplishments of the past year have been those that have enhanced the quality and beauty of our campus' physical environment. It is because you - faculty and students and staff - have strongly felt that the needs for facility and have shared on the importance of physical infrastructure as a moral issue. The registrar along with her team deserves congratulations for all jobs well done.

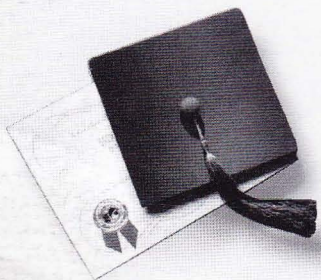
In 2003-04, we look forward to consolidating our program. During this phase we look forward to looking into strengthening our English Department, Placement program to ensure jobs for our graduates, Research & Development, Library strengthening, and Joint Collaboration with renowned universities.

During the coming academic year, we will begin the process of preparation for an accreditation by 2005. As the first step in this process, we have taken measures to convene a broad-based committee of faculty, staff, and other members of the university community to undertake a comprehensive and rigorous institutional self-study. This self-study will be aligned with the University Strategic Plan and will help us identify institutional strengths and areas that need improvement.

Though we have a good story to tell and we've made some outstanding accomplishments, we're by no means perfect. Let's look at some of the initiatives that need attention this year to make East West University better.

In the last seven years, our enrollment has gone from 20 to 3,556. During that same period, approximately 10% of continuing students dropped out. We must aggressively stem these losses. We must listen to what admitted students tell us about the reasons they fail to keep up with the pace. And we must address their issues.

While we celebrate our students' achievements and the quality of our graduates, we must recognize that improving student retention is critical to the University's future. I am grateful to our Academic Committee for its analysis and recommendations to reduce attrition, we hope to develop close relationships with our students, their peers and faculty through linked courses, which will create academic learning communities.





Whenever we seek to improve retention and, subsequently, graduation rates, it is important for us to remember that helping to achieve these goals is everyone's responsibility. Each of us has a profound impact on our students' campus experience through our various interactions with them and through the relationships we form with them as faculty, mentor and service providers. Providing our students with the best possible experience both inside and outside of the classroom must be our relentless focus.

Only by doing this can we truly move forward to realize our institutional goals to improve learning, increase retention, achieve greater excellence in faculty research, cultivate a student-centered campus life, and increase our visibility in the region.

There is one piece of unfinished business that needs to be addressed, and that is the building of our new campus. You will be glad to learn that our new Campus will be operational within two years and the location is one of the most strategic point of Dhaka City.

As Acting Vice Chancellor of this university, I know that our collective accomplishments of this past year are the direct result of your individual efforts - whether faculty, professional staff, or student. Your hard work and dedication to the mission and goals of this institution are among its greatest strengths. I pledge to you that I will work with you and the board to seek the support of the government and related organization for us to be successful.

We must keep our ambassadors the alumni, updated and make them feel proud of us. I am going to request the board to attach a special place for the alumni of our university. We could call it the "alumni hall". The total number of alumni that we have now including today's graduates is 525 and they are the future pillars of the university.

Let me now focus on the stars of today - the graduates. Your past is your inalienable property, you cannot deny it, and, for better or for worse, it will shape the rest of your lives. In a sentimental moment, you may long for the lost innocence and bliss of ignorance, but that ignorance is lost forever: you will wear the crown of Graduates in a few minutes from now and you will have to carry the burden of your university education every working hour for the rest of your lives, I correct myself, even in your sleep you will be pressed to have dreams full of responsibility.

Your parents understood the idea of progress, but for them it happened at a glacial pace. I remember as a kid going to learn about the amazing new developments in technology like colored refrigerators with built in ice makers. But progress was something reported yearly - in hindsight rather quaint. Your generation is entering the workforce on the second half of the chessboard -- a phrase originally coined by the brilliant American inventor and author Ray Kurzweil. He recounts the tale of the Emperor of China and the inventor of chess. The Emperor was so delighted by the game that he offered the inventor anything he wanted in the kingdom. The inventor asked the Emperor for rice.

"I would like one grain of rice on the first square of the chessboard, two grains of rice on the second square, four grains of rice on the third square," and so on. Thinking this would amount to little, the Emperor readily agreed.

But fulfilling the inventor's request is impossible. With the rice being doubled with each square, the final square would require 18 million billion grains of rice - enough to blanket the world. While the amounts of rice are infinitesimal in the beginning, they become substantial - about four billion grains - by halfway through the chessboard.

You are walking onto the second half of the board. The gains achieved in digital technologies and the radical upheaval in business in other institutions grow more astounding by the week. I remember emptying my clay bank to buy a one band portable radio. This year Intel will add more than 10 million transistors to its leading microchip. And there is no end to such progress in sight. Transistors will

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continue to shrink, processor power will continue to double and redouble, chips will be imbedded into every object, internet bandwidth will continue to expand, there will be far reaching changes in the way we do business, work, play, take care of ourselves and even think - for the better.

You take this for granted. It leaves my generation slack-jawed. This gives you an unparalleled opportunity to prosper and to lead economic change and development.

With this comes awesome responsibility. You also have an historic opportunity to create unprecedented progress in society and I'm not just referring to Bangladesh.

Moreover, I believe you'll find that your personal goals for a good life will increasingly be linked to those of others on the planet. In this new world, self interest and common interest are becoming aligned like never before. The global village needs business innovation for economic progress. But businesses need a world of social justice, equality of opportunity and stability for an effective global marketplace for goods, services and human capital.

What the world really needs now is a new generation of fresh, energized, savvy champions for change. Perhaps international economic and social development, and stewardship of the earth were ideas waiting - waiting for a generation that thinks different and better.

You are the vanguard of this new generation. You have come of age, in the digital age - with a global orientation, humanitarian outlook, access to knowledge, collaborative spirit, innovative thinking and a facility with the tools for learning and value creation that my generation could only begin to envy. You are uniquely equipped to lead this change. You've had the front row seats on today's unprecedented upheaval. You've been studying it. And now you're moving onto the stage. At your fingertips is the most powerful tool for communications and learning ever. With you rest the hopes of the world. Carry this mantle well.

In closing, I urge all of our family members to face the coming year confident that the future is ours to shape and that we have even more powers to unfold as we pursue our work on behalf of this community. Ours is a wonderful, compelling story. We must tell it loud and clear to all those who benefit from the work of this University and with whose support we will achieve even greater successes. I promise that if we continue to get your support, our teamwork will ensure that East West University will emerge as one of the finest institution of South East Asia.

Thank you very much Ladies and Gentlemen.

May Allah Subhanwatala have peace on all of you.

