# STAR ALUMNUS
## CELEBRATING JOURNEYS THAT INSPIRE GENERATIONS

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# The role of AIUB in building leaders at
# HOME AND ABROAD



Asif Parvez

Jahid Shohel

**American International University- Bangladesh (AIUB) has long been a leading institution dedicated to nurturing talented professionals in technology, management, and other fields. With a strong focus on practical learning and industry readiness, AIUB has empowered many graduates to excel in Bangladesh and across the globe.**

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This article highlights success stories of two AIUB alumni: Jahid Shohel and Asif Parvez.

### Jahid Shohel

Jahid Shohel graduated from AIUB in 2002 with a bachelor's degree in Computer Science. Today, he leads software engineering efforts at Disney Streaming, the platform behind Disney+, ESPN+, and Hulu. "Right now, I am working as lead software engineering at Disney Streaming. The role is based in Disney's Manhattan office in New York," he shares.

With nearly 20 years in the tech industry, Jahid has worked with a mix of large and small companies including Sony Mobile, Qlik, IKEA, and Disney. Over the years, he has held roles from software engineer to lead architect. His recent move from Sweden to the United States was driven by family reasons, and it came with the challenge of finding a role that aligned with both his expertise and personal values.

"When I was looking for opportunities, I got an offer from America's largest bank for an architect role with a good pay package. Even though I was unemployed at that time, I decided to decline the offer because that conflicts with my religious values," Jahid recalls. Instead, he focused on companies where he could contribute meaningfully without compromising his principles.

"Disney is a company that creates dreams for kids. Disney has very good work-life balance and does not conflict with my moral and religious values, so I decided to look for opportunities in Disney. After consecutive seven interview rounds, I finally landed my current role."

Of course, adjusting to life abroad was not without its difficulties. Jahid highlights how cultural differences in upbringing required significant adaptation. "The way kids are brought up in Bangladesh is different in western countries. Like many others, I got used to spoon feeding everywhere, from household chores to how to study a subject. It took some time for me to get used to those changes."

But the biggest challenge, he says, was reclaiming self-confidence. "Being born in a third world country, where rules are made to be broken, everyday listening 'you can't!', 'you are a failure!', 'not for you!' - all these destroys our confidence. And it's very tough to get back that confidence, especially when you are on your own."

Two key influences helped him regain his faith in himself: his religious beliefs and his mother's words. "God said, appreciate and keep trying, I will give you more," Jahid explains. "And my Mom always used to say, 'If others can, then you can. Don't underestimate yourself'."

Working for The Walt Disney Company fills Jahid with pride. "The Walt Disney is a company that is focused to create better everyday life for people, especially for kids. Creating magical memories that people will carry rest of their life. And I think, that is awesome! It's worth being part of that happy-moment creation."

At Disney Streaming, Jahid's work impacts roughly 183 million users globally. His team focuses on building systems that are highly available, fault-tolerant, and deliver results with minimal delay. They develop complex algorithms to find the best route to digital content, balancing many factors such as user location, IP prefixes, ASN, and account sharing.

"My team is responsible for finding best possible route to digital content. Developing algorithms to find best path considering many parameters is a complex problem to solve," Jahid explains. "During my bachelor education in AIUB I was first introduced to programming. From building blocks to becoming a computer software professional, all it rooted to my bachelor's degree."

"AIUB was not that big when I was student," Jahid adds. "But I was lucky enough to have good teachers who taught me well to become what I am today."

Jahid's commitment to learning and growth extends beyond formal education. He was active in extracurricular activities throughout his schooling and university life. "During school life I was involved with scouting, later in the university I participated in different programming contests."

Even in his professional career, Jahid contributes by hosting training sessions and managing programming communities that sometimes include hundreds of thousands of members.

To current university students chasing ambitious dreams, Jahid offers heartfelt advice: "If others can, then you can. Don't underestimate yourself, don't give up. Winners never quit, quitters never win. Let you be the only one who decides what you are, a winner or a quitter."

He acknowledges that making mistakes is inevitable. "Making mistake is part of every process, so don't let mistakes stop you. Founder of IKEA Ingvar Kamprad said, 'Only those who are asleep makes no mistakes'. So, don't worry about making mistakes, just don't make dumb mistakes."

Finally, Jahid encourages persistence and courage, "Dream big and be stubborn about achieving your dreams. Remember, as Walt Disney said: All our dreams can come true, if we have the courage to pursue them."

### Asif Parvez

Asif Parvez currently serves as the Registrar of Independent University, Bangladesh (IUB). With over 26 years of experience spanning academic leadership, administration, and teaching, Parvez's journey is a testament to dedication and strategic growth in the education sector.

Holding Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Management Information Systems (MIS) and Management Science from AIUB, he has previously held leadership positions including Deputy Registrar and Deputy Controller of Examinations at AIUB, alongside teaching as an Associate Professor.

In a recent conversation, Parvez shared his perspectives on managing the dual responsibilities of academic leadership, the skills crucial for such roles, and advice for future academic leaders.

Handling both academic and administrative duties requires a fine balance. Parvez explains, "Managing both academic and administrative tasks as a registrar requires a structured approach and strong multitasking abilities." He emphasises the importance of clear communication and collaboration among various departments to ensure institutional policies support overarching goals. "Leveraging technology for record-keeping and workflow automation helps maintain efficiency," he adds. "Most importantly, I focus on creating a student-centred environment while upholding academic integrity and supporting faculty and staff in their roles."

When asked about how university students can prepare for leadership roles in academia, Parvez advises proactive involvement. "Aspiring academic leaders should actively engage in both academic and extracurricular activities during their university years," he suggests. He recommends gaining leadership experience through student organisations, academic committees, and internships in university administration. Developing interpersonal, organisational, and problem-solving skills early on can build a strong foundation for future roles.

Parvez identifies key skills necessary in his current role: effective communication, organizational management, conflict resolution, and strategic planning. Reflecting on his education, he credits AIUB for playing a significant role in shaping these competencies. "The continuous curriculum updates equipped me with technical and analytical abilities, while collaborative projects, presentations, and group activities enhanced my communication and teamwork skills," he shares. "Participating in various campus activities and academic committees also gave me a deeper understanding of how universities operate, which has been invaluable in my professional life."

Extracurricular engagement was an important part of Parvez's university experience. He recalls, "Engaging in student clubs and university events provided opportunities to build leadership skills, network with peers, and develop a sense of responsibility beyond the classroom. These experiences helped me become more adaptable, improved my time management, and fostered a sense of community engagement, which are important in my current administrative and academic responsibilities."

A pivotal moment in Parvez's career path emerged during his undergraduate days when he worked as a student assistant in the registration department. "It sparked my interest in academic administration, especially those that involved real-life problem-solving related to organizational management," he says. His active participation in academic operations and administrative roles further nurtured his inclination toward higher education management.

Reflecting on his journey, Parvez offers advice he would give his younger self: "Embrace every opportunity for learning—both inside and outside the classroom. It's important not to underestimate the value of networking, participating in diverse activities, and seeking mentorship." He underscores the importance of building relationships, being proactive in personal development, and welcoming new experiences. "Every challenge faced and lesson learned during university can become a steppingstone for future growth," he concludes.

## Faisal Kabir's first steps in UIU led him to the world of AI and healthcare

If he could offer advice to his university self, Kabir would stress building problem-solving abilities, taking part in programming contests, and engaging in hands-on projects. He would also encourage joining student organisations for the networking and leadership opportunities they provide.

Now based in the United States as a tenure-track Assistant Professor in the Computer Science department at PSU Harrisburg, Kabir's work spans teaching, research, and service. He teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in AI, ML, natural language processing, and related areas. His research addresses data science, explainable AI, large language models, and their applications in healthcare and interdisciplinary contexts.

In 2025, Kabir and Sara Imanpour, Assistant Professor of Health Administration at Penn State Harrisburg, received $100,000 through the AIM-AHEAD Program for Artificial Intelligence Readiness (PAIR), funded by the NIH. The award will support the creation of an AI Health Research Lab aimed at improving healthcare access and outcomes.

The PAIR program is designed to enhance AI readiness at institutions across the country, focusing on training, improved grant writing skills, and fostering collaboration. For Kabir, the grant represents an important step toward a vision of using AI not just for automation but for making healthcare more equitable, accessible, and human-centered.

The lab will also mentor undergraduate and graduate students, giving them practical experience in applying AI to health-focused research. This, in many ways, mirrors Kabir's own experience at UIU, learning in an environment that valued both technical skill and collaborative exploration.

Even with the NIH grant and his position in the U.S., Kabir's journey can be traced back to UIU — to the teachers who encouraged him, the clubs he helped build, the leadership roles he took on, and the thesis project that introduced him to AI.

Those years didn't just prepare him for a career; they shaped the values that still guide him — collaboration, service, and a belief in using technology for social good. In many ways, the AI Health Research Lab at PSU Harrisburg is an extension of the same principles he practiced at UIU: combining technical expertise with human-centered goals, and creating opportunities for others to learn and contribute.

From being a first-batch undergraduate at a young university in Dhaka to becoming a principal investigator on a federally funded U.S. research project, Kabir's path demonstrates the enduring impact of a strong academic foundation paired with active engagement in one's community.