

HANDS-ON LEADERSHIP

How EWU prepares students for the real world

In today's fast-paced world, relying solely on academic knowledge gained in the classroom can be limiting and even counterproductive, as it does not foster the leadership skills that are increasingly in demand for today's competitive job market. Recognising this crucial reality, East West University (EWU) emphasises the development of dynamic leadership among its students. The university facilitates this through a range of club activities and active faculty-student collaboration. Such on-campus opportunities are essential for preparing students to become capable leaders in an era of rapid technological advancement.

One of the most accessible ways for students to develop leadership skills on campus is by joining a club. East West University currently hosts 23 clubs, including the Business Club, Debating Club, Science Club, Sports Club, Economics Club, and many others. These clubs, guided by faculty members, provide platforms for students to explore interests beyond the classroom, engage in extracurricular activities, and develop interpersonal and communication skills.

Reflecting on his transformative journey, G M Rabby, the current President of the East West University Business Club (EWUBC), shares, "I began my journey at the Business Club as a shy probationary member, eager to learn. Gradually, through small tasks and organising workshops, competitions, and seminars, I developed leadership, initiative, and confidence. Over time, I earned the trust of my seniors and accepted the responsibility to guide newcomers, oversee projects, and represent the club on larger stages. Now, as President, I apply these skills both within the club and in my

career in the corporate world. I feel proud that I chose to join EWUBC – it has undeniably helped me advance faster toward my goals."

Similarly, Nabila Shahabazee, President of the East West University Debating Club, emphasises the personal development she gained through club activities. She says, "Working for the club and presiding as its President, I have attained a plethora of soft skills, from conflict negotiation to event management. I have become a better listener, and I consider others' perspectives when making decisions and act with emotional intelligence. Organising events has required me to manage logistics, resolve conflicts, and coordinate diverse teams. All these experiences have solidified my leadership qualities."

Leadership development at EWU, however, is not limited to club activities. Students can also cultivate these skills through academic pursuits. Sadia Adnin, from the Department of Pharmacy, recounts how encouragement from faculty members enabled her to undertake a cross-departmental research project. She explains, "Collaborating with faculty members from both the Department of Pharmacy and the Department of Mathematics and Physical Sciences allowed me to explore advanced nanoparticle research beyond my major. The freedom my supervisors gave me to think independently and lead each stage of the project greatly boosted my confidence. This supportive academic environment helped me grow as a young researcher, strengthened my leadership skills, and motivated me as we prepared our work for publication."

Sourav Sarker, from the Department of Civil Engineering, similarly highlights how academic collaboration shaped his leadership development. He states, "Working with my

faculty mentor and EWUCRT—The Center for Research and Training, East West University—turned my interest in environmental sustainability into meaningful, hands-on research. I gained exposure to everything, from fieldwork to data analysis and manuscript preparation. Through their guidance, I developed confidence in my own academic voice, strengthened my technical and critical-thinking abilities, and learned to take ownership of complex tasks. This collaboration helped me grow into a more capable and accountable leader, enhancing my decision-making, communication, and teamwork skills."

These student experiences illustrate how an engaging campus life and active faculty member involvement foster confidence, promote critical thinking, and nurture leadership qualities. Emphasising this institutional commitment, Professor Dr Shams Rahman, Vice-Chancellor of East West University, stated, "Our goal is to provide a transformative education that balances academic excellence with real-world leadership. By empowering students to take ownership of their learning journeys, we ensure they graduate not merely as degree holders, but as visionary leaders prepared to contribute meaningfully to society."

Whether through club participation or academic collaboration, East West University remains firmly committed to the holistic development of its students.

