

DU loses its traditional academic character without DUCSU

Demands for holding elections of the Dhaka University Central Students Union (DUCSU) appears to be surfacing among the students after years of absence as the country's premier educational institution as it has not seen functioning of the students' forum for over two decades, reports BSS.

"It appears that the Dhaka University loses its traditional academic character in the absence of central students' union," said Shafayet Ahmed, a student of the Institute of Social Welfare and Research.

The ordinary students as well as university authorities, he said, are frequently facing different problems, which could have been set-

tled with a vibrant DUCSU, as students' unions are supposed to be the most effective academic forum of any university across the world.

"The absence of DUCSU has contributed to the rise of unhealthy student politics in the past two decades, when muscles instead of merit dominated the campus," said Nasim Ahmed, a final year student of the English department.

Dhaka University saw its last DUCSU election on June 6, 1990 for a one-year tenure amid a different political situation as the country was witnessing a campaign drawing its close against the then autocrat General Ershad.

Although DUCSU has not been functioning, the university authorities have been realizing fees for the central and hall unions from the students. The realized since 1990 today stands at Taka 6 crore.

Each student has to pay Taka 120 as union fees annually, of which Taka 60 goes to DUCSU and the rest is divided for the hall unions.

Besides, over the past 17 years, the university authorities have also been sanctioning over Taka 1.5 lakh annually for the salaries of DUCSU employees and the maintenance of its non-functional central students' union

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DU loses

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office.

Most of the resident and non-resident students of the university have raised a question as to why the money is being collected when the functions of DUCSU remain suspended and the students do not enjoy any extra facility that should have been offered by the central students union.

"It is unfortunate for the students," said Abul Kasem, a fourth year student of Political Science Department, pointing to the unusual dilly-dallying in holding the polls of the university central students body and the hall unions.

He went on saying, "We are paying fees for the unions to receive some extra curricular activities, but we are denied of our rights."

But even after the installation of successive democratic governments, a little initiative was taken to hold the DUCSU polls, blaming it on "unfavorable campus situation."

"We have witnessed even worst situation when activists of some students' organizations elbowed out ordinary students from the dormitories to be replaced by non-student hooligans or armed cadres," said Zafarullah Sohel, a student of International Relations Department.

Even teachers of the university agreed that the musclemen would

not have access to the campus or the residential halls if the DUCSU was there to look after the problems of the students.

"A central student union or the hall unions are also needed for the healthy entertainment practices and cultural activities on the campus, of which Dhaka University remained deprived for the past two decades," said Professor Shahid Uddin Ahmed, a former acting VC of the university.

He recalled the vibrant cultural and extra-curricular activities like sports and debate competitions, drama and musical festivals on the campus under the auspices of DUCSU and hall unions when Dhaka University said to have witnessed its golden period despite difficulties.

"In the absence of an elected student forum like DUCSU, the student organizations remain unaccountable. As a result instead of mobilizing students support they tend to dominate the campus with muscle power," he added.