ULAB enters WURI's Global Top 100 Innovative Universities

Photo: IQAC-ULAB

ULAB Enters WURI's Global Top 100 Innovative Universities

The University of Liberal Arts Bangladesh (ULAB) has entered the coveted Global Top 100 Innovative Universities in the World's Universities with Real Impact (WURI) Ranking for 2021. In ceremonies held on 10 June 2021 in the Korean capital of Seoul, WURI Project Leader Professor MOON Hwy-Chang announced that ULAB has placed 100th in the top 100 universities – the only Bangladeshi university on the list. The top five ranked universities are: (1) Massachusetts Institute of Technology (USA); (2) Stanford University (USA), (3) Minerva Schools at Keck Graduate Institute (USA); (4) Arizona State University (USA); and (5) Hanze University of Applied Sciences (Netherlands).

ULAB also ranked in various WURI categories. Under the Entrepreneurial Spirit category, ULAB made it to the top 50 universities, receiving a rank of 28. ULAB's entry to this category is the Dhaka International Mobile Film Festival (DIMFF) of the Media Studies an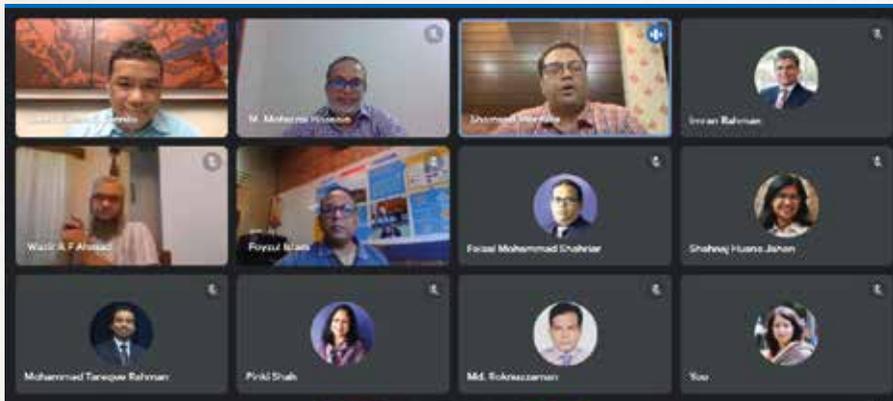d Journalism (MSJ) Department. DIMFF's purpose is to inspire and spark creativity in storytelling from people with limited income and resources through the use of a mobile device. Under the Ethical Value category, ULAB made it to the top 50 universities, obtaining a rank of 39. ULAB's entry to this category is the Building Resilient Universities Project (BRUP) of the Center for Enterprise and Society (CES). The project created a curriculum to promote diversity, tolerance and pluralism among university students. Under the Crisis Management category, ULAB made it to the top 50 universities, getting a rank of 27. ULAB's entry to this category is its "Shift to Online Learning during the COVID-19 Pandemic." The entry illustrated how the university thrived during the crisis by establishing central and departmental e-learning committees; conducting faculty and student surveys; caring for student well-being; building an online learning community; measuring faculty and student satisfaction; ensuring learning effectiveness; and reaching out to help other universities.

APQN Sets Standards for Online-Teaching Quality Assurance

In the past year (2020), in campus lockdown restrictions as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, online teaching has emerged onto the global higher education stage as a leading means of "adjusting to new environments" which suggests becoming a "disruptor" in higher education where operations are typically embedded in historical constancy.

Naturally, the definition of "quality" in higher education (HE) should be redefined amidst the rapidly changing expectations and conditions brought on by 2020. The question is how do internal quality assurance (IQA) and external quality assurance (EQA) monitor newly online teaching provision in higher education and develop future provision in a reliable and efficient manner? What is the quality of online courses and what are the outcomes of such training? Can we trust the quality of online education

Quality Assurance Committee Convened for the thirteenth time on 28 June 2021   *Photo: IQAC-ULAB*

APQN Sets Standards

and the qualifications of graduates who have been trained online?

The results of "APQN survey on COVID-19 impact in Higher Education Institutions" conducted from March to May in 2020, shows 68% of the respondents are "not satisfied" with online teaching, while "APQN Survey on Effectiveness of On-line Teaching" conducted in July in 2020, shows 34% respondents think online teaching is "inefficient". At APQN 8th forum entitled "Influence of COVID-19 on Higher Education Quality Assurance" held on July 28 in 2020, an urgent demand made APQN decided to develop APQN Standard for Online-Teaching Quality Assurance.

After the key elements of standard for online-teaching quality assurance were developed by Delphi Method at the beginning of 2021. Based on the Survey on "APQN Standard for Online Teaching Quality Assurance" was conducted in April, here is the final version of "APQN Standard for Online-Teaching Quality Assurance", endorsed by the 6th Board of APQN.

The principles includes 5 aspects: (1)information principle; (2) "teaching by learning" principle; (3) development principle; (4) validity principle; (5) objectivity/evidence principle.

Based on 5 principles, the indicators consist of 14 key features: (1) service, openness, sustainability in criterion 1 embodies "information principle"; (2) teaching design, teaching process and teachers' ICT literacy in criterion 2 and "learning process", "learners' ICT literacy" in Criterion 3, embody "teaching-by-learning principle", (3) objective achievement and satisfaction in Criterion 4 embodies "development principle";(4) assessment method, assessment mechanism and quality improvement in Criteria 5 embody "validity principle"; and (5) objectivity principle is applied to all 5 criteria.

QAC Approves 2nd Edition Curriculum Design/Review Manual

The University Grants Commission (UGC) has required all universities to follow an Outcome-Based Curriculum by the end of 2021. To comply with this requirement, ULAB's Institutional Quality Assurance Cell (IQAC) has revised the Curriculum Design/Review Manual, which was endorsed by the Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) in a meeting conducted on 28 June 2021. The QAC is headed by the Vice Chancellor and has as members, senior representatives of the university. The revised version of the Curriculum Design/Review Manual was deemed necessary due to the following reasons: (1) University Grants Commission (UGC) directive dated 6 February 2020 requiring all universities to have an Outcome-based Curriculum; (2) approval of the Bangladesh National Qualifications Framework (BNQF) dated January 2021; (3) approval of the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) standards in March 2021; and (4) ULAB's participation in the Times Higher Education Impact Rankings.

IQAC Director Invited to Philippine Roundtable

The Tarlac State University (TSU) hosted a roundtable discussion entitled "Re-VAMP (Venture on Academic Institutions Milestones and Practices) of the New Normal: Toward Sustainable and Smart Flexible Higher Education" on 6 May 2021 via Zoom Platform under a collaborative project of seven state universities and colleges in Region 3, Philippines. The discussion had two parts: first, each speaker shared about their institution's best practices in mitigating the effect of the pandemic in their respective academic community; and second, each speaker shared about the institutional challenges in the new normal. Prof. Jude William Genilo, Director of IQAC-ULAB, discussed the innovations ULAB has undertaken in the areas of governance, teaching and learning and student support services.

OBE International Network Inaugurates Bangladesh Chapter

United International University (UIU) organized the inaugural ceremony for opening the Bangladesh chapter of the International Network of Outcome Based Education (IN4OBE) on 18 April 2021. Prof. Dr. William Spady, Father of Outcome Based Education and CEO of the International Network for Outcome Based Education (IN4OBE), graced the occasion as Chief Guest. Other distinguished guests from IN4OBE, Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC), University Grants Commission of Bangladesh (UGC), Board of Accreditation for Engineering and Technical Education (BAETE) and esteemed faculty members and professionals were present in the ceremony.