Dhaka Tribune



Having promised transformative changes before the election, Ducsu leaders now find themselves navigating the delicate balance between student expectations and institutional realities. Photo shows Ducsu Vice President Abu Shadik Kayem, General Secretary SM Farhad, and AGS Mohiuddin Khan after the announcement of the election result on September 10

AHADUL KARIM KHAN

From promises to constraints: Ducsu leaders now trapped in limitations

Samsuddoza Nabab, Sushmita Munshi

As the newly elected Dhaka University Central Students' Union (Ducsu) and hall unit leaders settle into their roles, a stark reality is emerging: the gap between campaign promises and actual implementation capacity.

In the central council, the elected panel's core manifestos focused on ensuring accommodation for all students, creating a safe campus, and addressing long-standing student grievances. However, as they begin their term, the representatives are encountering significant limitations in authority and resources.

Questions are now arising: Can the elected leaders realistically deliver on their manifestos? How much power does the student body truly have? And what challenges are hall councils facing in their efforts to serve students effectively?

Having promised transformative changes before the election, Ducsu leaders now find themselves navigating the delicate balance between student expectations and institutional realities, with both students and observers closely watching how they bridge this gap.

Can elected representatives implement their manifesto?

Since Ducsu elected representatives cannot implement their manifestos directly, they aim to create pressure on the administration to see them realized.

According to current and former Ducsu and hall council leaders, the student body's role is largely limited to "pressurizing" the university to act.

Newly elected Ducsu Vice President Abu Shadik Kayem told Dhaka Tribune that Ducsu functions primarily as a "pressure group" and is engaging in ongoing discussions.

"We will compel the university administration from our position. The residency crisis for university students won't be resolved in a single day. This is our long-term plan."

SM Farhad, general secretary of Ducsu told Dhaka Tribune that they will observe for at least two months before publishing any "public statement" regarding any obstacles they are facing to implement their manifestos.

DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed told Dhaka Tribune that these tasks (manifestos) will have to be done "administratively" and not just by the administration–the "state's cooperation" is also needed here.

"If our mega project is implemented, our boys and girls will be able to get full residential facilities, and Ducsu elected representatives will play a supportive role in this."

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, president of Nagorik Oikya and former VP of Ducsu expressed that he has not seen the elected representatives' manifesto and does not remember it.

But about ensuring 100% housing, he told Dhaka Tribune: "How is Ducsu going to do that? There's no point in making unrealistic promises."

READ THE FULL STORY ONLINE

Mohiuddin Khan, assistant general secretary of Ducsu clarified to Dhaka Tribune that ensuring 100% housing does not mean that Ducsu will do it "themselves"–it means Ducsu will "persuade" in areas where it is needed.

"We're having discussions with different parts of the administration about where we can actually make this happen, and we're optimistic that based on the university's master plan, we're pressuring the administration to start work quickly within that framework," he added.

Another senior official at the University of Dhaka, told Dhaka Tribune seeking anonymity that every single student organization had made various promises without understanding the budget deficit.

"It's not even within the mandate. Budget is a secondary issue."

He further stated that no panel has given any importance to timelines or time frames.

"Without taking into consideration the financial constraints–whether for their own party, their panel, or the university–everyone is making all sorts of promises."

How much authority does the student body hold?

According to Ducsu VP Shadik Kayem, as for power or authority, Ducsu is the representative body of Dhaka University students.

"Now, for every task in the university, we need to create pressure at every level, compel the administration, particularly engage the alumni, utilize all the resources we have, alongside creating pressure on the administration and developing a roadmap for all these tasks–we will do everything."

According to Ducsu GS SM Farhad, due to being the elected body of the students, Ducsu holds significant power, and he also expressed that they are very optimistic about implementing their manifestos.

DU Proctor Saifuddin Ahmed told Dhaka Tribune that Ducsu will not be able to implement the manifestos themselves, but they can help "facilitate" them.

"As a pressure group, they can help make these things happen and can cooperate with the administration in various ways. We hope they will play a supportive role."

Mahmudur Rahman Manna, in this regard, argued that Ducsu only handles and is established and famous for "regular extracurricular" activities.