

"Empowering Futures: The Impact of GAABESU Research Awards - A Grateful Recipient's Perspective"

Avik Ghosh, 2019 ME

When I attended a Summer '23 alumni gathering to bid farewell to interns returning to their graduate schools after their stint in the Bay Area, I met Swapan Saha, an alumnus of the '88 batch of Electrical Engineering. His surprise at meeting a two-time recipient of the GAABESU Research Awards led him to ask for my perspective on receiving these prestigious accolades.

I am Avik Ghosh, a 2019 Mechanical Engineering graduate from IEST Shibpur. In the fall of 2019, I embarked on my PhD journey at the University of California, San Diego. I was honored to receive the Sailendra Kumar Sen and Indira Sen Memorial Research Award in 2018-19, established by Dr. Subir Sen '64CE, as well as the Gouri and Jitendra Mazumder Memorial Research Award in 2017-18, graciously donated by the late Prof. Jyoti Mazumder '72MET, each awarding me a grant of INR 18,000.

Let me share my perspective on this journey through three key points: motivation in research, alumni connections, and the spirit of giving back. Engaged in research during my undergraduate years, I found immense encouragement in being acknowledged and rewarded for my out of curriculum endeavors. This recognition fueled my ambition, prompting me to apply directly to a good PhD program in the USA. The GAABESU Research Awards played a pivotal role in affirming my path in the world of research. In our Shibpur hostels, in our closely knit friend groups, we had regular discussions about research and (also) the awards, and I think it motivated a few of my friends to jump into the sea of research too, most of whom are pursuing graduate studies in top Ph.D. programs in India and the US.

Furthermore, what set this experience apart was the profound connection with our alumni community. It was heartening to learn that our esteemed alumni actively participated in the entire process, from the rigorous application procedures to the heartwarming award distribution ceremonies. Upon my relocation to the Bay Area for my internship, I became a part of a vibrant WhatsApp group and a formal Google group, linking me with over a hundred alumni residing in the Bay Area. Attending a local event solidified these connections, creating a network that I now cherish deeply.

Looking forward, I am eager to reciprocate this generosity through the spirit of giving back. Once I complete my PhD and transition into the professional realm, I aspire to engage in activities that contribute to our alumni Community. Together with my friends, I am keen to sustain the tradition of support and mentorship that I have been fortunate to receive.

In conclusion, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Dr. Sen, the late Prof. Mazumder, and his family for their unwavering support and sponsorship of these research awards. Their generosity has not only shaped my academic journey but has also instilled in me a profound sense of responsibility to contribute meaningfully to our community and the world of research.