**Shaikh Jeeshan Kabeer**

My first encounter with computers was in the year 1998, when my father bought me a personal computer. At the time computers were pretty rare in my country, which made owing one that much more thrilling. I was perfectly in love with the machine from the moment I first laid my eyes on it. I would sit continuously stay in front of the PC playing games, watching movies, browsing the net, doing my homework and possibly everything else I could manage. Slowly questions behind the inner working mechanisms of this beautiful piece of technology started to emerge in my mind. I wanted to know every detail behind the inner working of computers. Very soon, what started out to be a childhood love affair converted into a relentless urge for knowledge.

I took all the weekend extra classes on computing in my school days and by the time I reached Ninth grade, I was convinced that computers were my thing. I was among the very few in my school who took Computer Studies as part of their O-level and A-level formal examinations. I secured the highest grades in all subjects for both examinations including Computing Studies. This provided me with even more motivation and determination to pursue my strong desire of studying Computer Science for under graduate studies and beyond. The search for a reputed engineering school in Bangladesh eventually led me to Islamic University of Technology (IUT). IUT is among the top ranked engineering universities of the country and in order to secure a position in Computer Science here I had to beat fierce competition, contending against thousands of bright and aspiring applicants.

I experienced my first thrill at university when I was introduced to “C” programming in my freshmen year. I was finally starting to learn how to interact with computers in a language we both understood. I would spend countless hours trying to solve simple problems, which at the time seemed large and cumbersome. I was slowly introduced to various other subjects. Among them I found courses like “Discrete Mathematics”, “Data Structures”, “Object Oriented Programming”, “JAVA”, “Algorithms” very stimulating. Through these and other courses I learned efficient methods of problem solving in different domains across various programming languages. It was amazing to see how simple theories, rules and ideas forged together to solve real world problems. Taking part in different project works also helped me to hone my programming skills and clear my concepts, while at the same time enabling me to showcase my strengths. Further, I put my skills to the test by participating in various programming contests so that I could evaluate my expertise and knowledge in pressure environments. I was also a member of a team which participated in the regional ACM ICPC Contest held in Dhaka, Bangladesh.

Among the various courses in my Bachelor, the ones which really stood were subjects like “Artificial Intelligence & Expert Systems” and “Pattern Recognition”. They dealt with providing intelligence to computers and using them to solve large and complex problems. This intrigued me very much and I wanted to undertake research in a similar direction. Thus, for my undergraduate thesis I selected bioinformatics data mining. Bioinformatics is an interdisciplinary subject where a huge chunk of research is focused on identifying and isolating effective data from high dimensional datasets. My undergraduate thesis focused on gene (feature) selection from high dimensional microarray cancer datasets. Cancer is a rapidly progressing disease and my primary motivation was to help develop a method which would aid in the early detection and prognosis of cancer.

To explore and understand different techniques used by other researchers, I consistently devoted long hours going through reputed Journal and Conference publications. I familiarized myself with popular machine learning algorithms and data mining techniques being applied to gene selection. After months of laboring I eventually managed to generate my own ideas and successfully defended my thesis to a panel of expert faculty members. My thesis work used modified genetic algorithm combined with an adaptive preprocessing step in a hybrid framework for effective gene selection. The approach was implemented using MATLAB and the performance analysis showed better results compared to related approaches. I have one publication on my thesis work.

Apart from academics and research, I was also involved with different extra-curricular activities. From my freshmen year I served as an active member of IUT Computer Society (IUTCS). In my senior year I served as the President of IUTCS and among other activities, lead the organizing committee for hosting the largest ICT National Festival of IUT. The event attracted almost one thousand participants taking part in different events. Working with IUTCS gave me the opportunity to develop leadership, management and interpersonal skills.

Throughout my undergraduate studies I remained focused and worked very hard to secure the highest grades. I graduated in 2011 with a CGPA of 3.95 out of 4.00, with class rank 3rd among 37 students. Subsequently I was offered a faculty position at IUT and I joined the CSE Department in January 2012. I have conducted numerous courses at undergraduate level, like Machine Learning, Unix Programming, Web Programming, Introduction to Computers, Data Structures & Algorithms. Being in an academic environment permits me to remain in touch with different state of the art techniques which are close to my interest. At the same time I can motivate my students to pursue research and share my knowledge with them. I have also continued research, publishing a few articles collaborating with colleagues and undergraduate students.

My eventual dream has always been to furnish myself with the proper knowledge and tools so that I can make my own contribution to the field of Computer Science. With this motivation and equipped with the theoretical and practical hands-on experience I have acquired so far, I think this is the perfect time for me to proceed forward towards graduate studies.

The search for a reputed institution to continue my higher studies eventually led me to consider graduate studies at University of British Columbia (UBC). I have looked at the different areas of research that are being conducted at UBC and found them to coincide with my own interests. My primary research interest focuses on Data Mining and Knowledge Extraction, since most of my previous research experiences are related to this domain. I have studied the works of Data Management and Mining Lab at UBC and found them very exciting. Especially data mining in Social Network and Business Intelligence domain fascinated me. My second field of research preference is Human Computer Interaction (HCI), as I have always found the human component of computing intriguing. Research undertaken by different HCI researchers in Imager Lab are very interesting, particularly those related to assistive technologies, personalized interfaces and emotional aspects of touch. Even though I do not have previous research experience working with HCI, I am fully prepared to work hard and overcome any shortcomings.

University of British Columbia is a sought after and competitive institution for computer studies. Thus I am well aware of the challenges before me. But at the same time I am confident in overcoming them, combining my existing knowledge and experience with sheer determination and hard-work. The state-of-the-art research environment together with the brilliant researchers working here will allow me to broaden my conceptual knowledge and enhance my research abilities. I strongly believe this graduate program will enable me to pursue a successful career in research. I am optimistic that my experience and credentials will be found suitable for enrolment into the M.Sc. in Computer Science program at University of British Columbia.