

# STUDENT INNOVATION: STILL GOING STRONG

I can't remember the first time I covered the Worldwide Ferry Safety Association's (WFSA's) international student design contest for a safe, affordable domestic ferry, but our report on the 12th instalment of the competition (see pages 30-36) reminds me of the many winners that *Ship & Boat International* profiled over the past seven to eight years – to the point that the contest became an annual fixture of our Ferries reports.

The teams' meticulous attention to detail in their designs is consistently impressive. The briefs present precise challenges: ensuring safe operations, even when experiencing collisions or rough weather; providing stability despite risks like passenger overcrowding, particularly in regions with lax safety oversight; and enabling cost-effective production by local boatbuilders.

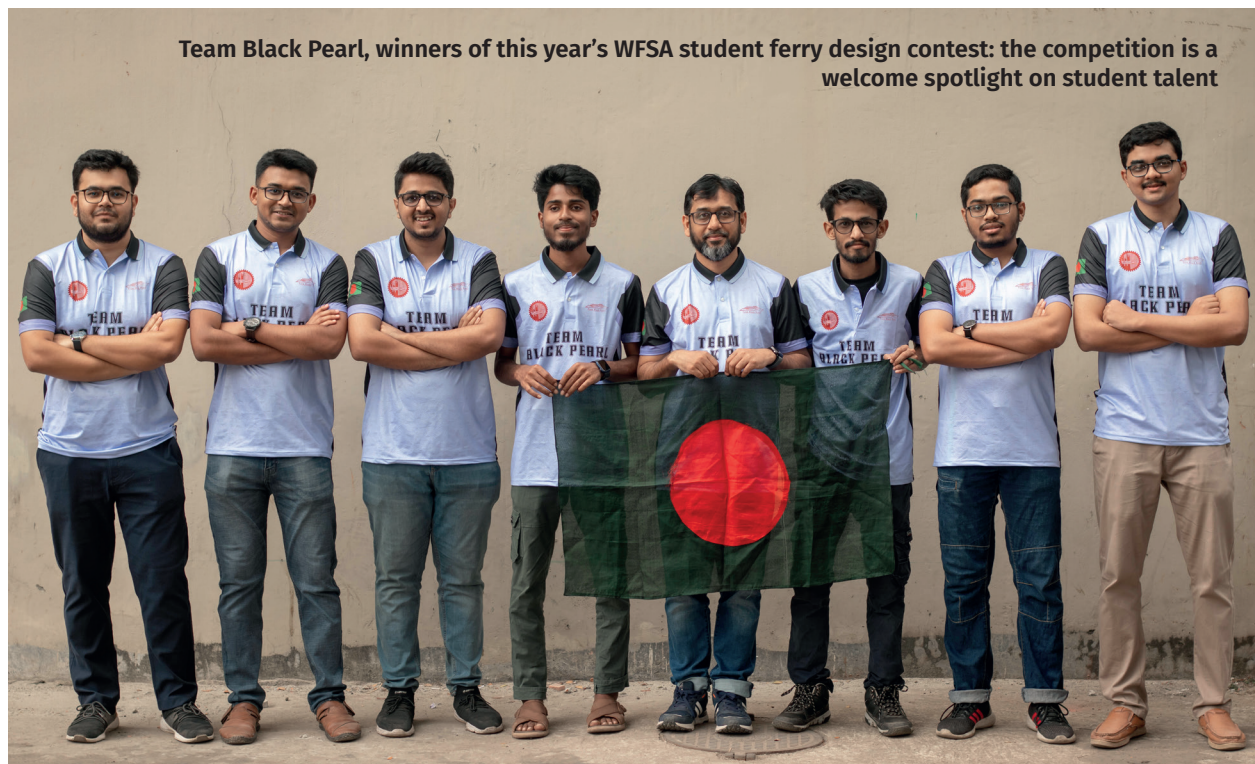
This year's winning team, Team Black Pearl of Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, wowed the WFSA judges with its design for the 200-pax aluminium catamaran *Naija Spirit*, which underwent extensive weight and stability analyses, including CFD calculations, to finalise the concept. It's all the more impressive given the team's physical distance from the waterways of Lagos – which, as you'll read, necessitated some serious online research. As a sidenote, WFSA contest-related interviews consistently highlight the teams' openness in discussing their design processes in detail, including candid insights into the challenges they

faced and the solutions they implemented to address them.

It's a shame we don't have the space to feature the runner-up teams too; one could dedicate the best part of an issue to profiling most of the contest entrants' designs. What's for sure: the WFSA's annual contests clearly demonstrate that skilled naval architecture is far from at risk of extinction. Anyone concerned about its future should follow these events closely: I personally see a wealth of talent ready to lead in the years ahead.

The only drawback is that, to date, few of the winning designs over the past 12 years have been realised. In many cases, the problem is a lack of investment by local governments and maritime authorities, especially those in the highest-risk accident hotspots in developing countries. Perhaps established naval architects and boatbuilders could assist these talented young designers? Investing in their designs (or helping them to fine-tune these concepts) could not only provide a fresh shot in the arm for naval architecture, but would go a considerable way toward boosting domestic ferry safety globally – making a real difference to thousands of lives, while creating myriad new career opportunities. The WFSA contest demonstrates thriving technical expertise; now, capital and commitment are needed to put this talent to work. ■

**Martin Conway,**  
Managing Editor



**Team Black Pearl, winners of this year's WFSA student ferry design contest: the competition is a welcome spotlight on student talent**