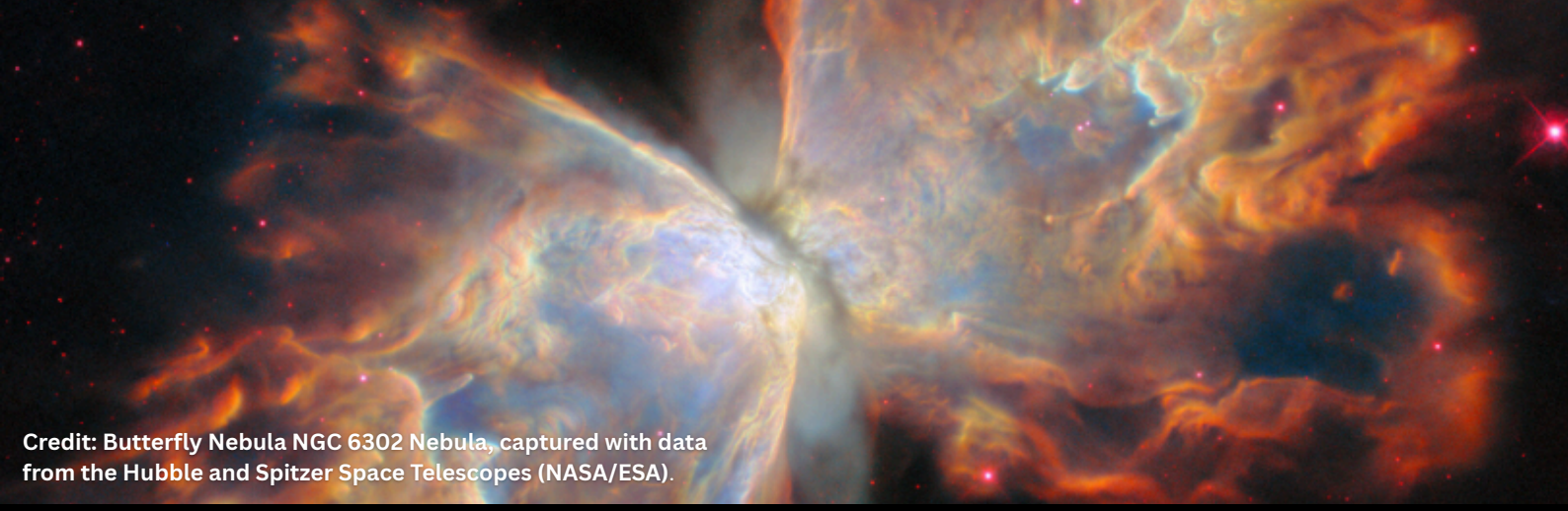


Credit: Butterfly Nebula NGC 6302 Nebula, captured with data from the Hubble and Spitzer Space Telescopes (NASA/ESA).

NO.102 UOBD SPACE SOC. OCT 2025

Monthly Magazine

We sat with the founder of the University of Birmingham Dubai Space Society, Ashton Desouza, to discuss his journey, achievements, and the spirit that propelled his team to international recognition.

Guided by Stars: Leadership That Shaped Our Society

What inspired you to establish the Space Society in Dubai, the first engineering club at our university, and to achieve international recognition?

My innate passion for building hands-on engineering projects during my first year eventually inspired me to establish the Space Society. Motivated by the UAE's pioneering space missions, I pursued ambitious projects and created a platform for students to innovate and excel. My goal was for the club to contribute meaningfully to the UAE's growing presence in space exploration.

How did you inspire other courses to partake in the Space Society missions?

I inspired students from various disciplines to participate by creating engaging opportunities. One key initiative was organizing a visit for 35 students to the Mohammed Bin Rashid Space Center (MBRSC), where they explored the UAE's space mission history—from early satellite programs to the Lunar Rover project. To further spark interdisciplinary interest, I built a functional, scaled replica of NASA's Perseverance Mars rover. This educational model demonstrated practical engineering concepts and empowered another team to design their own rover for the 2024 UKSEDS competition.

What project or achievement are you most proud of during your tenure, and why?

Without a doubt, Rocket Invictus — our rocket that soared through the skies in the UK during the 2024 UKSEDS competition — stands as my proudest achievement. Despite being newcomers, we earned two awards, including 2nd place out of 20 teams. This accomplishment reflected our team's dedication, innovation, and collaborative spirit while achieving international recognition in aerospace engineering within just a year of the club's founding.

Are there any particular moments or memories that stand out from your time with the society that you feel define your contribution the most?

A defining moment was the successful preliminary testing of our rocket at our Dubai campus. It featured an innovative parachute recovery system operating without ejection charges, developed to meet UAE safety regulations and promote a greener, combustion-free alternative to traditional black powder systems. After its validation and acceptance by UKSEDS, the system performed flawlessly, and on launch day in the UK, our team received the "Not Just Avionics" award for its sustainability and successful implementation — marking a proud milestone for the society.

How do you hope your work and achievements will inspire future members of the society?

Through the outreach and recognition our work received, especially coverage in Khaleej Times, I hope to inspire future members to push beyond boundaries and take on more complex, impactful projects. Our achievements show that with dedication, perseverance, and innovation, students in the UAE can compete and excel internationally with greener technologies.

If you want to define your time spent in Space Society in one word after three years of endeavors, what's that and why?

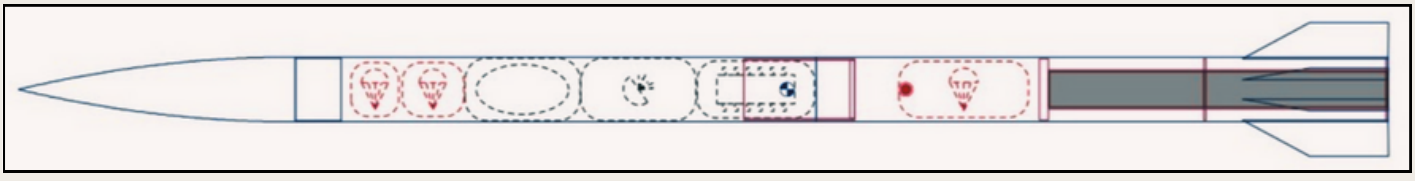
Invictus — a Latin term meaning "indomitable" — perfectly encapsulates both my personal journey as the founder of the Space Society and the name of our award-winning rocket. Leading the society through its formative years presented numerous technical, administrative, and leadership challenges — from managing funds and coordinating with stakeholders to guiding the team through ambitious projects. Yet, much like our rocket Invictus, we overcame every challenge with an indomitable spirit, demonstrating resilience, determination, and the drive to persevere in the face of adversity.

How did your team leader's experience help you grow personally and professionally?

My team leader's experience played a key role in enhancing my networking and communication abilities, motivating me to engage confidently with individuals from diverse technical and cultural backgrounds. This exposure strengthened my soft skills, which are vital for professional growth. Applying these skills during internships has allowed me to refine them further as I prepare to transition into my career.

How has the University helped you in achieving your aspirational goals?

The support of my faculty professors and laboratory technicians has been invaluable in helping me turn my aspirations into reality. Their guidance, technical expertise, and encouragement provided the foundation for every milestone we achieved. I am also grateful to our UK campus Space Society, which offered training in rocketry and introduced us to the UKSEDS organization.



From Code to Cosmos: NovaWorks AI+Space Workshop Takes Off

The University of Birmingham Dubai's **Space Society**, in collaboration with **Rabbitron Lab**, proudly launched the first session of its NovaWorks Workshop Series, AI+Space, in late October, marking an exciting milestone for interdisciplinary learning and innovation. **Over 40** students officially registered for the series, representing both **undergraduate** and **postgraduate** programs.

Participants come from diverse majors, including MEng Computer Science and Software Engineering, BEng Mechanical Engineering, BSc Computer Engineering, BSc Artificial Intelligence and Computer Science, MSc Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning, BEng Robotics and Artificial Intelligence, and MSc Data Science.

Throughout the series, students will explore how **artificial intelligence** can be applied to **real-world space projects**. Working collaboratively in teams, they will design and develop AI-based solutions with practical applications for space technologies. The workshop will conclude in **late November** with an **on-campus exhibition**, where teams will present their completed projects to the university community.

The project is interesting, and I am looking forward to it . Everything was explained well !

Tenuka Ratnajeewa , Workshop Student

Coming Up Next

DUBAI AIRSHOW
NOVEMBER 2025

ENGINES ON AND EYES TO THE SKY: UOBD SPACE SOCIETY HEADS TO THE DUBAI AIRSHOW 2025 FOR A JOURNEY THROUGH AEROSPACE INNOVATION

The excitement continues this November as the University of Birmingham Dubai gears up for one of the biggest aerospace events of the year — the **Dubai Airshow 2025.** With **over 100 students** officially registered, this collaborative initiative marks another successful partnership between the university and leading industry platforms.

On **Friday, 21st November**, UoB Dubai students will head to the Airshow together by bus to witness the latest innovations in aviation, space technology, and defense systems. The event promises an unforgettable experience, offering students the chance to explore cutting-edge advancements, connect with professionals, and gain real-world exposure to the future of aerospace.

Stay Tuned For Next Issues

UNTIL NEXT LAUNCH, KEEP LOOKING UP!

Share your thoughts, feedback, or ideas for future issues with us on our social media platforms. Whether it's a quick comment, a story from your own space journey, or a suggestion to make our society even better, your voice helps shape our growing community. Let's keep the conversation going, connect with us online, and help us reach for the stars together!