

منبر الآجي

# The Aggie Platform

*News from Texas A&M University at Qatar*

Volume 3, Number 2

Spring 2007



**New Dean  
and CEO  
Mark H. Weichold  
and his vision  
for TAMUQ**



TAMUQ students on an afternoon break at the old souq.

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**The Aggie Platform**

*News from Texas A&M University at Qatar*

Dr. Mark H. Weichold, *Dean and CEO*

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Texas A&M University  
at Qatar

**ENGINEERING**

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# The Aggie Platform

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News from Texas A&M University at Qatar

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## Inaugural Chemistry Conference Held at TAMUQ



Mr. Khalifa Abdulla Al-Sowaidi, QAFCO Managing Director

The Chemistry Program at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) held its first annual Chemistry conference, sponsored by Qatar Fertiliser Company (QAFCO). This conference celebrated the inauguration of the Chemistry facilities of TAMUQ in Education City. The meeting focused mostly on faculty research.

Organizers invited eleven speakers from Texas A&M University, Qatar University, Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar, and Texas A&M University at Qatar to present their most recent results in the various disciplines of Chemistry. The subjects covered varied from polymer chemistry to physical, analytical, and biological chemistry. One of the invited speakers, Dr. Donald J. Darensbourg, spoke about the synthesis of polycarbonates, polymers with various industrial applications, using carbon dioxide.

The conference started with an introduction by Dr. Hassan S. Bazzi, TAMUQ Science Program Coordinator and Chair of the Organizing Committee. Dr. James C. Holste, Associate Dean for Research of TAMUQ, gave a presentation about



Dr. El-Metwally Nour, Head of the Chemistry Department at QU

TAMUQ to the audience of over 60 chemists. Mr. Khalifa Al-Sowaidi, Managing Director of QAFCO, spoke about the line of products of QAFCO and the importance of collaboration with TAMUQ and other academic institutions in Qatar.

To celebrate the occasion, Drs. Holste and Bazzi presented gifts to Mr. Al-Sowaidi for his support of such events, and to Dr. Siham Al-Qaradawi, Dean of the College of Arts and Sciences at Qatar University, and Dr. El-Metwally Nour, Head of the Chemistry Department at QU, for their support of TAMUQ.

Dr. Bazzi said, "This event reflects Texas A&M University's commitment to provide the best resources available to faculty and researchers in Education City and in the State of Qatar as they undertake the processes of innovation and the creation of knowledge. We are looking forward to next year's conference."

Because of the overwhelming success of the conference and the potential for future contributions and collaborations as a result of the conference, QAFCO has committed to sponsoring the conference for the next five years.

## QAFCO Supports TAMUQ Chemistry Conference

In the context of its continued efforts to support scientific and technical research and strengthen links with universities, institutions of higher learning and research centers, Qatar Fertiliser Company (QAFCO) signed an agreement with Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) on Wednesday February 21, 2007. Under the agreement QAFCO will sponsor the TAMUQ Chemistry Conference for five years. The conference is organized by the University annually in Doha and attracts a large number of experts in chemistry and related disciplines. The agreement was signed at TAMUQ by Mr. Khalifa Abdulla Al-Sowaidi, QAFCO Managing Director, on behalf of QAFCO and Dr. Mark Weichold, TAMUQ Dean and CEO on behalf of Texas A&M University at Qatar. The signing ceremony was



Officials from QAFCO and TAMUQ

attended by a number of Department Managers, faculty and officials from QAFCO and TAMUQ.

*(continued on next page)*

Following the signing ceremony, Mr. Khalifa Al-Sowaidi, presented a check for QR 750,000 (approx. \$200,000 USD) to TAMUQ Dean and CEO Dr. Mark Weichold. In his speech at the ceremony, Mr. Khalifa Al-Sowaidi remarked: "I am delighted to seize this opportunity to foster ties with Texas A&M University at Qatar, a pioneering educational institution in the country, by signing a five-year agreement to sponsor the QAFCO-TAMUQ Chemistry Conference organized annually by the University in Doha."

Mr. Al-Sowaidi also stressed the significance of scientific research in the development of industry and in achieving sustainable development, calling for links to be forged between research centers and the productive sectors of the economy. "This step comes in extension of our role as a major industrial establishment and the country's first petrochemical Company in linking universities and research centers with the aim of upgrading the level of expertise to meet the needs of industry and other sectors of the economy," he added.

As to the conference aspired objectives Mr. Al-Sowaidi said: "It is pleasing to note that this scientific conference, which features diverse research papers and attracts a number of prominent scientists and experts in the various branches of chemistry, will hopefully contribute towards

practically putting into effect Qatar's educational strategy chalked out by HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned, Chairperson of Qatar Foundation and consort of HH the Emir of the State of Qatar. Among its top priorities are human development, modernization of education and promotion of scientific research, with the aim to enable Qatari nationals to address the demands of the present and shoulder their responsibilities in realizing comprehensive development."

On his part Dr. Mark Weichold, TAMUQ Dean and CEO, thanked Mr. Al-Sowaidi for his remarks and for the commitment of QAFCO to strengthen and support the cause of education and research in Qatar. He said, "TAMUQ looks forward to a long and fruitful partnership with QAFCO and we thank QAFCO for its generous donation and sponsorship of our first annual Chemistry Conference. The conference that was held on January 10, 2007, was a success. It gave us the opportunity to interact with the Qatari community and with our colleagues at Education City," he added. "I also recognize the hard work and the commitment demonstrated by our entire chemistry faculty and QAFCO specialists. Without their continued effort, team spirit and good knowledge, the conference would have not achieved this level of success."

## Environmental Chemistry Workshop



ExxonMobil Qatar, Inc. partnered with the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center at Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas, to host a tailored course, specific to the Qatar audience held at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) from March 4-6, 2007. The course, Environmental Chemistry II was conducted by Dr. M. Sam Mannan, Professor in the Chemical Engineering Department at Texas A&M University and Director of the Mary Kay O'Connor Process Safety Center at the Texas Engineering Experiment

Station, and Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Wahab, Assistant Professor of Chemical Engineering at Texas A&M at Qatar.

Dr. Mannan earned his Ph.D. in Chemical Engineering from the University of Oklahoma. He served as Vice President at RMT, Inc., an engineering services company, before he joined Texas A&M University in 1997. Dr. Abdel-Wahab earned his Ph.D. in Environmental Engineering from Texas A&M University. He has more than 16 years experience in  
(continued on page 4)

## Chemistry Workshop

*(continued from page 3)*

environmental engineering teaching and research. His area of expertise is in chemical and physical treatment processes of water, wastewater, and hazardous wastes.

This course, which is the second in a series of courses planned for Environmental, Health, and Safety professionals, reviewed topics from general chemistry that were relevant to environmental engineering practices. Topics covered included equilibria processes, chemical processes, biochemical processes, physiochemical processes, and more. The course content was tailored for entry level individuals, government as well as industry personnel. At the end of the course, attendees received a certificate of completion and continuing education credits. Although the medium of the instruction was English, the power point presentation material was provided to the participants in both English and Arabic.

The course consisted of half a day of instruction from

Sunday through Tuesday. A lunch followed the lectures on Sunday and Monday. The certificate ceremony and reception immediately followed Tuesday's lectures.

Drs. Ahmed Abdel-Wahab and Sam Mannan lectured 29 industry employees from the following companies:

- SCENR
- Qatar Fertiliser Company (QAFCO)
- RasGas Company Limited
- Gulf Drilling International LTD
- QEWC
- Qatar Shell Service Company WLL
- Department of Agricultural & Water Research (DAWR)
- Qatar Fuel Additives Co., Ltd.
- Qatar University
- Maersk Oil Qatar

## Top Ranking Aggies Visit TAMUQ

Following the visit of U.S. Secretary of Defense Robert M. Gates, TAMUQ was visited by yet another top ranking Aggie. General Michael Moseley, Chief of Staff of the U.S. Air Force and Texas A&M Class of 1971 and 1972, visited TAMUQ for lunch with university administrators and student leaders. Following lunch, Gen. Moseley visited with a group of students about his time at Texas A&M, their experiences at TAMUQ, the United States and a range of issues related to the Middle East.





## New Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs Appointed

Dr. James C. Holste, who has served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs since the creation of the campus, was recently appointed by Dean Mark Weichold as Associate Dean for Research and Graduate Programs. Dr. Holste's leadership and experience in these areas, as well as his contributions already made to the campus, made him the right person for this new post.

After receiving his Ph.D. in Physics from Iowa State University, Dr. Holste began his post-doctoral research at Texas A&M University in 1975. Through this experience, he began the first of many increasing responsible positions with the university. Prior to his move to the Qatar campus in 2003, Dr. Holste was Associate Dean for Graduate Studies & International Programs in the College of Science from 1997 and also served as Assistant Director for Research at Texas Engineering Experiment Station in 2003. He is a registered professional engineer and has more than 120 refereed publications and 9 U.S. patents.

With Dr. Holste leading these important efforts, the graduate and research programs will be developed with the needs of the State of Qatar as a highest priority. The state-of-the-art facilities will enable research that will establish an international

reputation for Texas A&M University at Qatar and for Qatar Foundation. There will be frequent and beneficial interactions between TAMUQ and the local industry, the main campus in College Station, Texas, and international collaborators from all over the world.

The research center will benefit Qatar and the region by addressing the scientific and engineering topics that are important to Qatar. Some areas of special interest include air and water quality; energy production; oil, gas and petrochemicals; production of steel and aluminum; and telecommunications. The research center and the graduate programs also will provide Qatar and the region with human resources whose research experiences enable them to understand how to receive technology from external sources, and who have realistic expectations for benefits to be derived from research programs. The graduate experience also will lead to deeper technical understanding and develop more sophisticated problem solving skills that can be applied to both technical and nontechnical issues for the benefit of the employer.

"It is an exciting challenge to realize this vision, beginning with empty rooms, but in just a few years we expect to have an active and vibrant research program in our new facility," Holste said.

# New TAMUQ Dean and CEO Mark H. Weichold

## *A Vision for Moving the TAMUQ Campus Forward*



*“ There is nothing in my history with Texas A&M University that compares to what we are part of in Education City. It is quite humbling and exciting to be a part of this very unique and revolutionary approach to education. ”*

— Dr. Mark H. Weichold, TAMUQ Dean and CEO

In just several months since becoming TAMUQ Dean and CEO in January, Mark H. Weichold, Ph.D., has implemented many changes to improve the campus and grow the undergraduate engineering program, as well as taken steps to secure graduate and research programs at TAMUQ.

Only days into his new role at TAMUQ, the administration, faculty and staff were notified that the campus received final approval from SACS. This distinction is a great step forward for the campus and adds to the prestige the university already enjoys. Continuing efforts for ABET accreditation will be supported by Dr. Stephen Gyeszly, TAMUQ faculty, who Weichold recently appointed as ABET Campus Coordinator.

The planned research and graduate programs will be headed by Dr. James C. Holste, who has served as Associate Dean for Academic Affairs since the creation of the campus. Weichold appointed Holste as Associate Dean for research and graduate programs, and nearly 30 new faculty have been recruited to support the growing undergraduate program and the forthcoming graduate program.

As Dean and CEO, Weichold is tasked with moving the campus forward, but Dr. Weichold's vision for the

campus makes this task one for the entire community. He has already created several committees to address areas of importance to the campus, including faculty tenure and promotion, study abroad, and disability services. The TAMUQ Student Body Government is also an important voice in the university's administrative process and he meets with the SBG leadership on a monthly basis.

An official investiture was held for Dr. Weichold in March and marked the ceremonial beginning of his time as Dean & CEO.

University Provost, Dr. David Prior said, "I am very pleased, as the Chief Academic Officer of Texas A&M, to preside over the investiture of Dr. Mark Weichold as Dean and CEO of Texas A&M University at Qatar" and "On a personal note, I am very privileged to have worked with Mark since the early days of the Qatar campus project. Five years ago, I asked him to be a member of the first evaluation team to explore the vision of the Education City".

In his inaugural address, Weichold said, "There is nothing in my history with Texas A&M University that compares to what we are part of in Education City. It is quite humbling and exciting to be a part of this very unique and revolutionary approach to education".





As a professional engineer and an experienced university administrator, Dean Weichold has much to offer the campus and its students.

## About the Dean and CEO:

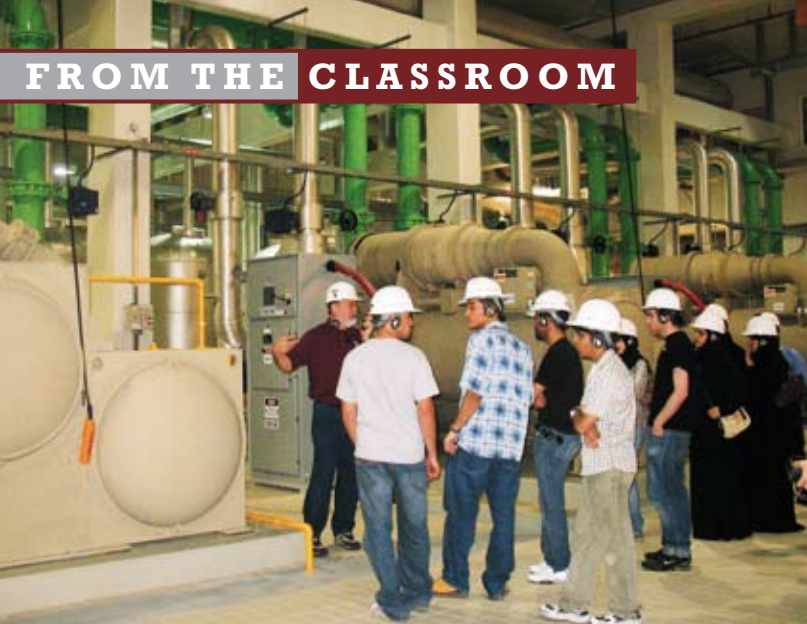
Dean Mark H. Weichold received the B.S., M.S. and Ph.D. degrees from Texas A&M University in Electrical Engineering and has worked for General Dynamics Ft. Worth Division, Motorola in Austin, TX, and the U.S. Army Electronic Technology and Devices Laboratory in Ft. Monmouth, NJ. A Registered Professional Engineer in the State of Texas, he is also a member of the Board of Directors for Ten X Technologies, Inc of Austin, Texas. He joined the Electrical Engineering faculty at Texas A&M University in 1982 and now holds the rank of Professor where his research interests include topics related to electron devices such as process development, device design, fabrication, and characterization. He has authored more than 80 journal articles, conference papers, and scientific reports, has been awarded three US Patents. He is a Senior member of IEEE, a member of the American Physical Society, and the American Vacuum Society.

Prior to his appointment to TAMUQ, Dr. Weichold served on Texas A&M's main campus as the University's Associate Provost for Undergraduate Programs and Academic Services since 1998 and in 2003, he became the Dean of Undergraduate Programs and Associate Provost for Academic Services. In that capacity he had responsibility for the Office of Admissions and Records and the Office of Student Financial Aid, in addition to the Office of Honors Programs and Academic Scholarships, General Academic Programs, the Career Center, the

Student Learning Center, and the University Writing Center. While serving on the main campus, he was involved with the Blinn TEAM Program, the Aggie Access Program, the Task Force on the Undergraduate Experience, Freshman Convocation, the Undergraduate Admissions Advisory Committee, a member of the Qatar Program Development Team, and the Minority Recruiting Leadership Team.

Dr. Weichold has served as President of the TAMU Chapter of Phi Kappa Phi Honor Society, a member of the Blinn College Advisory Board, the College Station Business Development Corporation, and the College Station Independent School District Board of Trustees. He has also served the engineering profession as a program evaluator for ABET.

He has been recognized with The Association of Former Students Distinguished Achievement Award for Administration (2006), the United Way Trailblazer Award (2001), the TAMU International Programs Office's International Excellence Award (1997), the TAMU GSC Kunze Award for Outstanding Graduate Advising (1997), the Eta Kappa Nu Outstanding Professor Award (1996, 1991, 1987), the Halliburton Professor of Electrical Engineering Award (1995), the Tenneco Award for Meritorious Teaching (1993), the University Honors Program Undergraduate Fellows Program Award (1991), and the General Dynamics Excellence in Engineering Teaching Award (1989).



*Left: Dr. Bryant explaining the operation of one of the 1,000 ton centrifugal chillers. Right: Dr. Bryant describing the condenser and chilled water piping arrangements for one of the chillers.*



## A&M Engineering Students Visit EC Central Energy Plant

The main campus of Texas A&M University in College Station, Texas has a cooling capacity of approximately 30,000 tons (360,000,000 Btu/hr) at their two main chiller plants. Central Energy Plant #1 here at Education City has a current capacity of 10,000 tons of cooling. There are 10 - 1,000 ton chillers in this first chiller plant. At least five more such plants are planned for the Education City complex and they are scheduled to be on line by 2012. The Education City campus is going to be seeing some amazing growth in the next five years!

Students in Dr. John Bryant's Introduction to Engineering recently toured the Education City Central Energy Plant. The types of equipment commonly found in these facilities are similar to and, in most cases, exactly the same type of equipment used in modern petrochemical and chemical process plants. Chillers, pumps, heat exchangers, piping, valves, cooling towers, and more are everyday items in these places. Though used for different fluids and processes, the equipment will look the

same in either application. Exposure to these machines gives the students a valuable "reality" link as they progress through their undergraduate courses. When they study pumps and compressors in thermodynamics, they will have actually seen what those things look like and they aren't little squares drawn on homework problems!

Through an internal Qatar Foundation grant in 2006, Dr. Bryant purchased headsets and radios for use on field tours such as this. The headsets are designed so that they can be worn with safety helmets. The tour guide, in this case Dr. Bryant, has a master radio that is used to communicate to all of the students at once. These facilities are often quite noisy with the chillers, pumps, and fans all operating at the same time. Through experience, Dr. Bryant had found that trying to yell over that noise was impractical and very few students could even hear him. The radios solve that yelling problem, are comfortable to wear, and enhance the safety of the tour.

*Left: Dr. Bryant describing the layout and operation of the domestic water pressure pumps. These pumps pressurize the drinking water piping system for all of Education City. Right: Four of our smiling freshman Aggies waiting in the control room at the end of the tour*



# LIBERAL ARTS IN THE EQUATION

## From the Program Coordinator:

You are reading a new permanent section in *The Aggie Platform* dedicated to bringing the Aggie Family everywhere news from the Liberal Arts Program at Texas A&M at Qatar.

Liberal Arts at TAMUQ plays a vital support role to the engineering faculty by offering required courses in English, History, Political Science and writing support through our Foundations and CAEN courses and Technical Communications Center. Having begun modestly a few years ago with the inception of the university, the Liberal Arts Program at Qatar will undergo numerous changes over the next twelve months due to the doubling of the student population and the resulting need to increase faculty. In Liberal Arts in particular, this means an increase of five new faculty members in the fall of 2007 bringing our total at that time to around fifteen.

To help administer this increase in department size, the Interim Dean of TAMUQ, Chuck Bowman, proposed that each program be headed by a Program Coordinator. Such a position roughly mirrors that of department head on the main campus. But, unlike the program coordinators in engineering, the Liberal Arts Coordinator oversees a panoply of disciplines: English, History, and Political Science. Though the job of coordinator will continue to expand for some time as new problems emerge to be addressed, as it stands now, the coordinator is responsible for such things as course scheduling, hiring and assessment of faculty and staff, and assorted odds and ends of department administration. All of this while keeping the faculty informed of administrative agendas here and on the home campus. To these ends, I have instituted monthly faculty meetings, the responsible free flow of information via e-mail and listservs, and the introduction of a yearly 'State of the Program' paper to be delivered to faculty and administrators both here and in College Station.

This spring was busier than any previous one with the on-campus interviews of prospective students, the hiring of faculty for the fall, and the move of all of our facilities to the new engineering building. I am particularly pleased with the new engineering building. I am particularly pleased with the Technical Communications Center which is now a working reality and which has already served scores of students needing various types of help with their writing. In the future, the TCC will expand to offer new services for both students and faculty. Beginning this spring, Liberal Arts offered two student awards for outstanding writing in English 104 and 210. In the fall of 2007, I intend to implement a 'Writing Initiative' which will add a further 1,000 words of student writing to English, History, and Political Science courses.

Texas A&M University at Qatar is a true work-in-progress where changes can be quickly achieved. There are few other educational facilities in the world with better administrative and technical support. Ideas emerge readily and come to fruition within a matter of months, not years. For anyone undertaking the role as coordinator of a program, little more could be desired. But one of my wishes is that more faculty on the home campus would become interested enough in this group of 'Mideast Aggies' to consider joining us in our endeavors. Already here, they will find a dozen engaged colleagues in Liberal Arts committed to bringing the A&M experience to Qatar.

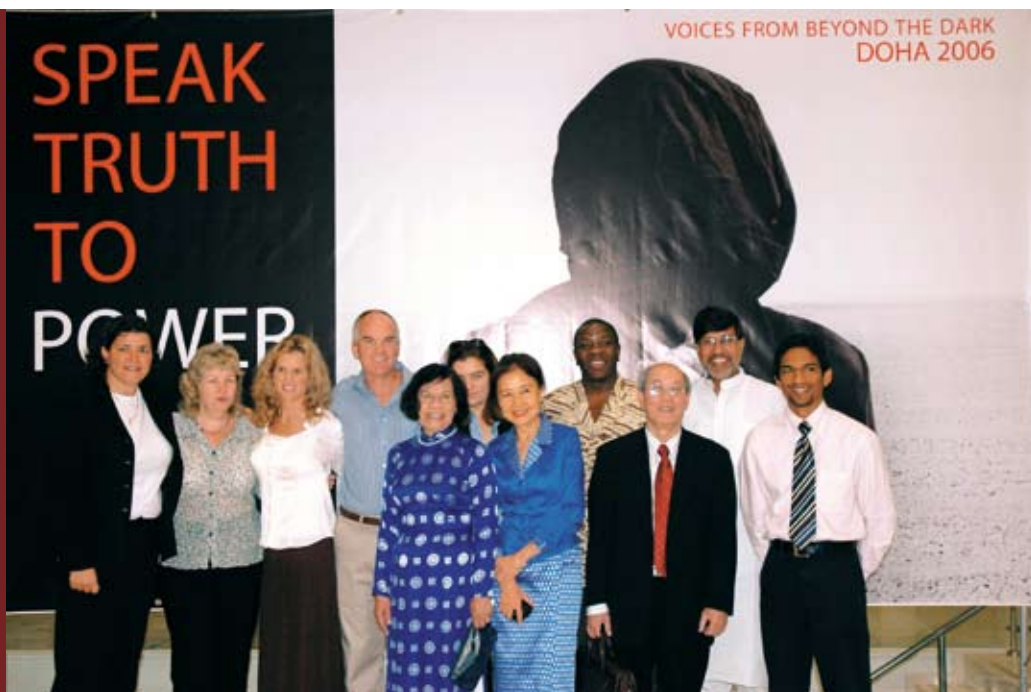
James Hannah  
Professor of English at  
TAMUQ and TAMU  
Coordinator of Liberal Arts  
Coordinator of Foundations  
and Writing Courses



“Texas A&M University at Qatar is a true work-in-progress where changes can be quickly achieved. There are few other educational facilities in the world with better administrative and technical support. Ideas emerge readily and come to fruition within a matter of months, not years.”

## Liberal Arts Program hosts “Speak Truth to Power” Lecture and Panel Discussion

*“In a world where there is a common lament that there are no more heroes, too often cynicism and despair are perceived as evidence of the death of moral courage. That perception is wrong. People of great valor and heart, committed to noble purpose, with long records of personal sacrifice, walk among us in every country of the world.”*  
— Kerry Kennedy



Kerry Kennedy, third from left, and panel members of the human rights defenders.

IN NOVEMBER, the Liberal Arts Program of Texas A&M University at Qatar hosted a riveting two-hour lecture and panel discussion, “Speak Truth to Power,” led by human rights activist, Kerry Kennedy and a panel of 11 human rights defenders from various countries around the globe. The forum was open to faculty, staff, and students of Texas A&M University as well as those from other campuses in Education City. To a capacity audience, Kennedy and her guest “defenders” held the audience spell-bound as they told their all too real stories of abuse, economic disparity, torture, brutality, murder, suspicious disappearances, religious and political persecution and a host of other injustices and indignities.

While he was not present for this particular lecture, among the defenders in Kennedy’s centerpiece book is the 2006 Nobel Peace Prize winner, Muhammad Yunus of Bangladesh, founder of the Grameen Bank, the first large-scale micro-lending program in the world, and who has transformed hundreds of thousands of lives of the poorest people in Bangladesh. Several other Nobel Prize winners are included in the photo essays incorporated into the book and listed in the organization website.

Holding up the Arabic version of the photo-illustrated book, in her introduction, Kerry Kennedy introduced the

panel of defenders and stated the mission of the touring lecture series and play and asked the questions she wanted the audience to bear in mind as they listened to the personal accounts to be told by the panelists present:

“ . . . The defenders’ own voices provoke fundamental questions: why do people who face imprisonment, torture, and death, continue to pursue their work when the chance of success is so remote and the personal consequences are so grave? Why did they become involved? What keeps them going? Where do they derive their strength and inspiration? How do they overcome their fear? How do they measure success? Out of the answers emerges a sympathetic and strength-giving portrait of the power of personal resolve and determination in the face of injustice . . . the rest of us (with our own lesser sensibilities) are left to muddle through. And if we are capable of less, then are we off the hook? Condemned to be sinners, is there any point in striving to be saints?”

One of the defenders present in the TAMUQ lecture, Rana Husseini of Jordan, offered her introduction which was similarly followed in style and horrifying content by the subsequent panelists:

“My name is Rana Husseini. I am a journalist. In the name of honor, a sixteen-year-old girl here in Jordan was killed by her family because she was raped by her brother.

When I went to investigate the crime, I met with her two uncles. Why was it her fault that she has been raped? Why didn't the family punish the brother? They answered that she had seduced her brother. I asked them why, with millions of men on the street, would the girl choose to seduce her own brother? They only repeated . . . Blood cleanses honor."

"The average term served for an honor killing is only seven and a half months. But it's important to know that the people who commit the killings are also victims . . ."

After the presentation, guests were invited to a lunch buffet and had the opportunity to mingle with the presenters and ask individual questions. Books in both Arabic and English were available for sale and autographed by the defenders present.

Pulitzer Prize-winning Chilean playwright Ariel Dorfman was inspired to write the theatrical presentation based on interviews with over fifty of these human rights

activists from around the world. The resulting play, *Speak Truth to Power: Voices from Beyond the Dark*, was first presented at the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington D.C. in September 2000, and broadcast as part of PBS's *The Kennedy Center Presents*. Since its debut, the play has been produced to acclaim in Geneva, London, Helsinki, Athens, Madrid and Sydney, among other countries.

The play was performed in Doha, using local Qatari and expatriate actors, on the evening of November 2nd in the Qatar National Theatre under the royal patronage of Her Highness Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al Missned.

SPEAK TRUTH TO POWER is a division of the Robert F. Kennedy Memorial. For further information on the activities of the organization and to order a copy of the book: <http://www.speaktruth.org>

## Keyboarding Skills Key to Efficient Writing

WE ARE EXCITED TO ANNOUNCE a new pilot project this semester in which we taught keyboarding to all our incoming freshmen. Several faculty members have noticed that many of our students use the two-finger, hunt-and-peck method of typing. Thus we decided to build keyboarding into the curriculum of our ENGR 289: Succeeding in College learning framework course taught by Mr. Mark Bell.

As part of their course requirements for ENGR 289, students spent one hour per week for fifteen weeks in the Technical Communication Center improving their keyboarding skills. Ms. Brenda Kent has been hired to be the lab coordinator for this project and she worked with students to help them unlearn any bad typing habits they have developed and replace them with the proper mechanics.

Students learned keyboarding skills using TypingMaster, which is a typing tutorial computer program that will substantially help the students to improve their typing. The students will first complete the touch-typing course which is a 12-week program that teaches them the proper touch-typing technique, starting with basics and advancing step-by-step using examples, word drills and games to familiarize them with the keyboard. The students also completed the numeric keypad tutorial which is a three-week course designed to teach them the touch-typing technique for use of the number pad.

We hope that by improving our students' keyboarding skills, we can help them make more efficient use of their time.



Students learning the proper mechanics of keyboarding will have more efficient use of their time.

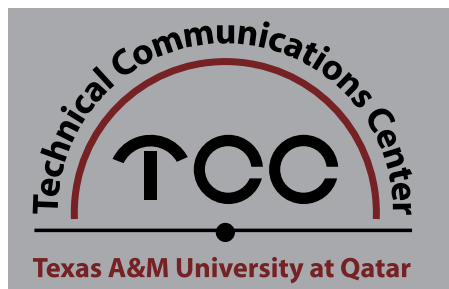
We find that most students compose their papers right at the computer so any improvement in their keyboarding skills will help them compose more quickly. They can focus on what they want to say, not worry about where the keys are. Further, we believe that this project will have residual benefits as well. Students will have more exposure to written English and will have to concentrate intently to complete the 35- to 45-minute exercises each week.

# TCC Tackles Student Writing Challenges One-on-One

The Technical Communications Center (TCC) opened its doors on August 22, 2006, inviting TAMUQ students to make individual and team appointments with tutors to work on their writing projects. Modeled on the University Writing Center (UWC) on the home campus, the TCC provides individual tutoring in a welcoming and personal setting, encouraging students to acquire skills to become their own best critics.

In addition to one-to-one consultations, the TCC also offers the Writing Studio, an informal setting where students can work independently on writing projects in the TCC and ask for help or comments from the TCC staff as needed.

A computer-assisted language lab facility provides additional support for students. The TCC staff is developing Independent Learning Modules (ILM's) to guide students in using the



computer software in the lab to identify persistent language and grammar problems and practice to correct those problems. The staff hopes to coordinate with the writing faculty to insure that students receive individualized assessment and instruction to accompany their classroom activities.

Two student workers serve as receptionists, helping students to make on-line appointments and log in to tutoring sessions, using TutorTrac, an automated appointments and record-keeping system used in collaboration with the UWC on the home campus. In fact, two UWC employees, Brady Creel and Mark Wolfe, traveled to Doha in August to help set up the system and orient the staff on its use. The reporting mechanism in TutorTrac has allowed the tutors to track students' progress and provide useful information to faculty.

## Meet some of our staff members:

**Douglas McPherson** grew up and was educated in Australia, but his interests, both leisure and academic, have provided opportunities to live and work in a variety of places. He has lived in Indonesia, where he worked on contracts with the Ministry of Finance and the Diplomatic Corps teaching English for Academic Purposes and TOEFL preparation to students nominated for graduate study in the USA. He takes regular holidays to



Thailand, Bali and other parts of South East Asia.

He also spent a few years at the University of Wollongong, in Australia, working as the CAL Coordinator in the Foundations and ELICOS centre of the University.

More recently, before arriving at TAMUQ, he spent 8 years at Dubai Women's College, teaching English for Academic Purposes, English for Computing, and a broad range of IT subjects, the latter specializing in web design, networking and database applications.

He says, "I am glad to be here in TAMUQ, working in the TCC and Foundations English. A lot of my current work, centered as it is on instructional design and online instruction, is non-physical, so any hints on beaches, tennis, squash, or football, (soccer), activities would be gratefully received."

**Joseph Williams** came directly to Qatar from the UAE via Atlanta, and he is delighted to join the dynamic faculty at TAMUQ. In the classroom, Joseph enjoys teaching subjects such as Academic Writing, Oral Presentation Skills, Reading, and Grammar. He attempts to take disliked subjects (typically, Writing and Grammar) and make them pertinent and engaging to 17-year old freshmen. He likes presenting at conferences and symposiums, too, having presented in Cairo, Istanbul, Dubai, Atlanta and St. Petersburg among other places. If you have an idea for a presentation and you want a co-presenter, feel free to contact him.

When Joseph is out of the office, he enjoys tennis, swimming, yoga, hiking, world cinema, museums, literature, and a decent outdoor cafe. While in Qatar, he dune bashes on occasion, hunts with falcons, smokes shisha, and fishes Bedouin style. His main passion is traveling, having thoroughly wandered through such diverse places as Nepal, Venezuela, Spain, Thailand, and Jordan. He speaks some English, Arabic, Turkish, and Spanish.

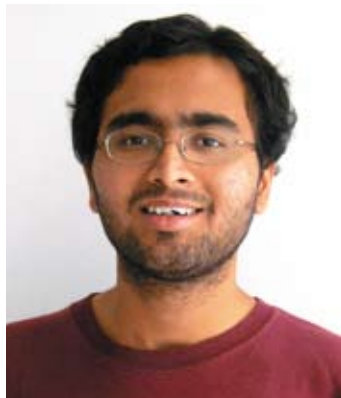


(TCC Staff continued from page 12)



**Deborah Balmer** comes to us from New Zealand. She originally trained as a secondary school teacher before doing further study in teaching English to speakers of other languages. She has taught writing in foundation programs at various universities, including Massey University in New Zealand and Zayed University in Abu Dhabi. She has worked across the adult literacy sector in tutoring, management and business development roles. Deborah has just completed a contract with the New Zealand Ministry of Education Learning for Living Project, where she was working in a professional development role with tutors who teach in adult training schools and polytechnics. The focus of the project was introducing adult numeracy learning progressions into the adult education sector. Deborah is looking forward to once again working alongside students.

**Nikhil Shanbhag** is a student employee with the TCC. He is a senior student majoring in Mechanical Engineering. He loves listening to any kind of music and loves watching comedy movies. He also enjoys running, cricket and tennis.



**Brenda Kent** taught Business Education in Texas and Virginia. After leaving the teaching profession, she used her business skills as a district representative for Congressman Joe Barton and as an editor for two consulting firms. Brenda has most recently been home educating her three children and coordinating an academic co-op for 30 home schooling families in the Bryan/College Station area.

**M o h a m e d Sirajudeen**, “Fiaz,” is also a student employee. He is a freshman majoring in Petroleum Engineering. His roots are from India but he is now settled in Qatar since he was dazzled by its panorama. He says, “The courses are pretty demanding around here”. But he also adds, “When the going gets tough, the tough get going.” He is interested in quite a number of sports including football and basketball, and if possible, he would be playing all the time every day. When he is doing nothing, he likes to sit in front of his computer and click on all his icons. He believes, “It’s like revisiting a path you have already blazed.”



## TCC Netiquette Workshop

How long does an Aggie wait before responding to an e-mail request? What should and shouldn’t be included in a “regrets” e-mail? How should someone handle an irate colleague in written form? The Technical Communications Center explored these questions and many others in a fall workshop entitled “Netiquette: Aggie Style.”

The workshop, the first in a series provided by the TCC, was part of an on-going effort to improve communication between various groups within the university as well as streamline work efficiency. It featured a hands-on approach that reviewed various types of e-mails, offered suggestions in sharpening these types of communication, and allowed attendees to discuss, practice and demonstrate their understanding of the topic.

## Liberal Arts Faculty News

**James Hannah**, professor and program coordinator of Liberal Arts, is currently involved in setting up a system by which he can photocopy and scan out-of-print books in the public domain for entities such as *Project Gutenberg*. Though the books are most often not rare, they are usually out-of-print and difficult to come by. An example is *Arabia Deserta* by Doughty, considered by most writers to be not only the definitive book on travel in Saudi Arabia's 'Empty Quarter,' but generally praised as one of the best-written travel books ever produced, and, so a literary classic. The book is long out of print and, in order to get it scanned, one needs to obtain a rare definitive edition and then reproduce the text. With the support of a TAMUQ IT mini-grant, James was able to purchase a photobed, lighting system, and Boston rocker book cradle to be used with his own digital camera and ABBYY FineReader OCR 8.0 for reproduction of text. In addition, James has two publications coming out this spring: an essay in *The New Madrid Review* and a short story in *The American Literary Review*.

Through award of an IT mini-grant, our writing center director, **Cecelia Hawkins**, received support to purchase a digital camera and accessories to use in developing a presentation for the South Central and International Writing Centers Associations conference *A Space for Writing: Writing Centers and Place*, Apr. 12-14, 2007, in Houston, TX. The presentation, titled *The Gulf: The Quest for Space for a Writing Center in Qatar—A Photo Narrative*, will describe the evolution of the Technical Communications Center at TAMUQ. At the completion of this project, the equipment will become property of the Technical Communications Center (TCC), allowing TCC staff to document activities for evaluation and assessment purposes, to keep a digital photographic record of TCC activities, and to enhance promotional efforts both locally and internationally.

In summer 2006, Ms. Hawkins attended both the First International Qatar TESOL Conference in Doha and the Summer Institute for Writing Center Directors and Professionals at Stanford University sponsored by the IWCA. She served as a panelist at the Teaching with Technology Conference 2005 at Texas A & M University in College Station and presented a paper, "Old Themes/Nu Tlz: Using Forums, Wikis and Blogs to Teach Traditional Concepts," at the Tertiary Writing Network Colloquium 2006, held at Massey University, Napier, New Zealand.



In the area of publications, history professor, **Dr. Ernest O. Starks**, has three new ones in the mill. *Freebooters and Smugglers: The Foreign Slave Trade in the United States after 1808* is in press with the University of Arkansas Press and due out by October 2007. *A. Philip Randolph: The FBI Files* is currently under review with Palgrave Macmillan Press. *A. Philip Randolph: Life, Legend, Legacy* is an encyclopedia entry under contract with Oxford University Press. This entry will be published in *Encyclopedia of African American History, 1896-Present: From the Age of Segregation to the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* (Paul Finkelman, Editor in Chief).

**Liticia Salter**, English lecturer, has had three presentation proposals accepted to three separate conferences this spring. During the March 4C's Conference in New York City, she presented "Please Pass the Tabouli: Opportunities for Technical Communicators in the Middle East" to the American Teachers of Technical Writing. During the April College English Association Conference in New Orleans, Louisiana, she presented "Be Good or Go to Hell: Hieroglyphic Bibles and their 'Curious' history." In May, as a panel member of a session sponsored by DuPont Corporation, she will present "Thinking Outside the Bun: Tough 'Arabic lessons' for Taco Bell" during the 54th Annual meeting for the Society of Technical Communicators in Minneapolis, Minnesota.

In the recent round of TAMUQ IT mini-grant awards, Ms. Salter was given generous support for new technology to use in teaching English 210 – Technical Writing. The new hardware and software will solve a three-fold need: 1. teaching/learning reinforcement; 2. facilitating the interface between the two languages of Arabic and English for speakers of Arabic and non-Arabic speakers alike, and 3. facilitating student learning (and application in their coursework) of important IT tools used in business and industry communication. The materials provided through the grant include transcription and translation equipment and software as well as DVD format tutorials for 20 specific software programs which will be housed in the Technical Communications Center for student self-directed practice.





After serving as the Doha Players pianist and musical arranger for the Spring 2006 production of *Oliver*, our English faculty member, **Curtis Farmer**, has accepted the conductor's baton as orchestral director for the May 2007 production of *Annie*. Mr. Farmer studied classical piano with Los Angeles arranger Leonard David Hirschberg, completing his musical education with John Paul of Sam Houston State University and Angus Morrison of the Royal College of Music in London. His professional work has included stints as keyboardist for the SHSU *Houstonians* jazz ensemble and the Houston-based pop group *Excalibur*, as well as lead vocalist for the *Sentimental Journey* band. Mr. Farmer's son Oak, a bassist in recent Doha productions of *The Sound of Music* and *Oliver*, will make his stage debut in February 2007 in a Texas production of *The Music Man*."

**Dr. David Work**, history faculty member, has been awarded the 2006 Nicholas-Hay award, a joint award of the Lincoln Institute and the Abraham Lincoln Library, for the best dissertation on Abraham Lincoln. He will receive the award in March. The dissertation is titled "*Lincoln's Political Generals*" and is an examination of Lincoln's policy of giving politicians general commissions during the Civil War in an effort to create a national coalition to wage the war. The dissertation looked at why Lincoln adopted this policy and analyzed how successful it was by discussing the careers of sixteen of these political generals.

Political science professor, **Dr. Todd Kent** presented a paper in March at the Southwestern Social Science conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico titled, "Reconsidering Religion as an Independent Variable in International Relations." In May, he will present a paper titled, "Religious Actors: Lions or Lambs," at the Joint Sessions of the European Consortium of Political Research in Helsinki, Finland. In addition, the distinguished, Chris Kojm, a Senior Advisor to the Iraq Study Group and a Visiting Professor at the Woodrow Wilson School at Princeton, was a guest lecturer in his World Politics class this semester.

## TAMUQ Reading and Discussion Club Initiated

CLUBS AND ORGANIZATIONS on the campus of Texas A&M University at Qatar often come about as a result of a spontaneous conversation somewhere. Such was the case one evening at dinner when Cathy Holste, spouse of Associate Dean, James Holste, and English faculty member, Leticia Salter, were discussing a new book they both happened to be reading. From that conversation sprang the concept of a women's reading and discussion group to enhance literacy and conversation skills of the many non-native English speakers in the TAMUQ family while also enjoying good reading. In 2006, the TAMUQ Reading Club was formed and the first novel read by the group was *The Kite Runner*, by Khaled Hosseini.

After experimenting with different approaches, the club has evolved to a membership of 28 active TAMUQ staff, faculty, and partner participants in the reading program. Each bi-weekly brown-bag lunch is led by one of the members who selected beforehand a short work for the members to read. The readings vary within the many literary areas of fiction and nonfiction and reflect the interests of the leaders. The meeting might also include a short audio/video recordings for added interest. In the background, the membership also reads a



longer work over the course of a month or so, and currently the group is reading a novel that recently won the Man Booker Prize, *The Inheritance of Loss* by Kiran Desai.

In each meeting, the discussion of the readings generally includes not only content areas, but also unfamiliar vocabulary and English expressions, as well as personal resonances from the reading. Sometimes the conversation goes off on a tangent and that's okay because the group considers the social interaction almost as important as the reading. Several of the members like to cook and have treated the group to some culinary masterpieces too.

TAMUQ librarian, Dr. Suzanne Gyeszly, has generously assisted the group with funding for the purchase of the novels. The Reading Club will break for the summer, but resume next fall.



## The LeaderShape Institute: A healthy disregard for the impossible

By Emily Yates, Student Development Specialist, TAMUQ Department of Students Affairs

The LeaderShape Institute is a six-day intensive and exciting program designed to develop and equip students to become effective leaders and to lead with integrity. Conducted by the American-based nonprofit organization LeaderShape®, Inc., the Institute promotes values such as integrity, diversity and creativity, encouraging participants to develop “a healthy disregard for the impossible.” This year, Texas A&M University at Qatar was proud to send eighteen students to the first international session of LeaderShape, hosted by the Qatar Foundation and corporate sponsor RasGas.

Fifty-nine students from Qatar Foundation branch campuses Texas A&M University at Qatar, Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar, and Virginia Commonwealth University in Qatar, as well as Qatar University and the College of the North Atlantic attended LeaderShape.

LeaderShape president Paul Pyrz, Jr. stated that, “We are thrilled to partner with the Qatar Foundation to bring The LeaderShape Institute to the students of Education City. The world is in desperate need of more individuals committed to creating change in their communities and doing so with the highest level of integrity. We look forward to seeing the results that these young people will be able to create and supporting them in their efforts.”

The unique format of LeaderShape gave TAMUQ students the chance to collaborate and interact with their peers from Education City and around Qatar.

Each day focused on a different theme, highlighting aspects of leadership. The curriculum emphasizes concepts such as “Building Community,” “The Value of One, The Power of All” and “Challenging What Is and Looking To What Could Be.”

Some of the week was spent in a large group setting with all of the participants and facilitators. The students engaged each other in discussions about topics including the role of power in leadership and team dynamics. Students worked on activities designed around each of these themes, including a team-building earthquake simulation, a discussion about where they draw the line on issues of integrity, and a personal style assessment. Ameer Khader '08, said that the experience provided a framework for “learning leadership and ethics in every aspect of life – things that can always be applied.”

Throughout the week, students also worked on defining their vision for changing or contributing to the world in a positive way. During the “Vision Showcase”, participants posted their visions for others to see, and had the opportunity to read and give feedback to each other about their visions. People were

also able to identify allies and partners by reading other vision statements. At the end of the week, everyone had completed a “Breakthrough Blueprint” – a detailed plan for achieving their vision that could be taken back to campus and put into action.

Each student was also placed in a small group with 8-10 other students called a Family Cluster and led by a Cluster Facilitator. Family Clusters met each day, and were comprised of students from different universities. This provided yet another opportunity to work with new students, as well as discuss topics in a small group setting. Clusters were also a place for students to give and receive constructive feedback on their leadership style and skills.

During an evening guest leader forum and reception, Dr. Hessa Al Jaber – ICT and Mr. Nafez Bseiso – RasGas discussed their personal philosophies of leadership with the students. University administrators and corporate guests were invited to the forum to interact with the students and find out more about their LeaderShape experience.

Ms. Lallah Howard, Assistant Dean for Finance & Administration, said that she “was so inspired by the students who made an effort to ‘work the room’, insuring that all of the guests felt welcome and had an introduction to LeaderShape and their accomplishments for the week. It was great to see them already acting like leaders. In addition, Dr. Hessa’s comments on leadership and life were especially interesting to me; the theory of “No Regrets” is one I have always felt was especially important in life. Never bother looking back saying “*What If* you can’t change the past, instead always look forward and say *What If* you can influence the future.”

The week was concluded with a commencement ceremony, attended by parents and family members. Students were recognized for their hard work, and charged with staying in action after their time at LeaderShape.

The Department of Student Affairs at TAMUQ collaborated with Qatar Foundation, CMUQ, VCUQ and Georgetown School of Foreign Service in Qatar in an effort to bring the LeaderShape Institute to Qatar. The first Qatar LeaderShape is the latest example of universities in Qatar working together to empower and educate the next generation of leaders.

*Top right and opposite page:*  
Students participating in challenge course.

*Right:* TAMUQ students, staff, and former students.



## The Games of Our Lives

By Karim Farhat '09, Chemical Engineering Major

December 1<sup>st</sup> was the date, Qatar was the place, and the event was the official opening of the Asian Games Doha 2006, the “Games of Your Life”. After two years of hard work and fabulous creativity, the dream of Doha turned to reality, by hosting the second largest multi-sports events in the world. Gigantic fully decorated stadium, sports expeditions from all Asian countries, and volunteers of all nationalities; all gathered to make the Games one of the most successful events ever hosted in Gulf region, if not in Asia and the world.

And since TAMUQ tries to be involved in any event that represents, helps, or improves Qatar, the AGGIES insisted on having a role in the Games; and as usual, they did a great and honorable job! Workshops, meetings, and long days and nights of venue service were just a part of what we, the students of TAMUQ, did to contribute – even a little bit – in shifting the world’s attention to Qatar.



As I knew from many of my friends, the preparation for the Games started several years ago. Since we started the semester two weeks early, this allowed us to complete exams before the Opening Ceremony of the Games, which made it possible for many students to volunteer. Some Aggies joined the organizing committee (DAGOC), while others – including myself – joined the broadcasting committee (DAGBS). I am sure that our friends in the organizing committee did a great job, but my experience and my friends’ participation in DAGBS was one to remember.

The Asian Games representatives of this committee visited the university while we were taking mid-term exams. So as expected, they had to summarize their presentations and literary walk with us to our classrooms to get some answers for the interviews! Then, after some workshops about broadcasting, dealing with cameras and their crews and management, we were ready to hold our new positions. We held four basic positions:



assistant to venue manager, camera assistant, commentary assistant and information assistant. We actually started work before the Games to get used to our jobs.

Finally, the day the entire country had been preparing for, December 1, 2006, was here. For 15 following days, my friends and I gained a lot of experience, and I am confident in saying that we did a good job in representing ourselves and the university. For me it was a unique experience. It was the first time that I worked with professionals coming from all around the globe, and in a field that I know very little about.

As it has been expected, on the first day I was a bit confused, especially when my boss started talking to me about some equipment with weird names, and when he was asking me to go to places I have never been to before and have no idea where it was! However, I must confess, through all the training that I received, two basic things helped me to succeed in my work: the engineering sense, and the will to help or what we call... the Spirit of the 12<sup>th</sup> Man. I bet you’re wondering what does this have to do with my job. Well I can explain. Sometimes, my boss used to ask me to take care of something that I haven’t ever dealt with. Here, it turned to be my responsibility to choose the right person to get more information, to ask for help, and to have enough confidence to make decisions. This is something that engineering teaches: sometimes you don’t know how to do stuff, but you always know how to deal with it!

And under the pressure of the Games and the need to be always ready for the worst possibilities (like some fancy orders from my boss to stay till after midnight at work or come to work at 6:00 am!), I was just overwhelmed sometimes and wanted to quit. Yet, I felt that I had a huge responsibility towards the Games, Qatar, as well as Texas A&M. I didn’t want them to say: “One student from TAMUQ quit”...because surrendering under pressure is not what TAMUQ teaches us.

In fact, I have reached a realization that every person, no matter how small or peripheral his job was, was very important if not vital. Thus, I felt that I cannot simply turn my back and leave, and what I was doing was worth all my efforts. The thanks of the crew for my help, the problems we went through together, and

the experience that I was receiving, all made me stay and do the best that I could wherever and whenever I could.

On the other hand, I cannot but mention some of the news that I believe all Aggies should be proud of. In both venues where I was working (Hamad Aquatic Center & Basketball Stadium), it seemed that the majority of the staff knew Texas A&M. My logistics manager from Greece told me that he applied to the main campus. In addition, I am glad to inform you that the manager of my friend, Tausif '09, is an Aggie! Tausif gave her a "SPIRIT OF AGGIELAND" wristband and she promised to wear it with pride!

I, as all students, was happy to help in the Asian Games and to contribute to the legacy being created by TAMUQ in continuously supporting the community in Qatar.

### 2006 Asian Games Volunteers from TAMUQ

Hazem Abdel-Moati '09, Chemical Engineering  
*Assistant to Venue Management, Doha Asian Games*

*Broadcast Services, Al-Rayyan Sports Club*

Ali Ahmed '08, Electrical Engineering Major  
*Protocol Attendant, ASPIRE Academy*

Manzoor Ahmed '10, Electrical Engineering  
*Commentary Assistant in the Equestrian Club, DAGBS*

Tausif Ahmed '09, Petroleum Engineering  
*Assistant to Venue Management, DAGBS, Al Sadd Sports Club*

Ahmed Al-Abdulla '08, Mechanical Engineering  
*Protocol Assistant, ASPIRE Academy*

Ahmed Al-Bikri '08, Petroleum Engineering  
*Protocol Group, Opening Ceremony & ASPIRE Academy*

Saoud Al-Mannai '08, Chemical Engineering  
*Athletes' Village Housing Assistant, Athletes' Village*

Ahmad Almansoor '09, Mechanical Engineering  
*Opening and Closing Ceremonies Cast Preparation*

Muneera Eassa Al-Shriem '10, Electrical Engineering  
*Assistant Venue Manager, Doha Racing Equestrian Club*

M S Mohamed Fiazudeen '10, Petroleum Engineering  
*Doha Asian Games Broadcasting Services, Assistant Venue Manager at Qatar Sports Club*

Karim Farhat '09, Chemical Engineering  
*Assistant to venue manager, Hamad Aquatic Center & Basketball Venue*

Yousef M. Murad '07, Chemical Engineering  
*Holding the torch and giving it to Sheikha Mozah*

Karthik Sringeri '08, Petroleum Engineering, DAGBS  
*Commentary Assistant, Khalifa Tennis & Squash Stadium*

Dani Wannous '10, Mechanical Engineering  
*Assistant Venue Manager, Al Arabi Club*

## TAMUQ Hosts Second Annual Career Fair



Students interacting with representatives from URS Corporation and ExxonMobil during the 2nd annual Career Fair.

The TAMUQ Student Body Government in coordination with the Academic Advising Office recently hosted the second annual Summer Work Experience Program April 10-11. During the event students had the opportunity to interact with professionals from industry and learn more information about companies in the region, as well as submit CVs for consideration. Company representatives were on hand to explain the different

roles of engineers within their industries and their expectations for the interns they select for the summer.

Companies represented in this year's Summer Work Experience Program were Baker Hughes, Exxon Mobil, Oryx GTL, RasGas, Shell, QAPCO, URS, Dolphin Energy, General Electric, Maersk Oil, Occidental Petroleum (OXY), Qatar Vinyl, Qatargas, and Schlumberger.

## Students Present Research in First TAMUQ Student Paper Contest



Eager and attentive students during the Student Paper Contest Presentations.

On Saturday March 10, the Petroleum Engineering Program at Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) organized for the first time in Qatar the Student Paper Contest where junior level Petroleum and Mechanical Engineering students competed in presenting their research topics. More than 40 professionals from 13 companies were present to judge the presentations. They were all impressed with the professional way the contest was organized, the quality of the presentations and the level of knowledge the students possess.

Twenty-two students participated in the contest, and were divided into 4 sections. The first and second place winners in each section were awarded prizes by ExxonMobil; those are:

### **First place winners:**

Mohamed Al-Marri, Sara Al-Saadi, Reem Al-Mansoori and Mohamed Daghabag

### **Second place winners:**

Nayla Al-Malki, Amna Al-Tayeeb, Nikhil Shanbhag and Ameer Khader

The Student Paper Contest is an annual event at the Petroleum Engineering Department at Texas A&M University in College Station where junior, senior and

graduate students participate in presenting their research topics. The university considers this event as one of the most important links between the academic university environment and the industry. The constructive intellectual interaction between the students and the industry professionals serves to motivate the students as well as guide them into more and even better research work; it helps them develop good presentation skills, and leads them to a better understanding of what is expected from them in their career. The industries also benefit from attending such events because they get the chance to recruit the best students as interns in the summer and maybe hire them after they graduate.

The Student Paper Contest is organized along the same guidelines used by the Society of Petroleum Engineers (SPE) in the International and Regional SPE Student Paper Contests. The winner in the local Contest at the University gets to represent TAMU in the Regional SPE Student Paper Contest and then, if qualified, in the International one. TAMU has a great record in these contests on both the undergraduate and the graduate level. Two of our junior students at TAMUQ, Lama Al-Oreibi and Megha Mohan, participated in the Sub-Regional SPE Student Paper Contest held in Abu-Dhabi in Feb 2007 and got first and

second place. They also participated in the SPE Regional Student Paper Contest held in Bahrain on March 10, where they competed against senior students from Iran, Egypt and other countries, and Megha Mohan was proudly able to secure the 3<sup>rd</sup> place in the contest.

The local contest at TAMUQ this year was solely sponsored by ExxonMobil. The Petroleum Engineering faculty at TAMUQ and the local SPE Student Chapter organized the event, which was marked a success. A student who won the second place in her session said: "Now I love Petroleum Engineering." Another student said that he gained more knowledge on how to approach engineering problems. Students who participated in the contest were impressed with the level of support the judges provided and are looking forward to an even bigger event next year. One of the judges said: "A very enjoyable and well prepared event. Texas A&M clearly takes great interest in its students and is endeavoring to prepare them well for the future." The Dean and CEO of TAMUQ, Dr. Mark Weichold, the Associate Dean for Research, Dr. James Holste and the Interim Dean for Academic Affairs, Dr. Reza Langari, as well as many faculty, students and staff attended the contest. The amount of effort put in place by the faculty, staff and administration in supporting this event was remarkable and is a witness to their tireless striving to improve the quality of education our students are offered. Everyone is looking forward to a



Left to right: Dr. Mahmood Amani, Petroleum Engineering Program Coordinator at TAMUQ, and Dan Cox '86, JV Asset Manager – ExxonMobil.

bigger contest next year, where both our junior and senior students will get to participate.

The success of this first annual student paper contest is largely due to the efforts exerted by TAMUQ's Petroleum and Mechanical Engineering faculty. A special recognition goes to: Dr. Mahmood Amani, Dr. Mashhad Fahes, Dr. Hadi Nasrabadi, Dr. Raffie Hosein, Dr. Earl Hoskins, Mr. Frank Platt, Ms. Darla-Jean Weatherford (from TAMU main campus), Dr. Houshang Masudi and Dr. John Bryant.

## ConocoPhillips Makes Donation to TAMUQ



In December, Mike Stice, ConocoPhillips Qatar President, visited Education City and presented TAMUQ with a contribution of

QR270,000 (approx. \$75,000). The funds will be distributed to TAMUQ students through scholarships.



**Dr. Hassan S. Bazzi**, Chemistry faculty and Science Program Coordinator, attended the 233<sup>rd</sup> National Meeting of the American Chemical Society in Chicago March 25-29, 2007, and presented the results of a project that is a collaboration with Prof. David E. Bergbreiter from the TAMU Chemistry Department. The title of the presentation was “Novel PIB-based Metathesis Catalyst”.



**Dr. Ashfaq Bengali**, Visiting Associate Professor of Chemistry, presented the results of his research “The Reactivity of the Metal- $\eta^2$ -Arene Bond” at the 233<sup>rd</sup> National Meeting of the American Chemical Society in Chicago on March 26<sup>th</sup>. This research focused on understanding the factors that influence the strength of the interaction between metal centers and aromatic molecules.

**Dr. Ahmed Abdel-Wahab**, Chemical Engineering faculty, received a research grant from Suncor Energy Inc., Calgary, Canada to conduct research on the use of Ultra-High Lime with Aluminum Process (UHLA) for recycled wastewater treatment in their industry. The research agreement was signed in February 2007. The first phase of this project will last for six months starting March 1, 2007 and it includes conducting a feasibility study. The UHLA technology was developed at Texas A&M University by Dr. Abdel-Wahab and it is an innovative technology for recycled wastewater treatment that has the ability to



remove the majority of scale-forming compounds and substantially reduce the total dissolved solids in water and wastewater.

**Dr. Yakut Gazi**, Lead IT Consultant at the Information Technology Services, has finished her doctoral dissertation entitled “Discourse Indicators of Culture in Online Courses” under the direction of Dr. Susan Pedersen of the Department of Educational Psychology of Texas A&M University. This case study investigated the manifestations of culture in the electronic discourse in an online course. The results showed that the online communication among the students did not exhibit discourse behaviors predicted by their original culture. Instead, the students developed a third culture during the course of the semester. The research identified the discourse characteristics of this third culture and discussed the course design features that may have facilitated the creation of a third culture in this course environment. Dr. Gazi co-presented the results of this research with Dr. Susan Pedersen and Dr. Karen Murphy at the Annual Convention of the Association for Educational Communications and



Technologies (AECT), October 10-14, 2006, in Dallas, TX. In addition, Dr. Gazi co-authored a chapter with Dr. Karen Murphy and Dr. Lauren Cifuentes, in the book “Flexible Learning” that is published early this year by Information Science Publishing. The chapter is entitled “Intercultural collaborative project-based learning in online environments”.



**Mr. David Manuel**, senior lecturer in Mathematics, attended the Qatar Mathematics and Science Teachers Association conference held at College of the North Atlantic in Qatar on March 24. Mr. Manuel gave a presentation entitled “Toothpicks, Triangles, Tangrams, and Pythagoras: a Sample of SEE-Math”. In it, Mr. Manuel discussed and modeled a sample of activities from the Summer Educational Enrichment in Math camp

for middle school students, which the Department of Mathematics hosts every year in College Station. In addition, Mr. Manuel will be providing an after school Math Camp for middle school students at the American School of Doha on Sundays beginning April 15 for six weeks and hopes to establish similar programs at middle and high schools throughout Doha in the future.



**Shannon K. McNulty**, Student Development Specialist II, was selected to participate in the Eighth Mediterranean Social and Political Research Meeting in Montecatini Terme, Italy in March of 2007. This academic conference, focusing on topics related to the study of the Middle East and particularly the region’s relationship with the European Union, was hosted by the Mediterranean Programme of the Robert Schuman Centre for Advanced Studies at the European University Institute. Ms. McNulty presented a paper entitled, “Labor, the Asian Curse: A Critique of Dependence



on Labor Export” and participated in a workshop co-sponsored by the Gulf Research Center (Dubai) on The Geo-

Economic Positioning of the Gulf Cooperation Council Countries. The workshop participants were academics and researchers specializing in the Arabian Gulf region. A compilation of the papers from this workshop will be published by the Gulf Research Center in the near future. Ms. McNulty received her MA degree in Arab Studies from Georgetown University in Washington, DC in 2004. She was designated HH Dr. Sultan bin Mohammed Al-Qassimi Scholar for Arab Gulf Studies and Foreign Language Area Studies (FLAS) fellowship recipient in academic year 2003-2004.

**Dr. Hadi Nasrabadi**, Petroleum Engineering Faculty, recently published a paper about analysis of species separation in a thermogravitational column in *Transport in Porous Media*, Vol. 67, No. 3, pp. 473–486, April 2007 (with Dr. Hussein Hoteit, RERI and Prof. Abbas Firoozabadi, Yale University). In the past, the analysis of species separation in a thermogravitational column filled with porous medium has been based on strong dependency of thermal and molecular diffusion to dispersion. In this paper, an alternative is suggested. It is shown that the dispersion effect is negligible for the conditions in a packed thermogravitational column

and that compositional dependency of thermal diffusion should be accounted for. He also recently published a paper about compositional variation in two-phase (oil and gas) hydrocarbon reservoirs in *SPE Reservoir Evaluation and Engineering*, Vol. 9, No. 5, pp. 530–542, October 2006 (with Dr. Kassem Ghorayeb, RERI and Prof. Abbas Firoozabadi, Yale University). Formulation and numerical solution of two-phase multicomponent diffusion and natural convection in porous media is presented. Thermal diffusion, pressure diffusion, and molecular diffusion are included in the diffusion expression from thermodynamics of irreversible processes. The

formulation and the numerical solution are used to predict compositional variation in 2D cross section of two-phase reservoirs. Both homogeneous and layered media without and with anisotropy are considered in the calculations. Numerical examples for a multicomponent reservoir fluid are presented. Results show a strong effect of natural convection in species distribution.



(Faculty News continued on page 24)

(continued from page 23)

**Dr. Suhail Zubairy**, a Professor of Physics at Texas A&M University and a Visiting Professor at TAMUQ has been awarded the Humboldt Research Prize of the Republic of Germany. This is regarded as Germany's major research award for senior scientists and scholars in all disciplines. The Alexander von Humboldt Foundation grants Humboldt Research Awards annually to foreign scholars with internationally recognized academic qualifications. The award is intended as a lifelong tribute



to the past academic accomplishments of award winners. Furthermore, award winners are invited to carry out research projects of their own choice in Germany in cooperation with German specialist colleagues. Professor Zubairy has been recognized for his many pioneering and wide-ranging contributions to the field of quantum optics and laser physics. He has made several important contributions to the fields of quantum computing and quantum informatics as well.

**Dr. Mohammed-Slim Alouini** and **Dr. Khalid Qaraqe**, both Electrical Engineering faculty, with Texas A&M graduate students Seyeong Choi and Sung Nam, published the following papers from September 2006 through March 2007 in IEEE and other international conferences.



1- K. A. Qaraqe and M.-S. Alouini, "Performance Simulation of 3G Closed Loop Transmit Diversity Systems", *4th World Scientific and Engineering Academy and Society (WSEAS) International Conference on Applied Electromagnetic, Wireless and Optical Communications (ELECTROSCIENCE'06) WSEAS International Conferences*, Venice, Italy, Nov. 2006

2- S. Choi, M.-S. Alouini, K. A. Qaraqe, and H.-C. Yang, "Finger Assignment

Schemes for RAKE Receivers with Multi-way Soft Handover," in *Proc. IEEE Wireless Communications & Networking Conference (WCNC'07)*, Hong Kong, Mar. 2007.

3- S. Choi, M.-S. Alouini, K. A. Qaraqe, H.-C. Yang, and Y.-C. Ko "A Practical Study of Adaptive Finger Reassignment and Replacement In the Soft Handover Region," in *Proc. IEEE International Symposium on Signal Processing and its Applications (ISSPA'07)*, Sharjah, U.A.E., Feb. 2007.

4- S. Choi, M.-S. Alouini, K. A. Qaraqe, and H.-C. Yang, "Performance Analysis of RAKE Receivers with Finger Reassignment," in *Proc. IEEE International Conference on Communication Systems (ICCS'06)*, Singapore, Oct. 2006.

5- S. Choi, M.-S. Alouini, K. A. Qaraqe, and H.-C. Yang, "Soft Handover Overhead Reduction by RAKE Reception with Finger Replacement," in *Proc. IEEE International Conference on Communication Systems (ICCS'06)*, Singapore, Oct. 2006.

6- S. S. Nam, M.-S. Alouini, and K. A. Qaraqe, "Diversity Combining with Up-Link Power Control," in *Proc. IEEE International Symposium on Personal, Indoor and Mobile Radio Communications (PIMRC'06)*, Helsinki, Finland, Sept. 2006.

**Dr. Seyeong Choi** received his B.S. and M.S. degrees from Hanyang University, Seoul, Korea, in 1996 and 1998, respectively. In April 2007, he defended his doctorate dissertation entitled "Design and Performance Evaluation of RAKE Finger Management Schemes in the Soft Handover Region" under the supervision of Dr. Alouini of the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering of

Texas A&M University. From 1998 through 2001 he worked as a researcher at LGTeleCom's Network R&D Center, Seoul, Korea, operating the CDMA mobile communication networks. His research interests include wireless communications, MIMO



fading channels, diversity techniques, and system performance evaluation. On Jan. 2006, he joined Texas A&M University at Qatar where he is doing his research under Qatar Telecom (QTEL) projects.

## Celebrating Arab Cultures Week – February 2007

The 2007 Celebrating Arab Cultures events held Feb. 8-11 recognized the culture and heritage of Aggie students from the Arab world. Over 100 students from Arab countries study at Texas A&M's main campus in College Station, Texas. There are also close to 200 students currently enrolled at Texas A&M's branch campus in Doha, Qatar. Each of these students brings unique culture that enriches the campus and local community. One highlight of the week was the keynote



Left to right: His Excellency Nasser bin Hamad M. Al-Khalifa, Dr. David Prior and Abdullah Al Sultan a Ph.D. student in Petroleum Engineering.

address that was given by the Ambassador of the State of Qatar, His Excellency Nasser bin Hamad M. Al-Khalifa. Ambassador Al-Khalifa expressed his appreciation for the efforts of Texas A&M University and the Qatar Foundation in establishing Texas A&M's branch campus in Qatar in 2003. Relationships formed through the TAMUQ campus and Texas A&M's collaboration with the University of Qatar Primary Educator Preparation Program have provided faculty, staff, and students wonderful opportunities to get to know about Arab culture in a very personal way. Ambassador Al-Khalifa also had the opportunity to interact with Arab students at a reception held in his honor.

The Ambassador's remarks covered the topic of "The U.S. and Arab Worlds: What can we learn from each other." Following the presentation Dr. David Prior hosted a dinner in his honor. This week of cultural events was sponsored by The Bowman Endowment, Salem Oncology Center, SABIC Americas, International Programs Office, Qatar Support Office, Office of the Executive Vice President and Provost, University Libraries Diversity Office, the Saudi Student House the Bush Presidential Library Foundation, Office of International Outreach, and Sponsored Student Programs. The students plan to host another culture week in 2009.

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### TAMUQ Faculty and Staff News *(continued from page 24)*

**Sung Sik Nam** is a Ph.D. student in the Department of Electrical and Computer Engineering at Texas A&M University, College Station. He is working with Prof. Mohamed-Slim Alouini and Prof. Khalid Qaraqe in the area of Wireless Communications. On Nov. 2006, he joined Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ), where he is working toward the Ph.D. degree under Qatar Telecom (QTEL) projects. From Sept. 2006 till now, he



has one conference paper published and one conference paper in *Proc. IEEE International Symposium on Personal, Indoor and Mobile Radio Communications (PIMRC'06)*, Helsinki, Finland, Sept. 2006, and two journal papers (extended version of conference papers) submitted in *IEEE* and *Wiley Journal*. He is working on the design of the threshold based power allocation algorithm to increase the effective acceptable users among the scheduled users.

## Dr. David B. Prior to become UT System Executive Vice Chancellor

Dr. David B. Prior, who has served as the Executive Vice President and Provost for Texas A&M University for five years will become the Executive Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs for the University of Texas System, effective June 15, 2007. Dr. Prior's contributions to Texas A&M University are numerous and include working with former President Robert M. Gates to plan and implement one of the largest faculty reinvestment and infrastructure growth initiatives in the history of our university. He also worked diligently to re-energize the world-renowned Ocean Drilling program now known as the Integrated Ocean Drilling Program. In addition, Dr. Prior has worked tirelessly in the establishment of the Texas A&M University at Qatar (TAMUQ) branch campus. In November 2002, Dr. Prior, then Interim Executive Vice President and Provost, led a 20 member delegation to Qatar to explore the Qatari vision for Education City and the role that TAMU might play in that vision, it was a successful trip, one that led to Dr. Prior gaining approval from the Texas Higher Education Coordinating Board to establish the Qatar Campus in April 2003. Then in May 2003 Dr. Prior returned to Qatar with a TAMU delegation to finalize the 10-year agreement with Qatar Foundation. In July of that same year the Texas A&M University at Qatar



– Qatar Foundation joint advisory board was established and institutional members were appointed. The board includes three representatives from the Qatar Foundation and three representatives from Texas A&M University. Dr. Prior was named as chair of the advisory board, where he served until March 2007. Dr. Prior's contributions to the Qatar campus have gone above and beyond and without his guidance and support the campus would not be where it is today.

## Interim University President Named – Presidential Search Underway

On December 18, 2006, Dr. Robert M. Gates, resigned his position as President of Texas A&M University and was sworn in as the US Secretary of Defense. His loss to the A&M System is significant, but his duty to the country prevails over his good work at A&M. Dr. Ed Davis, President of the Texas A&M Foundation was named Interim President of Texas A&M University on December 18<sup>th</sup> during a special telephonic meeting of the Texas A&M University System Board of Regents. Davis has served as President of the Texas A&M Foundation, a non-profit organization dedicated to raising private gifts, particularly endowments, benefiting Texas A&M University, since 1993. He also serves as primary contact

for a portfolio of major donor prospects and as president of the foundation's subsidiary Trust Company.

On January 5, 2007, Dr. Michael D. McKinney, Chancellor of the Texas A&M University System, appointed a 15-



member search committee to assist in identifying candidates for the position of President of Texas A&M University in College Station. Dr. Doug Slack, speaker of the university's faculty senate will serve as chairman of the committee. The committee will forward its recommendations to McKinney, who, in turn will make his recommendations to the Board of Regents. It is anticipated that the search process will take six to nine months.

## The Primary Educator Preparation Program

The Primary Educator Preparation Program (PEPP) is a unique international teacher preparation program. It is facilitated by Qatar University faculty in collaboration with Texas A&M University faculty and is financed by the Supreme Education Council. The first cohort of teachers completed 30 credit hours, field training and an internship experience. They were awarded diplomas at the Qatar University graduation June 29, 2006.

Students of the program have volunteered at private English schools during their school breaks. The cohort has attended local and national educational seminars. In 2006 and 2007, five students have successfully presented English as a Second Language (ESL) teaching methods and organizational tools at the Qatar TESOL conference.

Teaching in a second language takes courage and perseverance. The second cohort of the PEPP started the 2006-2007 courses with 13 eager students. The diploma requirements are concentrated into one year of intensive courses. It is expected that this cohort will receive their diploma July 2007.

A publicity campaign to expand student enrollment in PEPP courses began with posters distributed to Qatar government schools and weekly advertisements in the Al Sharq newspaper. This campaign has increased the number of students being trained as primary educators.

In January, 2007 the PEPP program began offering English methods classes in the afternoons, which allowed 15 teachers from seven government schools to attend classes after their school day. With this success, math and science methods classes were scheduled for the afternoons and attracted 29 teachers from seven government schools, one private school and a Qatar University student interested in becoming a teacher. The first male students were admitted to the program and were part of the first co-ed class. Of the 15 English methods teachers who received training, nine returned for the math and science methods courses.

Paramount to the preparation of the pre-service teacher is



the sequence of planned field experiences which are purposefully designed to develop the novice teacher into a confident professional who has a clear understanding in researched methodology and effective teaching techniques. Additionally, Cohort 2 has benefited from sharing the afternoon class with the in-service teachers. Discussions now include a diverse range of real-life Qatar education experiences. In April Cohort 2 students will spend eight weeks in an elementary classroom to observe a variety of students, to relate observational experience to theory and coursework, and to apply theory and coursework to pre-service experience in the classroom.

As Cohort 2 prepares to become interns in Qatar government schools and readies themselves for their July 2007 graduation, Cohort 3 has formed for the 2007-2008 program year. In March, 47 post-baccalaureate students were admitted into the program and began afternoon classes in English, computer technology and math.

The Doha Debates recently began to invite PEPP students to attend their debates.

*There have certainly been many exciting changes in the government schools. How wonderful for you to have played a part in the unique and ambitious reform initiatives that have taken place in Qatar.*

—Sarah Al-Humaidi, Doha Debates, February 8, 2007

*I have learned the art of teaching more effectively by introducing information in new, varied, and interesting ways."*

—Student currently enrolled in the Qatar University-Texas A&M University Primary Educator Preparation Program

### Job Opportunities at TAMUQ

Interested in joining the TAMUQ team and being a part of a revolutionary approach to higher education? As a growing campus, TAMUQ continually has positions available for faculty and staff.

Human Resource Services is busy creating new staff positions for the coming fiscal year. Those interested in applying for a staff position should apply through the Texas A&M University (TAMU) Online Employment Service at <http://tamujobs.tamu.edu> on the web. A resume may be submitted in lieu of

completing the Work Experience section of the application. Up to three documents may be submitted with the application. For questions or assistance, contact the TAMU Employment Office at [emploffice@tamu.edu](mailto:emploffice@tamu.edu) or telephone +1 979-845-5154.

Faculty and research positions are listed through the colleges/departments in College Station. Those seeking a faculty or research position should contact the Texas A&M University Dean of Faculties Office in College Station, e-mail [dof@tamu.edu](mailto:dof@tamu.edu) or telephone +1 979-845-4274.



## The Doha Debates

The Doha Debates are a unique forum for free speech in the Arab world and are one of most exciting projects of Qatar Foundation. They take the form of televised debates that are seen around the world on the BBC. Since their launch in October 2004, the Doha Debates have been a testament to how freedom of expression and the art of debate are developing in Qatar. TAMU students have been active participants and fabulous Aggie ambassadors!

TAMU and other university students from Education City as well as students from universities and high schools across Doha make up about half of the 300-strong audience. The students have taken a leading role in questioning the experts the Doha Debates bring to Qatar each month.

The Debates, which are chaired by internationally renowned broadcaster Tim Sebastian, who is best known as the former presenter of the BBC program HARDtalk, are filmed monthly at the headquarters of Qatar Foundation in Education City.

The Doha Debates have a format similar to the traditional 'Oxford Union' debates. Four invited experts – two on each side – argue for or against the motion. The discussion is then thrown open to the audience, directed by Tim Sebastian. At the end of the debate the audience votes for or against the motion,

based on the merit of the arguments they have heard.

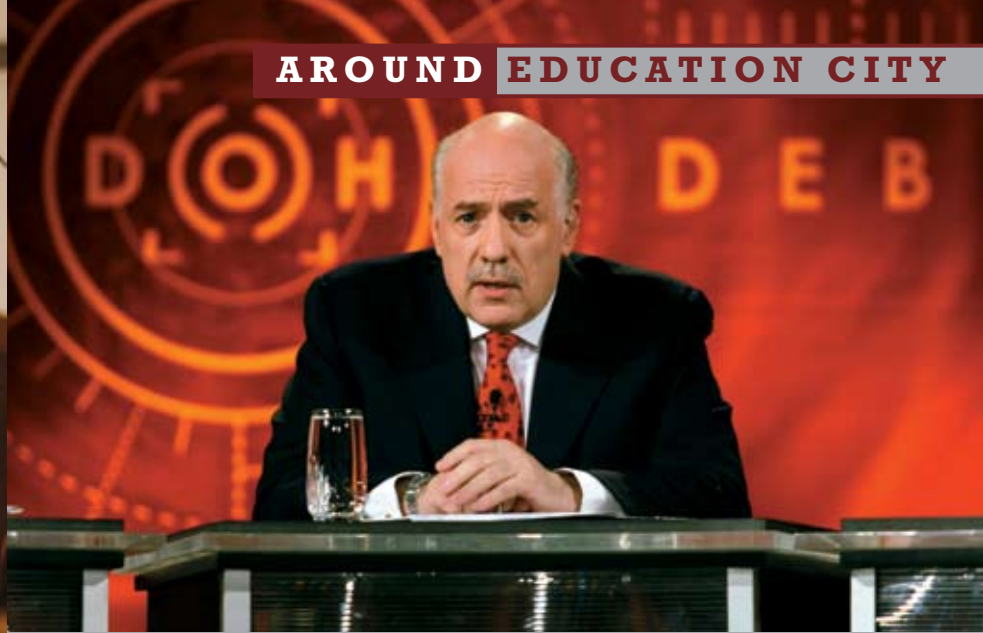
Striving to be both controversial and informative, the Doha Debates are intended to encourage dialogue and freedom of speech in Qatar and throughout the region. No topic is off limits; a fact that continues to surprise global viewers unfamiliar with the extent to which Qatar encourages the examination of opposing viewpoints.

Each Doha Debate is broadcast on the BBC World television channel which is seen by nearly 270 million people in more than 200 countries and territories around the globe. This has brought the Doha Debates a huge international following and they have become one of the top rated programs on BBC World.

An important point to note is that while the Doha Debates are a project of Qatar Foundation, Tim Sebastian, and the Doha Debates team have full editorial control – they set the topics and invite the speakers with no outside influence at all, either from Qatar Foundation or the BBC which simply buy the broadcast rights.

Recent Debates have discussed Hezbollah's role in Lebanon, the threat of Iran, the right of return for the Palestinians and the role of the family in reform in the Arab world.

The Doha Debates team also produces events known as



*Striving to be both controversial and informative, the Doha Debates are intended to encourage dialogue and freedom of speech in Qatar and throughout the region. No topic is off limits; a fact that continues to surprise global viewers unfamiliar with the extent to which Qatar encourages the examination of opposing viewpoints.*

Ali Ahmed, Electrical Engineering student, TAMUQ engaged in a serious debate

'Doha Debate Specials' which give students in Doha a unique opportunity to talk with some of the world's most famous names about the major issues facing the globe today.

The format of the Specials is a single high profile guest interviewed by Tim Sebastian and then questioned by a student-only audience. Past Special guests have included President Bill Clinton, Israeli Deputy Prime Minister Shimon Peres, Archbishop Desmond Tutu, Dr Mohamed ElBaradei and Amre Moussa.

### **COMMENTS about the Doha Debates:**

*"For me, the Doha Debates teaches us how to connect with the other side no matter how different their points of view are. I have learned so much from the Doha Debates and I am grateful for the flexibility of mind that they have granted me." — Student in Doha*

*"On a personal level, participating in the Doha Debate has helped me develop my own sense of critical thinking. I am more open-minded because of the Doha Debates." — Student in Doha*

*"The students we have taken to the debates absolutely love*

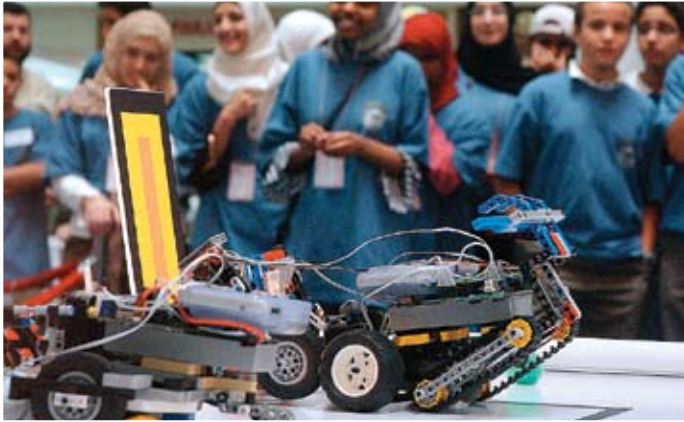
*going. They have found it exciting and stimulating and it has challenged their thinking. One student said it was the 'best night of her life'! Two others told me they were actually persuaded to change their minds from a previously formed opinion after having been swayed by the speakers. All students agreed it has taught them, at the very least, to listen to and entertain other opinions." — High school teacher in Doha*

*"For once, there is a program that unveils an alternative viewpoint to the ongoing issues in the world. As a university student from Singapore, I find the honesty and openness with which the issues are debated incredibly refreshing. I believe the Doha Debates is one of the strongest tools we have to cultivate a world with young people who think critically and deal with disagreements in a civilized way." — BBC World viewer in Singapore*

### **Contact:**

To find out more about the Doha Debates and to watch past debates online, please go to: [www.thedohadebates.com](http://www.thedohadebates.com)

To contact the Doha Debates team, please email: [thedohadebates@qf.org.qa](mailto:thedohadebates@qf.org.qa)



## CARNEGIE MELLON UNIVERSITY IN QATAR

# BOTBALL

## high-school robotics competition expands to include schools in Kuwait and the U.A.E

By Andrea L. Zrimsek, Writer/Editor,  
Carnegie Mellon University in Qatar

Botguy is on the move.

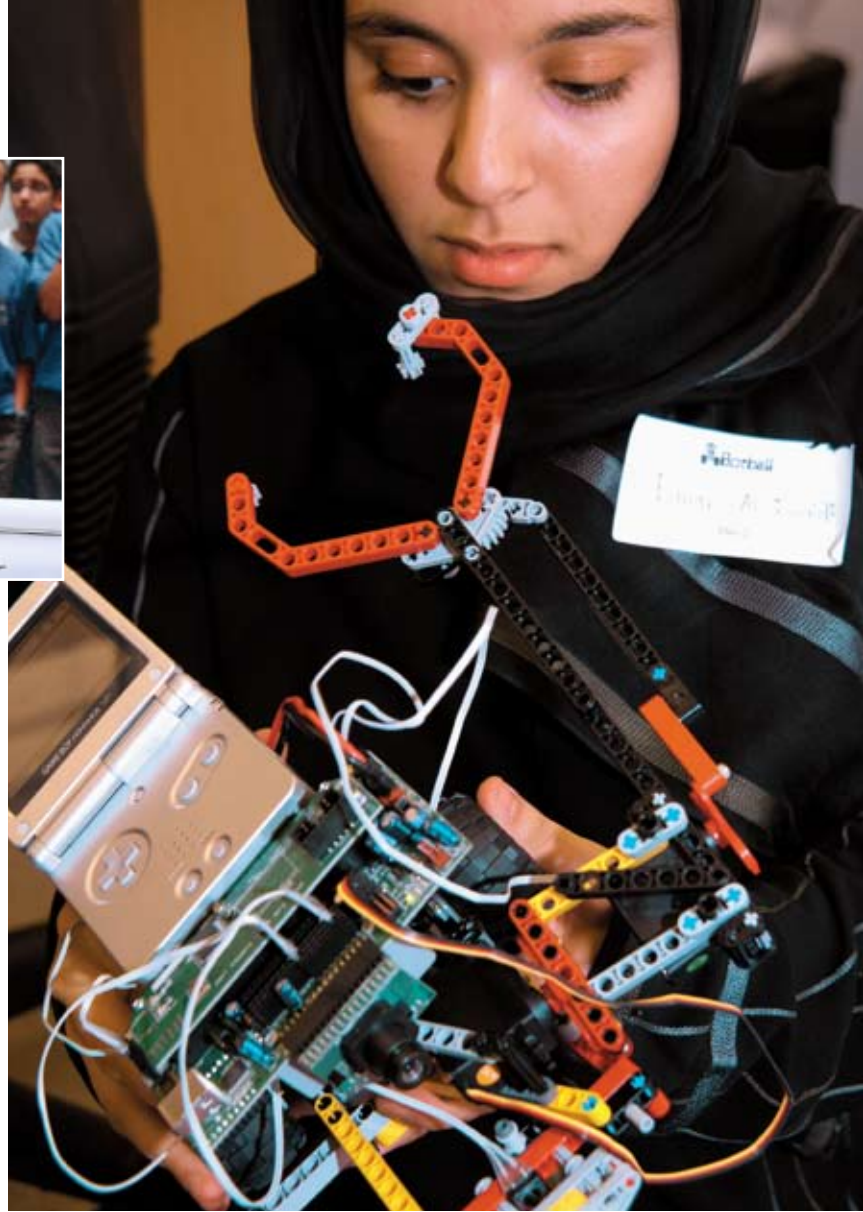
After enchanting students in Doha, he is now capturing the hearts and minds of young people in the U.A.E. and Kuwait as BOTBALL 2007 is expanding to these countries.

“Schools were so excited when we contacted them,” says Mohamed Mustafa, Carnegie Mellon Qatar academic assistant who coordinates the program. “Especially since we could go to them and do workshops.”

BOTBALL is a U.S.-based organization that introduces robotics to high school students. It’s a hand-on learning experience in robotics designed to engage young students in learning the practical application of science, technology, engineering and mathematics.

The goals of the BOTBALL are mostly educational for both students and teachers or educators. They include: technology awareness, system engineering, mechanical principles, C programming, Internet research and design and creativity.

Until 2005 BOTBALL was only offered to students in the United States. In 2005 Carnegie Mellon Qatar hosted the first international BOTBALL robotics competition in Doha in which four local high schools participated. In 2006



the event expanded to include 6 teams.

This year BOTBALL competitions are being held in Doha, Kuwait and Dubai. A dozen teams will compete against each other in Doha; three teams will compete in Kuwait; and three teams in the U.A.E.

All participating students began the competition with a two-day BOTBALL workshop in March at Carnegie Mellon Qatar. At the intensive workshop, the teams were given the necessary background and expertise to build and program their own Lego® Mindstorm robot.

Over the next few weeks, students will work with teachers and mentors to build and program their robots. The learning experience culminates in April and May when the teams from each country compete against each other on a 4-foot by 8-foot playing field in a fast paced, non-destructive tournament.

Robots score points by placing ping-pong balls into scoring position. The winning team also must demonstrate the work they’ve done in order to program their robot. The top two teams from each national competition will go on to compete in the Regional BOTBALL Championship.



“BOTBALL is a great way for high school students to learn about robots,” said Chuck Thorpe, dean of Carnegie Mellon Qatar and former head of the Carnegie Mellon University Robotics Institute. “It’s also an excellent way for students to put their skills in math, engineering and teamwork to use.”

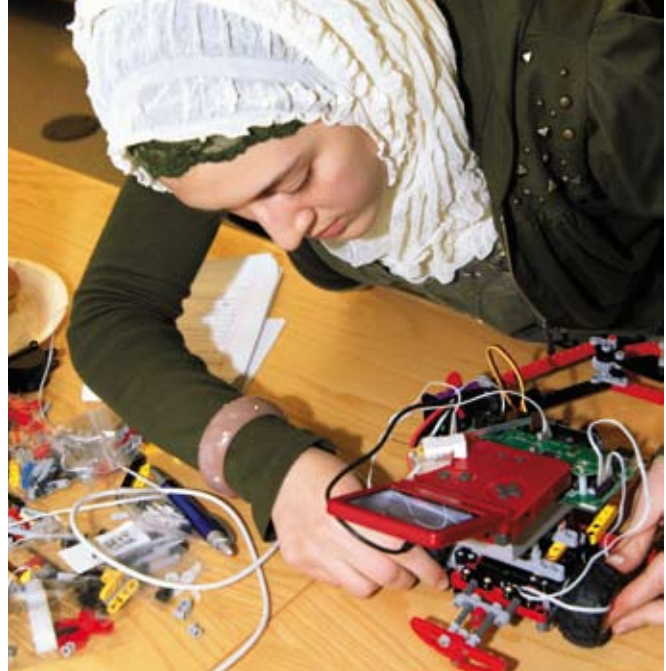
In addition to growing the event from six teams last year to 18 teams this year, the event will get international television coverage. Al Jazeera Children’s Channel believes so strongly in the mission of BOTBALL that it is producing a four-part documentary on BOTBALL and robotics.

“Al Jazeera Children’s Channel finds in this competition an exciting tool to help inspire students around the region and raise awareness of the creativity level of the Arab child,” says Mostapha Mellouk, Deputy General Manager of Al Jazeera Children’s Channel.

“During last year’s event, we witnessed the ability of Arab children to use subjects they learned in school in a meaningful way. They managed to design, build, program and document their robots.”

A JCC TV crew will be on location to cover all aspects of this year’s event, which will be broadcast in the form of several reports starting with the workshop in March all the way to the finale that will be held in Doha in May.

Another great thing about BOTBALL, says Mustafa, is that it exposes students to Carnegie Mellon and the programs we offer. He says one school that has participated in BOTBALL is even considering adding robotics to its curriculum. “Without Carnegie Mellon that would never have been possible. Once students participate in BOTBALL they realize what robotics is



and how it can be used in many ways in many fields.”

Botguy plans on getting schools in Oman, Bahrain, Jordan, Egypt and Saudi Arabia involved in the 2008 competition.

**Country-level BOTBALL competitions took place on Saturday, April 28, in Doha; on Thursday, May 3, in Kuwait; and on Saturday, May 12, in the U.A.E. Twelve teams will compete in Doha, three in Kuwait and three in the U.A.E. The Regional BOTBALL Championship will take place Thursday, May 24, at the Diplomatic Club in Doha.**

**BOTBALL special reports on Al Jazeera Children’s Channel will air internationally in May. Dates are not confirmed. For more information on BOTBALL, visit [www.qatar.emu.edu/BOTBALL](http://www.qatar.emu.edu/BOTBALL).**

by Sue Sullivan

*Aquatic Coordinator, Qatar Foundation*

On Saturday April 7, the Qatar Foundation Recreation Center hosted its 3rd Annual Education City Golf Tournament. Sixty-eight people turned up to play on the day making 17 teams of 4 players. The tournament was a Texas Scramble, which means you play as a ‘Team’ not as an individual player and the event, as always, was a great success. The players came from all departments and universities of Education City to meet new people who they possibly deal with on a daily basis, or maybe just speak to on the phone once or twice a year – but never have actually met.

Golfers from advanced levels to non-players alike joined in the fun, and it was a beautiful day for it. All the golfers had a great time and many players won terrific prizes.

Qatar Foundation sponsored the players’ lunch as well as the golf medals and prizes won during the competition. At the end of the tournament a Grand Prize draw was held for those



## 3rd Education City Golf Tournament

who maybe didn’t excel in the golfing. Gift vouchers to DVD players to airline tickets were the prizes donated to the Grand Prize draw by contractors associated with Education City.

By the end of the day a lot of people who were strangers to each other the day before had made some new friends and met a lot of new work acquaintances.

## Technology Business – Talking the Talk



QSTP  
TECHtalks

Join the  
conversation  
on technology  
business

“At university I discovered I had choices: I could either drive my career or have my career drive me”, said Khaldoon Tabaza, one of the Arab world’s most successful entrepreneurs. “I discovered that by shaping my own career and becoming independent I was suddenly in control of my own destiny”.

Controlling his destiny ultimately meant borrowing his father’s office for an afternoon, taping new company logos over the old ones, and holding meetings with prospective investors in his “operational” start-up company. The plan worked and another successful Khaldoon venture was born.

Khaldoon was proud to share his stories of entrepreneurial triumph – and battle scars – at the QSTP TECHtalks in February. The serial entrepreneur has been involved in several technology start-ups including Arabia Online, which earned the accolade “Yahoo! of the Middle East”. He is now based in Jordan where he manages technology investment funds and a consulting practice.

The TECHtalks are a new initiative by Qatar Science & Technology Park to bring together Qatar’s burgeoning innovation community. “Business innovation doesn’t happen in a vacuum – it feeds off conversation, interaction and being exposed to new ideas”, says Ben Figgis, marketing manager of the science park. “The QSTP TECHtalks provide a relaxed setting for scientists,

bankers and businesspeople to get together. We meet so many forward-looking people from so many different backgrounds, the time seems right to gel this into a community.”

The March TECHtalk focused on social media. Although blogs, podcasts and chat rooms have been impacting corporate reputations in the US for some time they are just starting to make waves in the Gulf. Andrew Bone from PR firm Hill & Knowlton showed a Doha audience tips and tactics for surfing the wave rather than being swept up in it.

QSTP runs the TECHtalks once a month as a means for the business and academic communities to network and gain fresh insights on technology business in the region. They are free and anyone that registers is welcome to attend. The times and locations are variable, so sign up for e-mail alerts by dropping a line to: [events@qstp.org.qa](mailto:events@qstp.org.qa)

Another community-based initiative is about to be launched by QSTP on research and commercialisation in Qatar. The Guru Group is a by-invitation network of seasoned professionals around the world, that contribute their expertise and contacts to help build Qatar’s start-up technology companies. A handful of them will also be engaged under professional mentoring contracts. See [www.qstp.org.qa](http://www.qstp.org.qa) for more details.



*We invite you to view the forthcoming special issue of the Aggie Platform featuring the Engineering Building Celebration.*



Texas A&M University  
at Qatar

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