

# The Aggie Platform

News from Texas A&M University at Qatar

Volume 2, Number 1

November 2005



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# 2005 Academic Convocation:

## Texas A&M University at Qatar Celebrates its Third Academic Year

**A**fter being selected from an applicant pool of over 600, the 63 newly minted Aggies in the TAMUQ Class of 2009 were officially welcomed into the TAMUQ community of scholars at the 2005 Academic Convocation in September.

Students, faculty, staff, families and honored guests assembled in the Liberal Arts and Science Building, TAMUQ's home until the completion of the Engineering Building, to mark the beginning of the third academic year. TAMUQ and other Education City faculty members donning full academic regalia, which especially impressed the freshmen, began the ceremony with a processional. Faculty members from the University of Qatar (QU), including keynote speaker Dr. Shaikha Jabor Al-Thani, also participated in the processional.

Dr. Michael Kemp, Dean and CEO of TAMUQ, gave a state-of-the-campus address that examined the purpose and mission of TAMUQ. The occasion of convocation served as an opportunity to re-establish for students, faculty and staff the goals to which they aspire, he explained. One of the goals of the campus is to create a program equal to the main campus, but Dr. Kemp offered that TAMUQ is already exceeding this goal. He said it is a promise to students that they will be academically pushed and challenged. But he added, "Let me assure you that the faculty and staff are not here to fail you, but to insure that you have an educational experience that will provide you the knowledge base and skill sets that will guarantee your success as an engineer and provide you with an exciting and satisfying career."

Dr. Shaikha Jabor Al-Thani, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at QU, delivered the Convocation Address and encouraged students to never settle on the easy path. As a graduate of the QU Class of 1981 and now one of its top administrators, Dr. Al-Thani recounted a few stories from her time as an undergraduate and emphasized the importance of an academic challenge. "It was always a challenge to me to try unconventional paths. Challenge is what makes life interesting, since you do not know what to expect, and it is a very successful way of getting the best," she said.

Dr. Al-Thani questioned why some institutions teach students in an environment that doesn't challenge their ability, equating this to a shallow swimming pool. "Let them learn to swim in the sea, the deep waters. Let them face the strong waves. Let the tides wash them to the shore. Let



*TAMUQ Academic Convocation: Students, faculty, staff, families and honored guests, including Dr. Shaikha Jabor Al-Thani – University of Qatar Vice President, participated in the celebration. Saoud Al-Mannai '08 welcomed the Class of 2009 on behalf of the Student Body Government.*



them retry time after time. Let them struggle their way out," Dr. Al-Thani said. She closed her address with a nod to the future of TAMUQ by saying, "I am confident that the TAMUQ Class of 2009 will have great stories to speak about 20 years ahead, and one day some of you will stand as a key speaker addressing and inspiring the Class of 2030."

During the ceremony, the new students were shown examples of the academic success they can enjoy. Students who have been named to the Dean's Honor List, which is a distinction for those who have made a 3.0/4.0 or higher grade point ratio, were recognized during the convocation ceremony. Dr. Kemp and Dr. Jim Holste, Associate Dean of Academic Affairs, presented 28 junior and sophomore students with certificates for their academic achievement.

Freshman Mehrnoosh Saneifar '09 said she was a little intimidated by all the names on the

Dean's Honor List, but by the end of the ceremony, "I decided to set my goals to become one of the students on the Dean's Honor List for next year."

One of the Dean's Honor List students, Mr. Saoud Al-Mannai, TAMUQ Class of 2008, spoke on behalf of the Student Body Government. He encouraged the freshmen to remain focused in their studies, no matter the obstacles or difficulty. "The burdens may seem great, but they are placed upon us by the faculty, day by day, assignment by assignment, only to give us greater strength for our future struggle," Saoud said. He also reminded them to appreciate the opportunity they have been given to attend TAMUQ because there are many people who would quickly trade places with them to be called Texas Aggies. In closing, Saoud illustrated the importance of everyone in achieving academic success. "We will do it together – students and faculty and staff – as members of the Aggie family."

### The Aggie Platform

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Texas A&M University at Qatar is part of  
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# New Doha International Airport



*A Bechtel Engineer explains the land reclamation project. The flat area in the background has all been reclaimed from the sea.*

*by Dr. John Bryant, TAMUQ Engineering Faculty*

**G**ateway to Qatar. Fifty million passengers per year. One third the size of Doha, Qatar. Seventeen-thousand workers housed on-site at peak of construction. One of few airports in the world able to service the new Airbus A380.

These and many other fascinating statistics were presented to Introduction to Engineering students from Texas A&M University at Qatar on their recent field trip to the New Doha International Airport (NDIA). Overseas Bechtel Incorporated, the prime contractor on this \$5.5 billion, seven-year-long construction project, hosted an engineering presentation and tour of the jobsite for the TAMUQ students.

Introduction to Engineering is not only a course designed to develop better problem solving, graphics and programming skills; it is also a course where freshman engineering students are exposed to the various branches of engineering and what engineers do out "in the real world."

Construction is often thought of only in terms of the architects and civil engineers. The TAMUQ students were introduced to the wide range of engineering disciplines, and their roles, in making this mammoth project a reality. One of the most important lessons that came out of the presentations was the importance of working in interdisciplinary teams. From initial design concepts to planning the master construction schedule and the thousands of activities in that schedule, teamwork was stressed over and over.

For freshman engineering students, this was valuable reinforcement of the teaming concepts that are stressed in TAMUQ engineering courses.

Mr. Peter Pappas, Project Director of the NDIA, introduced his engineering team to the ENGR III students during the tours on September 11 and 14. The presentation on the project took place in the on-site construction offices of Bechtel. After the 45 minute talk, students were issued their PPE (Personal Protection Equipment) and took part in a safety orientation.

After the safety orientation and boarding the buses, the group headed out onto the construction project site. The first stop was at the initial foundation work for one wing of the new terminal building. The Bechtel engineers explained what was involved at this site and fielded questions from the students. The students were impressed at the size of the steel reinforcing bars and volume of concrete to be used in the foundation beams and columns.

The next stop was at the foundation site for the main terminal building. Here, pilings were being set to support the six story structure that will be built on top of them. The pilings are 20 meters deep and several hundred will form the primary foundation support for the terminal building. The students were shown how the drilling rigs operate and how the vibrating mechanism drives the pile casings into the soil before the reinforcing steel and concrete were added.

*Gateway to Qatar. Fifty million passengers per year. One third the size of Doha, Qatar. Seventeen-thousand workers housed on-site at peak of construction. One of few airports in the world able to service the new Airbus A380.*



*NDIA, above, will welcome its first passengers in November, 2008.*

The last stop was an overview of the dredging and land reclamation operation at the western edge of the project. There are 22 kilometers of revetment walls that outline the airport on the western bay side of the NDIA property. This land is being reclaimed from shallow sea, about two meters deep, and turned into compacted soil for the primary north to south runways. The dredging operation is huge, with over 120,000 cubic meters of material being cut from the bay floor and pumped onto shore. The cutter/dredge and hopper ships sit just off shore for this 24/7 operation and cost about 400,000 QR (approx \$110,000) per hour to run.

The Bechtel engineers were very patient with the questions from the students and explained the many technical details of the reclamation process and the importance of correct preparation of the soil for the underground utilities and surface concrete work.

Both field trips were late in the afternoon to avoid the heat of the day, but, unfortunately, the tours could not be completed because of darkness. One of the unvisited sites that the students were interested in was the relocation project for a six million cubic meter solid waste landfill. The landfill was located in an area of the project that was to become new runway and hangar areas. In order to relocate the landfill, Bechtel designed and built an engineered landfill in the desert south of Doha. The material in the existing landfill is being excavated and moved to this new site. The land area can then be filled with reclaimed soil and conditioned to become part of the new airport. The Bechtel engineers said the smell from the old site is appalling and welcomed the darkness instead of continuing to that part of the tour!!

The Introduction to Engineering students at Texas A&M University at Qatar agreed that the field trip was a very educational and enlightening experience. They have already promised Bechtel, and insisted to Introduction to Engineering professor Dr. John Bryant, that they return next semester to see how the project has progressed.

Many thanks to Overseas Bechtel for offering this opportunity and the Qatar Foundation for the drivers and buses used to transport the students. Cooperative ventures like this enhance the education of these aspiring engineers.



*Dredging ship on NDIA project site.*

*The dredging operation is huge, with over 120,000 cubic meters of material being cut from the bay floor and pumped onto shore. The cutter/dredge and hopper ships sit just off shore for this 24/7 operation and cost about 400,000 QR (approx \$110,000) per hour to run.*

# STUDENT NEWS AND VIEWS



The students visited with TAMU president, Dr. Robert Gates, during their time in College Station.



How quickly TAMUQ students adopt the TAMU rivalry with the University of Texas at Austin!

## Study Abroad in College Station

**W**ith each passing semester, more Texas A&M University at Qatar students are getting the opportunity to visit the main campus. Most of the time it is for a week long cultural exchange visit where they receive VIP treatment; however, this past summer four ambitious TAMUQ students lived the life of main campus students. In advance of the official study abroad program slated to begin next fall, three students took a summer course and another conducted research and worked a summer job on the main campus. They shared an apartment, rode the bus to campus, went to the cinema on the weekends, took road trips to Houston and Austin, and still found time to study and work.

Ali Dashti '07, Khalid Al-Meer '08 and Yousef Murad '07 each enrolled in a history course covering Native American history. They visited with the professor before the first class to make sure they were prepared for the course. When they arrived for the first day of class, what they were not prepared for was the number of students in the room. There were about 130 students in the classroom. Forty more students in the class than in the entire student body at TAMUQ!

While Ali, Khalid and Yousef were reading four books in five weeks time for their history course, Ameer Khader '08 was busy in the TAMU

*This past summer four ambitious TAMUQ students lived the life of main campus students. They shared an apartment, rode the bus to campus, went to the cinema on the weekends, took road trips to Houston and Austin, and still found time to study and work.*

Department of Mechanical Engineering lab, where he had been invited by Dr. Reza Langari to do undergraduate research. Ameer's first project was working on a team with graduate students to build a radio controlled helicopter. He also drew plans for equipment to be used in the TAMUQ ME lab next semester. His last project in the ME lab was to design, create and program a robot that could be used in crisis situations, like earthquakes and hurricanes, to search for survivors. Ameer said, "It was just a simple model that consisted of a processor, two simple motors, gearings and medium quality sensors." But no matter how "simple," he definitely learned a lot from his work in the lab.

Ameer spent many hours in the ME lab, but he would also venture out across campus to his student job in the TAMU library. This job supplied him with a little pocket money, as well as stacks of information to bring back to the TAMUQ library, where he is a student assistant during the regular academic year.

When the students needed a reminder of home, they would visit the Qatar Support Office to visit with the staff. Also, while walking across campus they would often pass TAMUQ Dean, Dr. Michael Kemp, who was visiting the main campus for meetings with the administration.

At the end of the summer in College Station, the results were in. Ali, Khalid, and Yousef each received an A in their history course and Ameer's drawings from the lab equipment were sent to machinists in Doha and are currently being used to construct the equipment for the lab. But, undoubtedly, they each admit that the biggest challenge of the summer was learning to do laundry!

Whether in the classroom, laboratory or hanging out on campus, these TAMUQ students have left just as deep of an impression on the main campus as it has on them.

## Student Exchange Program

**T**he TAMUQ Department of Student Affairs announced the selection of ten TAMUQ students to visit the main campus in College Station, Texas, November 6-12, 2005. The Qatar Support office has arranged for students to tour campus and selected locations like the Student Recreation Center, the football stadium, and basketball arena. Students will visit the four engineering programs that are also offered at the Qatar campus. Each student will spend a full day with a TAMU student to experience everyday student life on the main campus. The TAMUQ students will have the opportunity to visit with TAMU President Robert Gates and other university administrators.

**Ghalya Mohamed Abdelkader**

**Hessa Al-Nesf**

**Salman Essa M E Al-Boainain**

**Ahmed Ali A M Al-Rabeay**

**Bassel Babi**

**Yaser Mohammad Assami**

**Ibrahim Zein**

**Amine Bouras**

**Mohamed ben Kamel Ben Amara**

**Karthik Krishna Sringeri**



*"After knowing more about the Student Exchange Trip, I got really excited about applying and so I did. Now as I will be leaving Doha soon, I'm looking forward to seeing my university's main campus as well as meeting some students, and, most importantly, to live the College Station Aggie Spirit for a whole week."*

—Ibrahim Zein '08

# STUDENT NEWS AND VIEWS



The Santa Chiara Texas A&M Study Abroad Center.

Texas A&M students from Qatar and Texas made lasting friendships during the trip.

## TAMUQ Sends Delegation to Champe Fitzhugh, Jr. International Leadership Seminar

**T**his past summer, the beautiful Italian countryside played host to Texas A&M students from both the College Station and Doha campuses. Castiglion Fiorentino, Italy, home of the Santa Chiara Texas A&M Study Abroad Center, is a quaint picturesque eleventh century walled village between Rome and Florence and was home to more than forty Aggies and Texas A&M staff for two weeks in July.

For the six students representing TAMUQ, they were met with not only the warm Tuscan breeze that was refreshingly less intense than the Doha heat, but also the friendly and familiar "Howdy!" from the main campus students.

Both the College Station and Doha Aggies were selected to participate in the Champe Fitzhugh, Jr. International Honors Leadership Seminar held annually at the Santa Chiara Center. The seminar was established in 1992 for incoming Texas A&M freshmen. It is a two-week summer seminar designed to increase international awareness and develop leadership skills. Participants attend lectures and development sessions lead by TAMU administrators and five upper class student leaders.

Although students from many countries study architecture year round at the center, the leadership seminar has been reserved for students from the College Station campus. One student from TAMUQ was invited to attend the seminar in the summer of 2004, and because of his contribution to the seminar and the leadership development he received, TAMUQ was given the opportunity to send a delegation of students to Italy July 16-August 2 for the 2005 seminar.

Fifteen incoming freshmen from the Class of 2009 were invited to apply for the program based on their demonstrated academic excellence from high school, similar to the process used for the students on the main campus. After a meeting with the students and their families, five freshmen and one upper class student were selected.

Noof Abdalla, Tausif Ahmed, Mohammed Al-Ali, Fatima Al-Mulla, and Amira Redissi were selected to represent TAMUQ as freshman participants in the program, and Ebtesam Yousuf was designated as the upper class student leader from the Doha campus.

With the exception of a trip to College Station accompanied by HH Sheikha Mozah Bint Nasser Al-Missned, this trip marked the highest participation by female students on an educational or exchange trip. Their participation in this program, and other similar programs, will enhance their academic career and prepare them for life in mixed gender engineering teams.

T A M U Q Director of Student Affairs Dennis Busch and his wife accompanied the students to the seminar. Mr. Busch said, "This was a wonderful opportunity for the students to explore their leadership potential and meet students from the main campus, as well as the other university students studying at the center."

Students attended leadership development sessions covering topics ranging from time management and wellness issues to initiating student organizations. TAMUQ students were encouraged by the TAMU students to create student clubs and activities in order to make their academic careers what they expect from university life.

The TAMUQ students had the opportunity to give a presentation on TAMUQ and Education City to the TAMU students and administrators. Each student was included in the presentation, which covered the founding of the Qatar Foundation and Education City, how Texas A&M was invited to develop an engineering program in Doha, and a look into the future of the campus. Participation in this presentation as well as the other sessions reinforced the leadership potential in each student and gave them matters to consider and put into



Tausif Ahmed '09, Mr. Dennis Busch, and Mohammed Al-Ali '09 take a break in Venice, where the group spent two days before heading back to Doha.

action during their academic career.

The itinerary for the TAMUQ and TAMU students also included day trips to Rome, Assisi, Florence and other regions in Italy. Before each day trip, students heard lectures on the history and highlights of the city or area. Each city offered evidence of superb engineering from centuries ago. Seeing complex structures, like the Pantheon and Coliseum, which were designed and built with rudimentary tools and have stood for thousands of years, was a lesson this group of young TAMUQ engineers will not soon forget.

The students spent their free time at the Santa Chiara Center with other university students. There were students from the University of Texas at San Antonio, University of Houston, University of Tennessee, and American University at Sharjah who were spending the entire summer at Santa Chiara.

"The seminar was amazing. Being a part of a good group of students with the opportunity to develop my leadership skills was a great experience. And Castiglion Fiorentino was beautiful, history everywhere," Amira Redissi '09 said of her experience.

Texas A&M has long been committed to developing the whole student, including skills needed outside the classroom. Programs like the Fitzhugh Leadership Seminar offer students ways to not only develop themselves, but encourage participation in service oriented activities, both within the campus and the community.

TAMUQ expects to send a group of students from the Class of 2010 to Italy next summer.

*"The seminar was amazing. Being a part of a good group of students with the opportunity to develop my leadership skills was a great experience. And Castiglion Fiorentino was beautiful, history everywhere,"*

—Amira Redissi '09

# STUDENT NEWS AND VIEWS

TAMUQ students with Senior Yell Leader Will Whitehurst '06 and AOLP Director Rob McClelland '04

The freshmen received their official Class of 2009 t-shirts from Orientation Leaders.



## TAMUQ Class of 2009 New Student Orientation

**T**exas A&M University at Qatar added 63 new members to the Aggie Family this past August when the Class of 2009 arrived in Education City for the TAMUQ New Student Orientation.

Just like freshmen on the main campus in College Station, TAMUQ's new freshmen expressed excitement about beginning their courses and adapting to residence hall life, as well as nervousness about being away from home and making new friends. In order to ease the nerves and fuel the excitement about being Aggies, students participated in a new student orientation coordinated by the TAMUQ Department of Student Affairs.

Students met with academic advisors, faculty members and other staff to learn about their new university and the programs offered to them. Mr. Dennis Busch, Director of Student Affairs, and Ms. Shannon McNulty, Student Development Specialist, as well as almost 20 student orientation leaders, felt it was important for the new students at TAMUQ to learn about the main campus and all of Texas A&M's traditions.

"We believe it is essential for our new students to know the history of their university, and to begin to understand what it means to be part of the Aggie family," Mr. Busch said. Senior Yell Leader Will Whitehurst '06 and Rob McClelland '04, director of the student run Aggie Orientation Leader Program, were invited from College Station to Doha to teach the students about life in Aggieland and the many traditions that go along with being an Aggie.

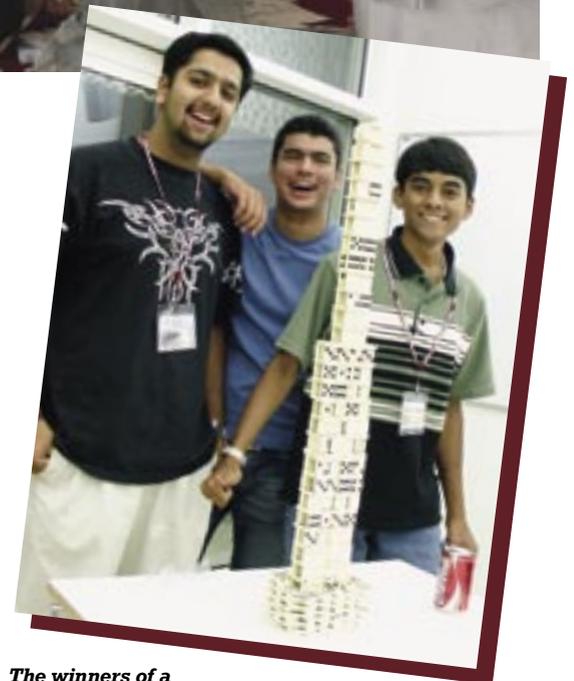
Whitehurst, in his official Texas A&M Yell Leader uniform, taught the freshmen class about

Texas A&M traditions and led them in the Aggie War Hymn. Even though he was in Doha to teach the students about current life on the main campus, he reminded them about the early days of Texas A&M. "The traditions we have in College Station were started by the first students of Texas A&M over 100 years ago. I'd like to challenge you to look down the line many years and you decide what kind of place you would like TAMUQ to be," he said.

As their visit to TAMUQ was nearing its end, McClelland said, "Our objective was to teach them what we do in College Station, so that they can adapt our traditions to their culture in hopes that they will create traditions unique to TAMUQ. But now that we have learned so much from the TAMUQ students, it's our duty to return to College Station and share with them all the wonderful things we learned about the people of Qatar and the students at TAMUQ."

Proud Aggie moms and dads attended a special session for parents of new students on the first day of orientation. The father of Fatima Al-Mulla '09, Mr. Ahmad Abdulrahman Al-Mulla, pointed out the societal barriers being pushed aside for his daughter to attend TAMUQ. "Our country is undergoing tremendous change. Qatar is witnessing an industrial boom and hence needs more qualified engineers. Fatima decided to study petroleum engineering and she wants to challenge society, believing that girls can enter any field of study they wish. She aspires to get her degree and to enter the Qatari working force to further contribute in building the country."

Dean Michael Kemp welcomed the students by saying, "We are most pleased to welcome the Class of 2009 to the Texas Aggie Family and look forward to what their unique contributions can



The winners of a fierce game of dominoes with an engineering slant: Who can build the tallest domino building!?

add to the educational environment of TAMUQ." Dean Kemp also expressed his pride in the returning students who took leadership roles for this orientation program and said it was a true display of Aggie Spirit.

In addition to volunteering as leaders for the TAMUQ orientation, some TAMUQ upperclassmen also assisted the Qatar Foundation (QF) with its international student orientation for students attending all Education City universities. Their contribution to the QF orientation and the Texas A&M orientation helped make each program a huge success.

The freshman class used the free time during orientation to locate their classes, get their student identification cards, and get to know one another. "The orientation was very interesting. It was nice to meet my new classmates, get settled in my new role as a freshman and learn about the history and traditions of Texas A&M University," said Ayah Al-Rashdan '09.



### 2004-2005 Dean's Honor List

Congratulations to the Dean's Honor List students who achieved academic excellence during the 2004-2005 academic year! These students achieved at least a 3.0/4.0 grade point ratio. Good luck this year!

\* indicates 4.0 Grade Point Ratio

- Ahmed Al-Bikri '08
- Abdulla Al-Fehani '07
- Abdulrahman Al-Kaabi '08
- Abdulla Alkuwari '08
- Saoud Al-Mannai '08
- Lulwa Al-Maslamani '07
- Ali Al-Medaihki '07
- Khalid Al-Meer '07
- Hessa Al-Missned '07
- Nasser Al-Neama '08
- Sabla Alnouri '08
- Sara Al-Saadi '07
- Suha Al-Sulati '07
- Aisha Al-Wadaani '07

- Aly Anany '08
- Nour Cheikh-Ali '07
- Emad Daher '08
- Ali Dashti '08\*
- Ahmed El Sanadedy '08
- Ameer Khader '08
- Mohammed Laram '08
- Fatima Mahmoud '08
- Yousef Murad '07
- Safa Naufal '08\*
- Dina Nicola '08
- Nikhil Shanbhag '07
- Ahmad Talfat '08
- Abtesam Yousuf '08

# STUDENT NEWS AND VIEWS

## The Aggie Platform

**Roving Reporter:** "Can you tell us something about yourself?"

### Nayla Al-Malki Class of '07:

Despite the rigorous weekly schedule of engineering, math, science, and liberal arts classes, most Texas A&M students find time to "have a life" too. Class of 2007 student, Nayla Al-Malki, a native Qatari, personifies the traditional grace and modern ambition found among our students. During her off-hours from studying, Nayla can be found working to hone her manifold artistic skills.

When she was in the sixth grade, she began her first attempts in the ancient art of henna painting. Watching her mother, sisters, aunts, and other relatives adorned for parties and weddings, she soon wanted to try it herself. Her talent for creating beautiful designs allowed her such popularity that she was charging 20 QR for her services! Because the years of tedious detail involved in henna painting have given her some chronic shoulder and neck pain, she says her painting for profit days are over however and she only does it occasionally for family and friends.

The handwork of doing henna painting, though, naturally led her to another form of creative expression, that of Calligraphy. Soon Nayla will



be competing in an exhibition of this, another most sacred and ancient art-form in Arabia. She loved looking at calligraphy as she was growing up and, like henna painting, decided she would learn the skills. She began studying the art at the local Creative Youth

Center, where she continues to practice now at an advanced level. One of the challenges she enjoys is working within the constraints of what she terms as "very restrictive rules" governing calligraphic design. Some of the styles she is currently working to master are the Diwani, Req'aa, and Farsi; each of these, among others, have very specific stylistic considerations and are often lifetime studies for artists. Nayla, however, enjoys blending the ancient with the modern.

Another, more contemporary art form she enjoys is working with PhotoShop software on her computer. Hybridizing the graceful scripts of Arabic calligraphy and digital design, she has recently produced some rather stunning designs for various projects.

By the way, perhaps we should mention that she is also a Dean's List student and loving every minute of being a member of the multi-talented group who comprise what will be the first graduating class of Texas A&M University at Qatar.

### Ahmed El-Sanadedy Class of '08:

Growing up in both Qatar and Egypt, I have been able to go through the experience of living the quiet suburban life of Mesaid, as well as the exciting coastal city life of Alexandria, Egypt. Acquiring a British based education in both countries, I was able to interact with many people of different cultures. This, of course, helped shape my character and develop my opinions on many issues; not to mention, it caused me to become quite accustomed to having afternoon tea followed by a short game of the always classy croquet.

The Alexandrian life fascinated me, with its crowded streets and bustling nightlife; however, I longed for something more than shallow festivities. My prayers were answered when I noticed a Texas A&M University at Qatar advertisement. I was still a little skeptical of only applying to Qatar, as I might change my mind down the road and regret my rash decision. So I applied and was accepted also to some top engineering schools in England. I made a pro and con list illustrating the advantages and disadvantages of attending each location. While England had a very long 'pro' list, Doha had a very short 'con' list. This inspired me to choose Doha as my home for the next four, but more likely six or seven, years. The pack-



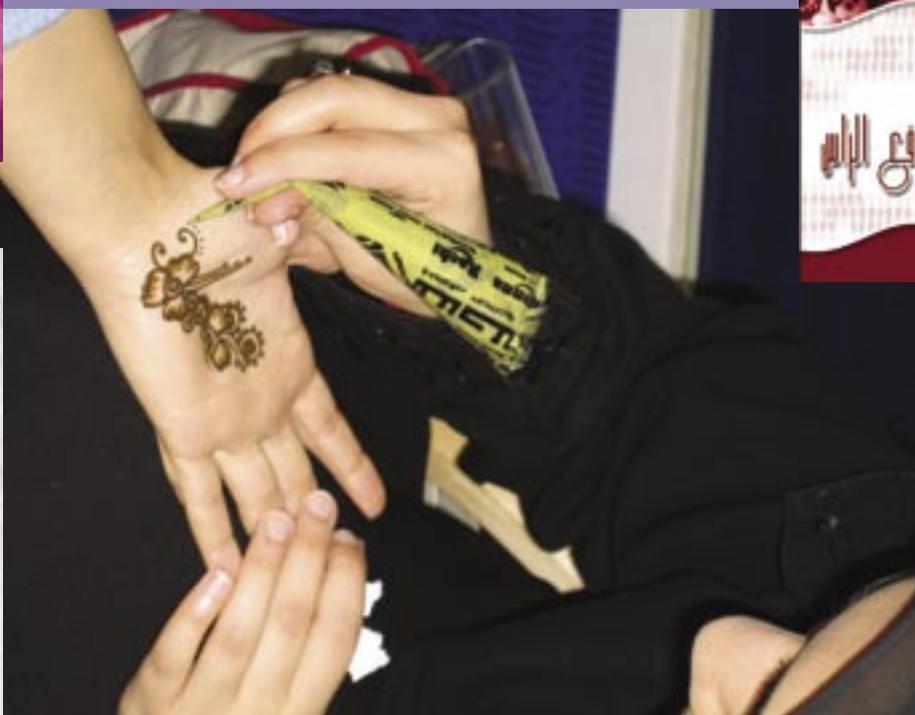
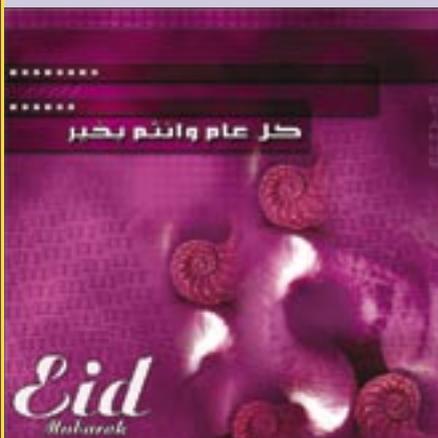
ing commenced shortly thereafter.

When you are packing for such a long stay it is hard to decide what to take with you. You rarely know what material possessions you're going to miss until you leave your home. Should I take my teddy bear? Should

I take the quilt that I slept with since I was a little child? I decided to take the bare necessities and rebuild my life from scratch. I was leaving the Alexandrian life behind for a more favorable journey in Doha. Taking personal items with me from my previous life would only serve as rusting metal links, chaining me down to Alexandrian soil.

When I first arrived at Education City, it took me a little while to get settled, mainly because it was difficult to leave the compound. But eventually I made some friends and currently use them as chauffeurs to drive me around and do my bidding! The hospitality of Doha is what I love about this place so much. There is never a favor too big to ask or a deed too impossible. Once you get settled, Doha can easily be considered your home. I would not be telling the truth though if I said that I didn't miss my teddy bear, but that is what life is comprised of: leaving small things behind in favor of larger and better things, and that is exactly how I feel about my new life.

## Artwork by Nayla Al-Malki '07



# STUDENT NEWS AND VIEWS



## “Seizing the Moment” World Economic Forum in Jordan

*Youth representing Arab countries met during the WEF to present issues affecting their generation. Top Left: Yousef Murad '07 met Amre Moussa, Sec. Gen. of the Arab League, during the conference. Above: Yousef and the other youth reps met with King Abdullah of Jordan and US First Lady Laura Bush.*

**I**n his opening remarks of the World Economic Forum (WEF) in Jordan 2005 at the Dead Sea this past May, His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Hussein of the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan said, “Arab youth need and deserve a world where they can reach their potential – be full partners in global advancement – and build a secure future, for themselves and their families.”

For the first time in the history of this regional WEF meeting, young people from each Arab nation were invited to participate in the three day meeting. HM King Abdullah II wanted the input of young Arabs to identify problems plaguing their generation and to learn what issues they feel will most affect their futures and the future of the Middle East.

Following a series of phone interviews with WEF organizers, Yousef Murad '07, a chemical engineering major from Texas A&M University at Qatar was selected to represent the youth of Qatar at the WEF in Jordan held May 20-22, 2005, under the theme “Seizing the Moment.” Fourteen Arab countries sent youth representatives two days early to Jordan to meet with the leaders of the World Youth Summit, which was asked to organize the youth participation in the meetings.

After two days of intense meetings, the fourteen youth representatives identified three main issues to present to the forum. Gender and equal opportunity issues, entrepreneurship, and education. Throughout the planning meeting, Yousef was able to site the changes he has witnessed in Qatar as solutions to these pressing issues in other Arab countries. “Most of the problems brought up by the other youth representatives have already been solved in Qatar, or they are being addressed,” Yousef said.

As HM King Abdullah mentioned, he wanted the youth to be “full partners in global advancement,” as well as full participants in the forum. The youth representatives had the opportunity to meet with HM King Abdullah and United States First Lady Laura Bush to discuss the issues they identified. The students also had a private meeting with Her Majesty Queen Rania of

*“Arab youth need and deserve a world where they can reach their potential — be full partners in global advancement — and build a secure future, for themselves and their families.”*

— His Majesty King Abdullah II Ibn Hussein of Jordan

Jordan and Prince Faisal, brother of the King, to discuss youth and entrepreneurship.

Yousef had a private meeting with the Minister of Finance of Qatar, HE Sheikh Mohammed Bin Ahmed Bin Jassim Al-Thani, who was representing the State of Qatar at the forum.

In addition to attending the general session and plenary session on Palestine, the youth canvassed the other meetings to offer their insights into how changes made in the Middle East today will improve the region for future generations. Yousef attended a meeting regarding infrastructure and, with his

engineering background, was able to engage in the technical discussion during the meeting.

The youth representatives selected the Bahrain representative to address the 1,200 leaders from business, politics and civil society attending the three day meeting during the closing session. Yousef represented not only Qatar, but TAMUQ, in a very positive manner during the WEF. In the process of “seizing the moment,” he has forged lasting friendships that will undoubtedly be the foundation of solid and lasting relationships between future Arab leaders.

## TAMUQ Athletics



TAMUQ Soccer team played former members of the Qatar National Team at the start of the semester. After a close, competitive game, the Aggies ran out of time. Qatar National Players: 2, TAMUQ: 1

# QSO

## QATAR SUPPORT OFFICE

### Your Link To Qatar

#### US Arabic Distance Learning Network

Texas A&M University and the Qatar Support Office (QSO) joined the US Arabic Distance Learning Network in September 2005. The Network, a consortium of universities led by Montana State University (MSU), is committed to expanding opportunities for students to study Arabic language and Arabic culture. The Network fosters the efforts of U.S. higher education to promote better relations with the Arab world and to assist students to prepare for careers relating to the Arab world. While this program is primarily targeted towards students, Texas A&M University is using this program to help benefit faculty, staff or students who are interested in the Qatar program. This program is a non-credit bearing program and takes place via distance learning two nights a week. The program currently has 16 participants.

*Dr. Abdelfattah teaching Arabic to students in many sites simultaneously*

#### Engineering Welcome Day

The College of Engineering in College Station hosts a welcome event for new Engineering freshman each year. This year's event was held on September 6 and QSO was asked to host a booth during the event. The QSO staff put together a display to show off the Texas A&M University at Qatar campus, as well as highlight the US Arabic Distance Learning Network, the Spring Leadership Exchange Program and other initiatives taking place between the campuses.



#### Student Exchanges

Texas A&M College Station will again be home to 10 TAMUQ students for a week in November. QSO is working with various student groups on the Texas A&M University campus to ensure an exciting program while these students are on campus. QSO has begun advertising for the 2006 Doha/College Station Spring Leadership Program. Selection of the 10 TAMU students will be complete by December.

#### Welcome to QSO!

The QSO has recently added two new faces to the office. Ms. Allyson (Ally) McNeill joined the staff on July 22 as Senior Office Associate. She and her husband recently moved to College Station from Alabama.

QSO also welcomed Ms. Amal El-Halwagi, Program Coordinator for the US Arabic Distance Learning Network at TAMU. Ms. El-Halwagi, who is originally from Egypt, brings to the program many years of experience and knowledge. It is a pleasure having them both on the team in the QSO.

#### Relocations

QSO relocated 22 people to the TAMUQ campus this fall, including faculty, staff and their families. All in all, it was a successful relocation. There is still much to learn; however, the process is getting better with each year. Comments, concerns or suggestions on the relocation process can be sent to QSO Director Susan Williamson at [susanw@tamu.edu](mailto:susanw@tamu.edu).



## NEWS FROM TAMUQ HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

### Cultural Orientation 2005

TAMUQ faculty, staff, and families recently participated in a cultural orientation sponsored by the TAMUQ Human Resource Services Department. This orientation augmented the pre-departure orientation hosted by the Qatar Support Office (QSO). Pre-departure orientation is designed to address critical family issues such as partner placement, schools for children, medical coverage, and making friends. In addition, basic household issues such as temporary living accommodations, obtaining appliances compatible with foreign electric service, banking needs, and shipment logistics are addressed. QSO pre-departure cultural orientation programs provide ways to ease the transition to a new environment.

The most successful international assignments include both pre-departure and post-cultural orientations, so TAMUQ's Human Resource Services Department offers a "Post-Cultural" orientation to address the unique needs of expatriates once they arrive in Qatar and answer questions that arise after being in the new environment. The customized orientation program was tailored specifically to TAMUQ strategic goals and reflects the varying relocation employee groups and the ever changing international environment.

Marco Blankenburgh, founder and director of KnowledgeWorkx and who has worked in the Arab world for the past 13 years, Douglas Stuart, IOR Global Services Training Manager, and Victoria Hensen, TAMUQ's Employee Assistance Program Clinical Psychologist, served as the orientation leaders. Veteran TAMUQ employees served on a discussion panel to address questions and concerns of newer employees.

After a self assessment on-line survey *The Culture in the Workplace Questionnaire*, derived from the work of Dr. Geert Hofstede to illustrate culturally dependent work preferences, the general session opened with individuals evaluating key factors about themselves. Family and work units reviewed the results together so they could get a better understanding of what it will take to succeed. The general session included more specific cultural issues like the differences in work and teaching cultures. Qatar is particularly challenging in this aspect as the population is greatly diverse. TAMUQ's working and student environment consists of Americans, Qataris, Indians, Sri Lankans, Egyptians, Jordanians, Canadian, Lebanese, Iraqis, Syrians, Palestinians, and more. It is not enough to talk about intercultural dimensions between Qatar and



*Faculty and staff, and their families, participated in a three day cultural awareness orientation.*

America as all cultures must be addressed in order to meet the business and education goals.

Following the general session, the group was divided into groups to more accurately address the needs of staff, faculty and families. The staff session covered working with people of varied backgrounds and ethnicities in an Arab culture. Faculty heard about learning styles

and cultural and religious norms to make teaching and working with TAMUQ students more effective. Family members discussed how to assimilate to the new surroundings as most of their time is spent outside Education City.

Continual follow-up orientation sessions are also offered by the Human Resource Services Department throughout the year.

#### Did you know?

- The national language in Qatar is Arabic, but English is widely spoken throughout the country. Classes at TAMUQ are taught in English.
- Native Qataris are a small percentage of the country's population. Many different nationalities make up Qatar's total working population: Canadian, British, American, Sri Lankan, Egyptian, Lebanese, Palestinian, Jordanian, Syrian, Filipino, Indian and more.
- Many people dress in what is considered western clothing, but many of the population wear traditional clothing. Western style clothing is conservative – covering shoulders and knees when in public is appreciated.
- Women in Qatar hold high government and corporate offices, attend school, drive vehicles, hold jobs and pay bills just like women in other countries around the world.

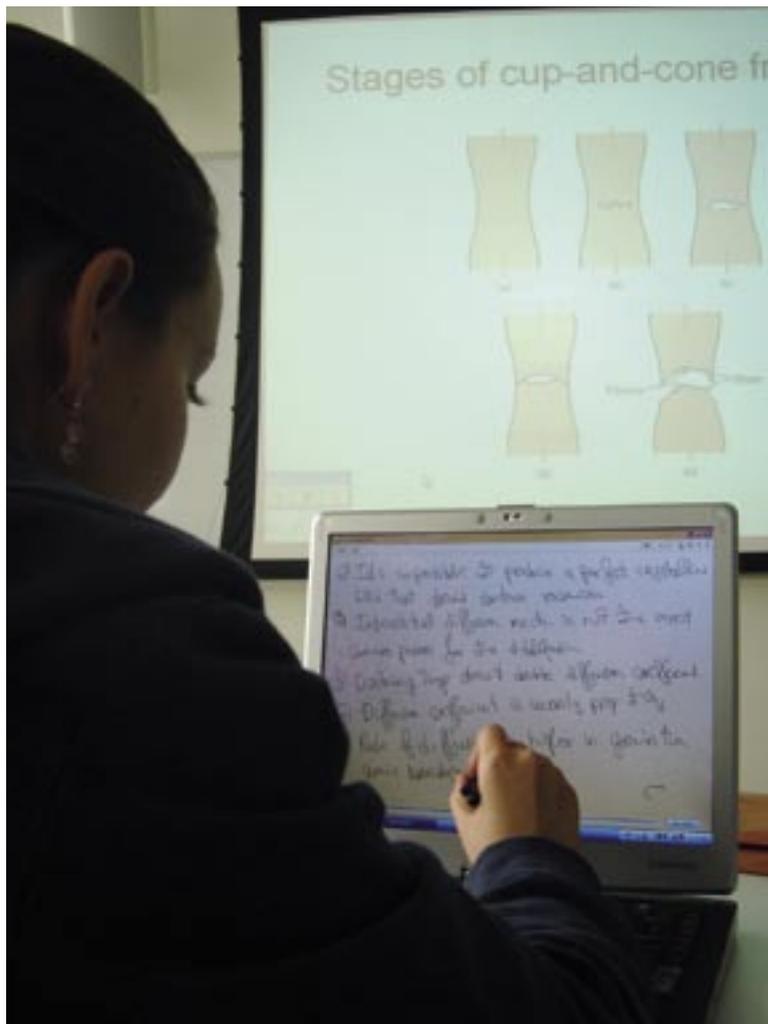
# Interactive Technology for Lectures

**S**ince reporting in the June issue of *The Aggie Platform* about the pilot project to introduce an interactive computer system for use in the classroom, Dr. Steven Gyeszly has started using the system to apply an innovative teaching technique, which he calls "Interactive Lecturing," in his Principles of Materials Engineering course (ENGR 213). Like many courses at TAMUQ, a student's grade in ENGR 213 is based on quizzes, exams, and in-class participation. But for Dr. Gyeszly's students, "in-class participation" has been taken to a whole new level.

The classroom is furnished with hardware and software that when combined are designed to increase the student's participation in lectures and improve comprehension of the material. As reported, the Liberal Arts and Science classrooms were outfitted with Sympodium monitors and AirProjector wireless adapters and each student was issued an M275X Tablet PC loaded with the required software, which they use for other classes as well. Because of the nature of engineering courses, the Tablet PCs offered more versatile functionality as compared with traditional laptop computers. The students use the tablet function of their computers to take notes during Dr. Gyeszly's class as well as other classes, and faculty members now have the capability to use the system for any course.

For ENGR 213 students, the classes start by wirelessly connecting their Tablet PC to Dr. Gyeszly's computer in the classroom. Once all of the students are connected, a typical lecture begins with a PowerPoint presentation, but that is where typical ends. On this particular day, after watching a video of a 3-D polymer structure, students are asked, in the form of a true or false question, what they think would happen if force is applied to this certain material. Instead of raising hands and one student being called on, each student is given the opportunity to test his or her knowledge by sending the answer via SynchronEyes software to Dr. Gyeszly's computer. Depending on the results of the answers, Dr. Gyeszly explains again the covered concept or he moves on to another topic.

Throughout his lectures, Dr. Gyeszly gives pop



Students use their Tablet PCs to take notes, as well as quizzes and exams.

quizzes either in multiple choice or short essay format to test the students' understanding of the covered subject. The quizzes are all administered through the SynchronEyes software and the students get their results immediately, with the exception of essay answers. Records of in-class participation are easier to keep because a log of all electronic communication is saved.

Thanks to Dr. Gyeszly, who has wanted to try this new and unique teaching method for years, and TAMUQ'S Information Technology Services that was able to supply the technology, it is evident after only several weeks of lectures that students are more engaged than in a traditional lecture and interaction has increased.

The success of the technique will be gauged in the short-term by the performance of the students in quizzes and the final exam, which are all administered electronically, and by feedback from students. But, ultimately, when students progress to more advanced courses and use the information, and apply the material in their professional work, the true measure of the technique will be clear.

Students like Sabla Al Nouri '07, who still takes paper notes, and Mona Ibrahim '07, who uses the Tablet PC for her notes, both say they like the interactive lecturing method of ENGR 213 because it makes the students stay focused on the lecture because they never know when Dr. Gyeszly will ask a question to the whole class or give a quiz. Both feel they are retaining more from the lectures, which will ultimately decrease cramming for exams and increase long-term retention.

An additional bonus to using the system is ensuring the participation of those students who are shy or do not feel comfortable speaking in front of the class. From the comfort of their seat, students can submit questions or comments electronically to the professor in the classroom. Also, with the permission of the professor, they can contribute to drawings or calculations on the projection screen via the wireless projector. Another advantage is the course is designed to be paperless.



## TAMUQ Connects QU Administrator with TAMU

Texas A&M University at Qatar and the University of Qatar (QU) share the mission of educating the young people of Qatar. One of the ways in which this mission is accomplished is collaborative efforts in research. Dr. Mahmoud Khader, Associate Dean for Programs Affairs in the College of Arts and Sciences at QU, was invited to the TAMU main campus to conduct Chemistry research.

Dr. Khader has focused much of his career on surface science research and, since becoming an administrator at QU, he has committed himself to improving and strengthening all the programs in the College of Arts and Science and creating new degree programs.

Dr. Wayne Goodman, co-director for the Center for Catalysis and Surface Chemistry within the TAMU Department of Chemistry, visited with Dr. Khader during the Materials Science and Engineering Conference held at TAMUQ and QU last spring. Following the visit, Dr. Khader was invited to collaborate on surface

*Dr. Khader has paved the way for the possibility of future visiting researchers from QU to TAMU and strengthened the relationship between QU and both the Doha and College Station campuses of TAMU.*

science research in Dr. Goodman's laboratory.

In addition to his research, Dr. Ben Crouch, Executive Associate Dean for the College of Liberal Arts at TAMU, offered to arrange a series of meetings for Dr. Khader with university administrators to discuss TAMU programs and their accreditation and self-assessment process, and to get ideas to incorporate into his programs at QU.

After Dr. Khader set up his experiment for the day, he would spend the time it took to run the experiment meeting with administrators in the English, Communications and Chemical

Engineering Departments, as well as the Bush School. Each meeting provided him with significant information, ideas and resources. He said, "The contacts I made there are a valuable network, the Aggie Network."

Dr. Shaikha Jabor Al-Thani, Vice President and Chief Academic Officer at QU, looks forward to an even stronger relationship with TAMU, TAMUQ and all the universities in Education City. She is currently working on several projects with the universities, including one with the TAMU College of Education.

Because Dr. Khader was in College Station for only eight weeks, he left his research project in the capable hands of a graduate student team. The results of the research will be published early next year. Dr. Khader has paved the way for the possibility of future visiting researchers from QU to TAMU and strengthened the relationship between QU and both the Doha and College Station campuses of TAMU. He is also a proud Aggie Dad to Ameer Khader, TAMUQ Class of 2008.



## Welcome New Faculty!

**T**AMUQ welcomed ten new distinguished faculty members this fall. Their expertise is a great addition to the campus and the students are excited about the opportunity to work with these new faculty members.

New additions to the Engineering faculty

include Dr. Mahmood Amani, Dr. John Bryant, Dr. Dragomir Burkur, and Dr. Houshang Masudi. The Liberal Arts Department added Dr. James Hannah as English faculty, Mr. David Manuel for the math faculty, Dr. Ernest Obadele-Starks to the history faculty, and Mr. Mark Bell, who has returned to the Liberal Arts faculty and will as well serve as

an Academic Advisor. Also, the TAMUQ Library welcomed two new librarians this fall, Mr. Yassin Noor and Mr. Khurrum Siddiqi. The science department has an additional chemistry faculty member on board with Dr. Jimmy Whang.

**Dr. Mohammed-Slim Alouini**, engineering faculty, represented TAMUQ at two Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE) conferences this summer. Dr. Alouini presented two papers, "Adaptive combining for diversity rich environments" and "Low-power minimum estimation and combining with adaptive modulation," at the IEEE International Symposium on Signal Processing and Its Applications held in August in Sydney, Australia. He also held a three hour tutorial covering "Analytical Techniques for the Design and Performance Evaluation of Diversity Systems over Fading Channels." In September, Dr. Alouini traveled to Adelaide, Australia, for the 2005 IEEE International Symposium on Information Theory to present a paper entitled, "Minimum



estimation and combining generalized selection combining (MEC-GSC)." These papers are proposing new techniques that can be used in emerging or future wireless communication systems in order to improve their reliability and performance.

**Dr. Hassan S. Bazzi**, chemistry faculty, spent the summer in the Department of Chemistry at McGill University in Montreal, Canada. He conducted research on the synthesis, characterization, and self-assembly of DNA-mimetic polymers ("smart" polymers) using metathesis polymerization. He will present the results of this project at the American Chemical Society national meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, in March 2006. On June 8, 2005, Dr. Bazzi offered a seminar to the Chemistry Department at McGill as part of being a recipient of the Carl A. Winkler Award for excellence in the PhD program. In addition, McGill



University nominated Dr. Bazzi to the Council of Graduate Schools/ University Microfilms International Distinguished Dissertation Award.

**Dr. Milivoj Belic**, physics faculty, received the prestigious Galileo Galilei Award presented by the International Commission for Optics. The presentation was held this past summer before the XXICO Congress in Changchun, China. The award is given for outstanding contributions to the field of optics achieved despite certain circumstances that do not provide the ideal environment for research. Typically, the award is given to researchers who do not live or work in a highly developed country, but still produce outstanding scientific results. Having conducted significant and



consistent research in Belgrade during difficult times, Dr. Belic was nominated by organizations and colleagues in Germany and Belgium and was selected from seven other well known scientists to receive the award.

**Dr. Devanayagam Palaniappan**, mathematics faculty, recently published a paper about electrostatics in the *Journal of Physics A: Mathematical and General*. "Classical image treatment of a geometry composed of a circular conductor partially merged in a dielectric cylinder and related problems in electrostatics" appeared in the June 2005 issue of *Journal of Physics A: Mathematical and General*. This paper is about the general mathematical treatment of a 'snowman' type hybrid inclusion in an electrostatic environment. More specifically, exact solutions for the electrostatic potentials for the hybrid object are presented in a closed form suitable



for numerical computations and simulations. A variety of physical quantities are also provided which may be of interest to physicists and engineers.

# TAMUQ CAMPUS EVENTS



Dr. Timothy Chester, TAMUQ CIO, officially launched SAQR during Supercomputing Day."



Chief Systems Engineer for SAQR, Mr. Jon Gardner, installs one of the 101 nodes that make up SAQR

## TAMUQ hosts Supercomputing Day to Launch SAQR

**O**n September 22, 2005, TAMUQ officially launched its supercomputing cluster dubbed "Supercomputing Applications in Qatar for Research" or SAQR. TAMUQ hosted Supercomputing Day to introduce area educators and industry leaders to the benefits and advantages of supercomputing and specifically SAQR, created by TAMUQ's Information Technology Services (ITS).

Over 130 IT, education and oil and gas industry leaders attended the all day conference held in Education City. ITS and Apple Computer representatives gave lectures on topics ranging from the purpose of SAQR to the latest technology offered by Apple Computer. As reported in the June issue of *The Aggie Platform*, SAQR was created using 101 Apple G5 XServe computers. The name SAQR, which means falcon in Arabic, was chosen because, like the falcon that has remarkable vision and a symbiotic relationship with the people of the Arabian Gulf region, TAMUQ has a long-range vision for its research endeavors and is establishing strong relationships with the community and industry in the region.

After a welcome by Dean Michael Kemp, who was proud of this latest technological addition to the Education City community, Dr. Timothy Chester, TAMUQ Chief Information Officer, had the responsibility of officially launching SAQR at the opening session of the conference. Although Supercomputing Day was devoted to lectures about the technology that makes up SAQR, the overall focus was on the cluster's potential contributions to research, education and industry.

"General research into petroleum and chemical engineering is vital to the long-term interests of the State of Qatar. SAQR is designed to provide our faculty researchers with the tools that

they need to conduct this research and contribute to the long-term vision of Sheikha Mozah and Education City," said Dr. Chester.

Chief Systems Engineer for SAQR Mr. Jon Gardner gave a presentation covering the purpose and history of SAQR. Built with assistance from Apple Computer, the BioTeam, and the Department of Chemical Engineering on Texas A&M's main campus, which also has a supercomputing cluster, SAQR is designed to aid faculty and industry researchers in running complex engineering applications, such as oil field mapping, in mere hours instead of days or weeks.

Typical supercomputing applications take many hours to set up and process, so it is difficult to view the results within the time frame of a presentation. However, Ms. Leigh Hausman, Senior Lead Systems Engineer, showed a program being run on SAQR in real time. The program involved generating a three-dimensional image of a complex protein, a computationally-intensive process that SAQR completed in a matter of a few seconds.

Dr. Michael Gonzales, a graduate of TAMU and a molecular biologist who works with Apple Computer to advance the use of supercomputing in scientific research, spoke about visualizing scientific research from a systems perspective instead of an IT perspective. He discussed that with the advance of technology comes the ability to create more research data, but also more challenges in operating the technology. His primary role at Apple is to work with researchers to provide them with the correct and best technology that enables them to focus on their research instead of IT issues.

Qatar Petroleum (QP) sponsored a lunch during Supercomputing Day in honor of the launch of SAQR, because there is a shared

desire to educate the community about the contributions SAQR, and similar clusters, will make. QP has owned one of the largest supercomputing facilities in the region until SAQR's launch and is pleased with the addition of TAMUQ's cluster, as the data produced by SAQR could play a vital part in the future of the petroleum industry.

Mr. Dreux Ste. Marie is a Systems Engineer with Apple and serves the education market for Apple in East Texas. With his primary accounts including the TAMU main campus, Mr. Ste. Marie worked with the cluster in the Department of Chemical Engineering and shared his expertise in the creation of SAQR. He gave two presentations on Mac OS X and Mac OS X Server 10.4, also known as "Tiger," which is Apple's latest operating system. Mr. Ste. Marie also talked about the specific high-performance products that make up SAQR, the XServe, as well as the XSeve RAID and XSan.

ITS built SAQR for a fraction of the cost of a traditional supercomputer, and, unlike traditional supercomputers, SAQR is able to be upgraded by simply adding more computing nodes. A conference attendee inquired about the cost of the cluster because he knew "falcons are very expensive to buy." Mr. Gardner, quickly responded, "The beauty of a supercomputing cluster versus a supercomputer is it's like buying a falcon one feather at a time!"

Once the TAMUQ research faculty get acquainted with SAQR, future plans include developing tighter integration between SAQR and other supercomputing resources within the Texas A&M University System, working with local government and industry to assist in research, and expanding the capabilities of SAQR to be able to address an even broader range of research needs.



For many, Aggie football season is the best season of the year. Just because Doha is located almost half way around the world from College Station, Texas, the home of TAMU's main campus, the season

isn't any less anticipated or exciting. Students, faculty and staff of TAMUQ and the Doha Aggie Club, made up of graduates of the main campus and their families, have supported and yelled for the Aggies during two



Current and future Aggies enjoy the TAMU v SMU football game.

Texas A&M football games viewed live from the main campus in College Station, Texas.

TAMUQ's Information Technology Services arranged a live DVD-quality (mpeg-2) streaming feed from Kyle Field, the university's 82,000 seat football stadium. The feed was transmitted over Internet2 and the Education City network, then shown on large screens in the

TAMUQ building. The collegiate athletic league of which TAMU is a member, the Big XII Conference, gave special permission to provide this feed exclusively to the Qatar campus.

With the +eight-hour time difference between Texas and Qatar, the SMU and Baylor games had a local kick-off time of 7:30 p.m., which made for exciting Saturday nights in Doha. For the games starting later in the afternoon or evening, many avid Aggie football fans listen to the games over the internet at 3 o'clock in the morning! The anticipation is building for the Texas A&M vs. University of Texas game in November. This is a game no one will want to miss, so the Aggies in Doha are very thankful for the early kick-off time! Gig 'em Aggies!