

Synopsis of Interview

David Manuel

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First impressions of Qatar

Met by TAMUQ employee on arrival. Was given a phone but no passcode to unlock and use it, and the battery ran out the next day. Daughter got locked into a bathroom, son broke a bed. Others were helpful in the process of getting settled in the compound. It was the family's first

Faculty in Mathematics, first as Lecturer and then Senior Lecturer on the main campus. Took a one year contract initially, teaching freshman and sophomore math courses, which turned into a three year contract. Wanted to make sure the family adjusted before making a longer term commitment.

The campus was in its second year when the Manuels arrived. Everything has grown since arrival, when the larger class size of 60 had been admitted. Knew all the faculty then, much harder to do now. See lot more of the students, class sizes haven't changed much about 30 per class. Teaching style has changed, done some collaborative research teaching math in independent schools in Qatar. Teaching style is mostly lecture, so fits in with the oral culture. Some of the word problems can be difficult for EFL students.

Behavior and maturity has changed. Need to teach appropriate behavior, keeping order in the classroom requires more time. Less understanding here in Qatar on the part of students as to what appropriate classroom etiquette is.

Significant events

Enjoyed the Singing Dunes, experiencing the desert climate. Enjoyed most about being in Qatar. Enjoyed the Asian Games in Dec. 2006. Over the course of time, began to attend events occurring in Qatar.

Changes

More concern about keeping everything under controlled; more bureaucratic governance. It used to be very relaxed, perhaps prompting the administrative changes. What worked for 25 people won't work for 200 people.

Heard about the TAMUQ project in summer 2004. Greg Klein, one of the first Math faculty, was in CS visiting, talking about the place, the benefits. Family was very ready for change, but [David Manuel] was more resistant. But opportunity sounded interesting. Learned more about it. Not disappointed with the experience.

On preview trip, March 2005, Greg Klein pointed out building that didn't exist in 2003, and now the difference between 2005 and now [2008] is just as remarkable. The growth downtown (near the Sheraton Hotel) and in West Bay (out by the Ritz Carlton) is extraordinary.

Education City

It's a campus of colleges. Perhaps, might be feasible to get degree at one college, but take classes at the other specialized programs, e.g., engineering students at TAMUQ might take political science at Georgetown, perhaps Chemistry at Cornell.

The future

See the TAMUQ graduates making a worldwide impact. Hearing about one of them making a big discovery or working on a big project, succeeding in industry on a global scale. It's not exactly what was expected, but was a good experience.

Travel

Spent time in the UK, Ireland and Paris. Son has spent time Malaysia. Hope it gives children a different perspective on places, on political events, hoping their experience makes them global kids. Have global appreciation of people and places.

Involved in Club Scouts and Boy Scouts in Qatar. Camping is a different experience, find a spot on a beach area. More primitive experience in Qatar. Was a Den Leader: Nearly fifteen languages spoken in the den. Went camping in Oman.

Community involvement

Meeting people is a good survival skill in Qatar, and meeting people leads to activities. Met a Brit who worked at Qatar Petroleum who was a 'social hub'. Qatar Math and Science Teachers Association, talked at the conference, worked with a prep program, worked with someone at the Supreme Education Council, invited to analyze math standards in Qatar schools, got involved in a number of levels of community service. It's a way of reaching out into the community, and has the benefit of taking the TAMUQ reputation to prospective students.

Will miss the people, both at TAMUQ and in the community.