An eye on the future:  
Sidra Medical and Research Center
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On the cover: First year medical students
Mohamed EI Shazly and Anayah Sarkar get
a bird’s eye view of the new Sidra Medical
and Research Center.

At right: Inspired by Islamic architecture, this
Doha landmark is a feature of the Corniche.

Inside back cover: Medical student Zeinab
Ammous practices the patient exam on
classmate Manisha Deb Roy.

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Medical faculty showed their dedication to life-long learning as they took part in a new Clinical Teaching Program designed to enhance the skills of doctors who teach medical students and residents.
Students, faculty and staff got a preview of the progressive concept and world-class facilities of the Sidra Medical and Research Center as Qatar Foundation revealed highly impressive details of the project in March.

The first of its kind in the region, the Center, will provide the highest quality of patient care and be intricably linked to WCMC-Q and the educational journey of its students.

Along with WCMC-Q and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), Sidra will embrace the model of “one program in multiple institutions”. Together, the partners will promote healing, inspire learning and advance scientific discovery.

Sidra will be constructed near the Medical College and will be part of a new medical zone on the Education City campus; a pedestrian walkway will adjoin the two establishments. Its medical staff will have Weill Cornell faculty appointments.

“A teaching hospital and medical college on one site represents one of the most ideal situations in healthcare,” Dean of WCMC-Q, Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, said. “It’s an extraordinary setting for training the doctors of the future.”

Qatar Foundation board member and higher education advisor Dr. Mohamad Fathy Saoud said, “The Center would be an important addition to the great things happening in Qatar.”

Research to bring lasting benefits to the people of Qatar

Biomedical research will begin prior to the opening of Sidra, in partnership with Weill Cornell in Qatar and in New York, HMC, the National Health Authority and other local and international health care and research institutions. The research, which will be directly relevant to Qatar, will focus on pregnancy health and fertility, developmental and preventive health and women’s health.

The core sciences and technologies that will be used to support the research will be functional and anatomical imaging, stem cell, genetic, genomic and proteomic, and general clinical research.
State-of-the-art building planned

With a US$7.9 billion endowment from the Qatar Foundation, the Sidra Medical and Research Center will boast 382 beds, 200 examination rooms for outpatients, 20 operating theatres, and a biomedical research center in the first phase. The infrastructure will enable expansion to 550 beds in a subsequent phase.

The Sidra building will incorporate elements of Islamic architecture with a special focus on the traditional Qatari styles. It will be a modern structure of steel, glass and white ceramic tile.

The dramatic design is the creation of renowned architect Cesar Pelli of Pelli Clarke Pelli and the project’s executive architectural firm is Ellerbe Becket.

Unveiling the design at a press conference in March, Mr. Pelli said the Center would be a benchmark for healing environments around the world.

“The dramatic design and landscaping includes three spectacular atriums that serve as indoor healing gardens – a unique feature that all patients will be able to view from their rooms and that will allow them to benefit from fresh air during the cooler months. The building also incorporates water features in the lobby and drop-off areas and a comprehensive art collection,” he said.

The towering atriums divide the sweeping facility into sections and accentuate the dedicated entrances of the three “hospitals within a hospital” – one for children, one for maternity, and one for other adult services.

“Offering similar amenities to a luxury hotel, all patient rooms will be private and generously sized and will incorporate three zones to accommodate the patient, his/her family and an area for nurses and medical staff,” Mr. Pelli said.

The state-of-the-art biomedical research center will be situated in the clinic building and connected to the west of the main building by an enclosed walkway. A second clinic building – a mirror image – will be built later.

The historic house that currently exists on the property will be preserved and incorporated into the Sidra campus between the two high tech clinic buildings, symbolizing the importance of both tradition and progress.

An all-digital facility, Sidra will be wireless, filmless and virtually paperless. It will incorporate the latest technologies and equipment in all clinical, administrative and research functions. At the same time, the Center will be consumer-focused and will provide the ultimate in patient care and comfort.

Construction of the Center is scheduled for completion in late 2011.

“A teaching hospital and medical college on one site represents one of the most ideal situations in healthcare. It’s an extraordinary setting for training the doctors of the future.”

— Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, Dean of WCMC-Q
With the second round of clerkships now behind them, the Inaugural Class is about to embark upon their fourth year electives in the United States. The training they have received over the past five years has prepared them well for what lies ahead, but this doesn’t eliminate the nerves that naturally go with the unexpected.

The students’ focus has been on practicing the skills of patient care while undertaking clerkships at Hamad Medical Corporation’s (HMC) hospitals and clinics, most recently in the fields of surgery, neurology and psychiatry. The first round of clerkships, completed in December, focused on pediatrics, general medicine, obstetrics and gynecology.

Students adjust to their surroundings

“The anticipation of next year has really made them work hard over the last year,” explained Dr. Nounou Taleghani, Associate Dean of the Clinical Curriculum.

“They are completely fitting into the role of doctor. They’ve matured quite a bit, their confidence level has increased tremendously, and their knowledge base has improved.

“They have typical medical student syndrome. You rarely see them without their white coat or stethoscope around their necks, especially when they come to school because they are the upperclassmen.” On the rare occasions that the Class of 2008 visit the Medical College they are engulfed by younger students eager to hear about their experiences in patient care.

All members of the Class of 2008 agreed that they now felt very comfortable in the hospital setting.

“The first clerkship, medicine, was so intense. I’m not entirely sure why, maybe it was because it was the first time, we weren’t clear what was happening and we didn’t know the doctors,” Khalid Al Khelaifi recalled. “Now we are more used to it. We know what to do and what not to do.”

Amila Husic commented, “It’s been less than a year but I think I know almost everyone in the hospital. We rotate between teams because it’s better to get different points of view from different people, not to just adopt the methodology of one. It’s definitely more enjoyable now. I know people, I’m used to the systems and I know my way around.”

Associate professor of neurology and neuroscience and neurology clerkship director Dr. Leopold Streletz said he was amazed at how well the students had adapted to HMC’s hospitals and integrated with the many residents, specialists, consultants and faculty that were supervising them.

“I’ve been particularly impressed by the students’ retention of information from their previous year,” he said. “They are certainly very motivated, curious and bright. It’s nice to see them apply their neuroscience education from the Brain and Mind course to patient care. They’re the same students I had last year but they’re a little older and they’ve learnt a lot.”

Assistant professor of psychiatry Dr. Tuna Burgut, the co-director of the psychiatry clerkship, noted how sensitive the students were to cultural issues as a result of their exposure to patients from all parts of the world.

“What may be considered normal in one culture may
not be normal in another and they are quite attuned to that,” she said.

Cooperation makes for a smooth introduction

Dr. Taleghani said the roll out of the clerkships had been a pleasant experience thanks to the support of staff at HMC. In particular, she thanked Medicine chairperson Dr. Abdul Latif Al Khal and assistant director of Medical Education Dr. Ismail Helmi for their untiring work.

“All of the faculty have been receptive to accepting students, and very cooperative in working with our clerkship directors and delivering the type of curriculum we require,” she said.

Chief of the neurology division at HMC, Dr. Derick Deleu, agreed that the integration of the students into HMC’s hospitals had been very smooth.

“We’re talking to them at the same level and allow them to assess patients first hand so we know what their skills are. We treat them the same as residents,” he said.

A closer look at the clerkship experience

The second round of clerkships ran from January 7 until May 22 of this year. Students spent four weeks working in neurology, six weeks in psychiatry and eight weeks in general surgery.

“They basically did everything that a junior resident or intern would do,” explained Dr. Bakr Nour, vice chairman for the Department of Surgery at WCMC-Q and surgery clerkship director.

“Each day they would attend morning reports, then every student would go with his or her assigned consultant to whatever activities of the day there were.

“In the surgery clerkship they did patient rounds, then went to the operating room or to the outpatient clinic. In the operating room they would scrub in, then participate in all aspects of surgical care before, during and after the operation. Once the patient came out of surgery, the student would follow them up in the recovery room.”

In addition, every afternoon the surgery clerks would attend a two-hour lecture presented by Dr. Nour in HMC’s Education Center. The lectures were a replica of those given at Weill Cornell in New York and covered the entire spectrum of general surgery and some topics in specialty surgery.

“The students were also on call at least twice a week, some even volunteered to do more,” Dr. Nour went on. “Throughout the entire clerkship experience they learned first hand the art of surgical management.”

Student Dino Terzic gave his thoughts on the surgery clerkship: “The greatest day is the day they let you scrub in and first assist. This involves passing instruments to the surgeon or helping them hold the cameras during a laparoscopic...
procedure. The highlight is when they show you the anatomy and what goes on in surgery itself. We’re not expected to perform any surgery, but it’s great to observe and become familiar with what goes on.

“It’s a heavy workload. You have to know the surgical diseases, how to diagnose them, and how to treat them, but it’s really interesting.”

Meanwhile, the neurology clerkship trained students in the appropriate surgical management of neurological diseases. Students learned and practiced the neurological exam on patients and improved their skills in diagnosis and management of neurological diseases.

“They were given exposure to medical neurology, both in patient consultations and ambulatory practice, as well as accident and emergency consultations,” Dr. Streletz commented. Students also attended video streamed lectures from the New York campus.

Osama Al Saied, a medical student, said he got to see a great number of patients with different conditions.

“We looked after two or three patients at a time. During the morning report, if we had admitted any patients we presented them to the team. Then we’d go on rounds with the consultant to see patients and examine them or visit the clinic. The consultant answered questions and guided us.”

The psychiatry clerkship was similar. Students followed three patients at any one time in the hospital, they did their daily rounds, wrote notes, saw patients alongside their consultant, joined family meetings, and visited the outpatient clinic to sit in on interviews.

“They were able to see the longer-term course of illness, treatment and recovery,” explained Dr. Burgut.

The students were based mainly in HMC’s Psychiatric Hospital, but also visited Hamad General Hospital for consultation rounds, Rumailah Hospital for geriatric rounds and Shafallah Center for pediatric rounds.

“In general, all the students were interested in learning psychiatry,” Dr. Burgut added. “It is going to be part of their profession no matter what field they go into. It’s important to give them the skills to form a rapport with the patient, to be able to talk about emotions, and furthermore talk about difficult issues such as sexuality, aggression and suicide.”

Choosing a career path

For their fourth year, students choose electives, clerkships that are shorter in duration but focus on the specialty they wish to pursue. Most electives are four weeks, but some are two weeks. Depending on what their sub-specialty is the students’ experience will be different.
Dr. Taleghani explained: “If a student wants to focus on emergency medicine they will spend almost the entire time in the emergency department. Other electives are all in the clinics dealing with outpatients. If it’s surgery they’re interested in they will spend time in the operating room, if it’s radiology, they will spend a lot of time looking at radiographic films.”

Every imaginable field of medicine is offered as an elective. WCMC-Q’s Class of 2008 will do some of their electives in the US and some at HMC in Doha. Other required clerkships that the students will complete in Doha include – Primary Care; Medicine, Patients and Society III and Public Health.

The fourth year tends to be very liberal in terms of how they can organize it, so the students will travel back and forth depending on their schedule.

Rana Biary said she was looking forward to continuing her training in New York. “I’m excited and a little nervous because we’re not sure what it’s going to be like.”

Dr. Taleghani said most of the students had made up their mind about what they wanted to do.

“It’s a typical cross section of the different fields of medicine, as you’d expect in any medical school,” she said. The Class of 2008 has interests in surgery, internal medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, radiology, anesthesiology, neurosurgery, as well as emergency and family medicine.

“Some students haven’t changed their minds from day one of their second year.

“There are also a couple of students who remain unsure about what they want to do, but that’s completely normal.

Many of them are convinced when they’re doing a rotation that that is what they want to do until they start the next one.”

Amila was one such student who remained undecided. “The decision we have to make can feel overwhelming. I think there are ten people trying to help me out at the moment but it’s so hard because you haven’t been exposed to everything yet.”

Rana had narrowed it down a little further. Her first choice was emergency medicine with surgery coming a close second. Her electives will help her decide.

“We’re supposed to have a fairly clear decision in the next couple of months because we need to seek letters of recommendation for our residency applications,” Rana said.

WCMC-Q’s Class of 2008 will apply for residencies in September 2007.

On the job: Vildana Omerovic interviews a patient while doing the psychiatry clerkship.

Laying the foundations

The Foundation program, launched earlier this year by WCMC-Q, has been hailed a success following completion of the pilot project in May.

Eleven students who finished the 16-week program celebrated their achievement with faculty, family and friends at a reception at the Medical College on May 3. They were presented with certificates and congratulated on their efforts.

Foundation program director and lecturer in physics, Dr. Imad Makki, said the program was under review by the Qatar Foundation.

“The Foundation program provides potential WCMC-Q students, including those who have participated in Qatar Foundation’s Academic Bridge Program (ABP), with another layer of learning in the sciences before they move a step up and apply to join our two-year Pre-medical Program,” Dr. Makki said.

“Students have the opportunity to improve their SAT, TOEFL (Test of English as a Foreign Language) and IELTS (International English Language Testing System) scores and become familiar with our style of teaching.”

This pioneering class covered biology, chemistry, physics, mathematics and English writing with an emphasis on critical thinking and problem solving.

Dean of WCMC-Q, Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, said: “The Foundation program is designed to give students the best possible preparation for entry into the Medical College. It helps groom them for the two-year Pre-medical Program and builds on the valuable work of the ABP.

“We are hoping to ease the transition from school to university by extending our curriculum with this pilot project. Students would have the chance to improve their critical thinking in core subjects and acquire some of the tools to improve their chances of success in applying to join our institution.”
Orthopedic expert debunks myths of joint replacement

The myths and realities of joint replacement and improved surgical techniques for minimally invasive hip implants were among the topics discussed by Dr. Thomas Sculco, a leading orthopedic surgeon, during his visit to Qatar in April.

As chairman of the Department of Orthopedic Surgery at Weill Cornell Medical College and surgeon-in-chief at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, Dr. Sculco shared his research with physicians in the orthopedic and surgery departments at Hamad Hospital.

“There are a lot of inaccurate opinions that have developed and carried forth over the years about joint replacements in terms of how people deal with it, and how long the surgery lasts,” Dr. Sculco explained. “These myths are mainly among the patient population, but also among surgeons who may not be doing surgery every day.

“A lot of data has refuted these opinions. For example, there is a widespread belief that joint replacements have limited longevity, around 10 years. In fact 90 percent of joint replacements today are still good after 20 years and they can last for 30 years and beyond.

“Another myth is that surgery is long and the recovery slow. That has all changed. We have improved pain management, anaesthesia, rehabilitation, and we have developed all sorts of surgical techniques so that patients recover much faster.”

Leading the way in hip replacement surgery

Dr. Sculco went on to explain a minimally invasive surgical technique he developed eight years ago for hip replacements. The technique is now used by many surgeons around the world.

“Traditionally we did a hip replacement through an incision between nine and 12 inches long. That’s more than we need to do,” he explained. “You can do the operation easily, successfully and safely through an incision half that length using different instrumentation and a modified surgical technique.

“The benefit is that patients recover much more quickly when you do less dissection and trauma to the tissues.”

During his visit Dr. Sculco also had the chance to discuss local cases with Hamad’s orthopedic surgeons.

“I had good interaction with the department. The staff at Hamad Hospital were very hospitable, very friendly and very accepting. They took me on rounds with them and showed me around the hospital. They are doing some nice work.”

Plans for an exchange program

“One of my thoughts was to develop an exchange program between Hamad Hospital and us. Their staff could come and spend a month or two weeks with us at the Hospital for Special Surgery in New York, and then potentially, we might send a resident here to work in the area of trauma.

“Our program has an elective in the last year where the residents can go anywhere in the world. If one of them was interested in trauma I would encourage them to come here. There are a lot of motor vehicle accidents and industrial accidents in Qatar that cause a tremendous number of fractures and serious injuries, something I would like my residents to see more extensively. HMC is very favorable, so we’ll see what happens.”
The partnership between WCMC-Q and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) continues to go from strength to strength with a series of developments that contribute to the growing acknowledgement of Qatar as the center for medical education in the region.

Ten WCMC-Q faculty have been appointed to HMC’s clinical staff, a new Education Center has opened for medical students in the grounds of Hamad General Hospital, five HMC hospitals, including Hamad General, have gained international accreditation, and the deepening partnership between the Medical College and HMC is showcased at one of the largest healthcare events of the year.

Clinical appointments mark further cooperation

In late March, HMC’s Board of Directors approved the credentials and privileges of ten members of WCMC-Q’s clinical faculty and appointed them to the staff of HMC as consultants.

They include: Dr. Bruce Davidson, Dr. Maya Hammoud, Dr. Nasir Hussain, Dr. Mai Mahmoud, Dr. Nady Mohamed, Dr. Bakr Nour, Dr. Powers Peterson, Dr. Ahmad Teebi, Dr. Leopold Streletz, and Dr. Amal Khidir.

The faculty specialize in critical care medicine, obstetrics and gynecology, internal medicine, genetics, general surgery and pediatric surgery, geriatrics, pediatrics, neurology, pathology and lab medicine. They are utilizing their skills for patient care and adding to the variety of ways they interact with their students.

Dr. Hussain said he was excited to be part of HMC and to be contributing to the healthcare mission of the corporation, and the nation at large. “Getting permission to work in the hospital allows me to do the things I do the best; patient care and bedside teaching,” he noted.

Dr. Mahmoud added: “It’s great to be able to share ideas and experience with each other to achieve excellence in patient care and outstanding medical education.”

“This is a very exciting time for all of us,” Dr. Mohamed agreed. “It’s enabling us to combine our goals of patient care and the educational and clinical training of residents and future doctors.

“I specialize in minimally invasive surgery, in particular the use of laparoscopic and keyhole surgery to diagnose and treat a wide range of gynecologic conditions. This can assist the women’s hospital where an increasing number of patients require such procedures.”

Celebrating the announcement, Dean of WCMC-Q, Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, said, “These appointments further bind our institutions. Sharing the expertise of WCMC-Q faculty and medical staff at HMC is integral to our triple mission of education, patient care and research.”

HMC Chairperson Dr. Latifa Al-Houty said, “This very important development further strengthens our affiliation with WCMC-Q. We warmly welcome these physicians to HMC, where their expertise and knowledge will further support the comprehensive patient care that we offer.”
Education Center opens for medical students

As part of HMC’s commitment to WCMC-Q’s students and the ongoing development of HMC staff, a state-of-the-art Education Center has opened in the grounds of Hamad General Hospital.

The first of its kind in the Middle East, the Education Center provides facilities for lectures, training and research, enabling medical students and professionals to stay up-to-date with continual developments in the profession and to share their knowledge and experience.

HMC assistant director of medical education, Dr. Mohamed S. El Tawil, commented, “The Center is a resource for medical students, clerks, post-graduates and for physicians continuing their medical education. Helping HMC doctors to update their knowledge and skills is very important.

“The facility has an auditorium, three classrooms equipped with the latest videoconferencing technology, an electronic library, a skill lab, and a computer lab.

“Students based at HMC will feel more connected to, and supported by, Weill Cornell in Qatar and New York whilst they learn from the finest physicians in the country. We have a partnership with the Medical College and we’re working together to produce the highest quality of doctors.”

HMC hospitals achieve international accreditation

Five HMC hospitals have been granted accreditation from the renowned international body assessing medical centers around the world, the Joint Commission International (JCI). It is the first time the body has provided accreditation to so many institutions in the Middle East simultaneously.

Hamad General, Hamad Women’s, Rumailah, Al Amal and Al Khor Hospitals all underwent rigorous auditing and checks to ensure they reached the 368 standards set by the JCI. All the hospitals will be tested again in three years to verify that they have maintained and improved upon the standards achieved this year.

Dr. Al-Houty said the accreditation was “a major milestone in HMC’s march towards higher quality and international standards”.

JCI accreditation is awarded to those institutions that achieve international standards for the level and quality of service provided, health and safety, as well as the quality of equipment, facilities and staff. Accreditation is voluntary and demonstrates HMC’s commitment to the highest standards of patient care.

JCI Middle East managing director Dr. Derick Pasternak congratulated HMC’s management and staff, all of whom played a vital role in achieving the accolade. “The fact that five hospitals were able to work together and achieve accreditation virtually simultaneously is very impressive,” he said.

“The JCI process is patient centered. As such, the presence of students in a teaching hospital is a complicating factor and does not make accreditation easy. Any hospital that is able to achieve compliance with the JCI standards while engaged in clinical teaching deserves to be congratulated.”

Qatar shines at Arab Health exhibition in Dubai

Arab Health, the second largest annual healthcare event in the world, drew the partners together once again earlier this year. WCMC-Q and HMC had a considerable presence at the event as they joined forces to promote Qatar as a center for medical excellence in one oversize fort-like booth. Representatives from both organizations networked with more than 2000 healthcare companies from 70 countries at Dubai’s International Exhibition Center.

WCMC-Q director of Public Affairs Michael Vertigans said he was able to supply attendees with information about the first-class medical education on offer at WCMC-Q.

“The Arab Health Exhibition is a great opportunity to showcase what we have to offer,” he said.

“We have ambitious plans to expand the representation of Qatar healthcare at the 2008 exhibition. Next year will see all the major players in health from Doha – Sidra Medical and Research Center, University of Calgary, Qatar Science and Technology Park and the College of the North Atlantic – showcase their talents alongside WCMC-Q and HMC. Visitors will be left in little doubt that Qatar is a major hub for healthcare in the Middle East.”
The WCMC-Q writing faculty provided a wide-ranging and stimulating series of weekly public talks during the month of April.

The first two talks grappled with whether Shakespeare had the knowledge to author the plays under his name and how to create a healthy planet through children’s literature. Another talk artfully proclaimed Samuel Beckett’s humor in order to debunk the myth that the Irish writer was miserable. The last talk in the series suggested that when women characters in literature express anger, they’re dismissed out of hand as ‘nasty,’ while the causes and contexts of their anger are never fully explored.

“By sharing these literary ideas with the public we are showing them what this Medical College is really about,” said Associate Dean for Pre-Medical Education, Dr. David Robertshaw.

“As part of our responsibility to our students and to the community, we offer communications. Communities develop through communication; without it they are lost.

“Teachers of English composition and writing at WCMC-Q are providing students with the skills necessary for their life as doctors. They are bringing a little bit of literacy to us.

“With the public talks they are also showing the community that WCMC-Q represents far more than laboratories and test tubes. It helps students prepare for life.”

In his talk ‘Did Shakespeare write Shakespeare? A historical excavation’ on April 2, Dr. Alan Weber, lecturer in writing, took a receptive audience through a Shakespeare detective trail.

He examined the little that is known about Shakespeare’s life and queried whether or not the writer – in the form he is now known to the public – ever existed. The surname was common at the time and much of the work known as Shakespeare’s may have been crafted by another writer or several.

“At the time of his death crucial questions weren’t asked or answered. The gap has been filled by a myth. When we look for real evidence we cannot find it, the trail dissolves.”

“Shakespeare as we know him was a simple country lad and yet the plays present expert knowledge on everything from ships to law. The knowledge represented seems impossible to have been collated by one human being at that time.”

On April 9 senior lecturer in English, Peter Fortunato, entertained an audience of colleagues, parents and would-be writers with a journey into the writing and illustration

During his talk entitled ‘A Children’s Book for an Endangered Planet’, he took the audience through his creative process and his collaboration with the book’s illustrator.

He discussed his sources of inspiration, shared some of the letters and artwork he has received from children who have read his book, and afterwards signed copies of the book for enthusiastic audience members.

More than a little laughter was heard from the audience during Dr. Rodney Sharkey’s talk on April 16, ‘To laugh at that which is unhappy: Samuel Beckett’s sense of humor.’

An assistant professor of writing, Dr. Sharkey said: “It’s important for me to debunk the myth that Beckett was a humorless man because I know the reverse.”

Under the title, *What Washington Irving did not want us to know: the story of Dame Van Winkle*, poet and lecturer in writing, Lauren Alleyne, – who is also the WCMC-Q Writing Center coordinator – provided an illuminating and thought-provoking talk.

Her interest in Dame Van Winkle stems from a comment from her own mother.

“My mother half-jokingly referred to my father as a man who seemed to have been asleep during his life!” she said.

Ms. Alleyne immediately formed a mental image of Rip Van Winkle and was prompted to re-read Irving’s story. She became “fascinated” and “horrified” by Irving’s portrayal of Rip Van Winkle’s wife as a caricature rather than a character.

“ Irving unashamedly depicts Rip as a ne’er do well, a vagabond, a lazy man and unsupportive husband, yet, he is very forgiving of his foibles. His wife appears in the story as a harridan, and a shrew and I was struck by the unfairness of that depiction. I thought that if I’d had to live with that man I’d be an angry woman too.”

She discussed feminist revision and female anger as a necessary but often maligned emotion and political motivator. Professor Alleyne also engaged the audience with poetry from part of her collection tentatively titled: Dreamgirlloverwitchwife.

The series came to a literary grande finale on April 30 with short presentations by WCMC-Q’s writing faculty on The Place of Literature and Writing in Medicine followed by a stimulating roundtable discussion.

Dr. Rodney Sharkey debunks the myth that Samuel Beckett was a humourless man.
A total of $240,000 has been awarded to eight WCMC-Q research projects, involving 24 students and nine faculty members, as part of Qatar National Research Fund’s (QNRF) Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP).

The program supports research that addresses the economic, social needs and opportunities of Qatar and is a first for the region.

The WCMC-Q research projects cover a range of topics, including Qatar’s traditional healing methods, disease-fighting phytochemicals in stress induced plants, novel cationic lipids as gene therapy agents, and the impact of the incorporation of literature into the curriculum at Weill Cornell.

One of the projects, on wind energy measurements in Qatar, is a collaborative effort between faculty and students at the Medical College and at Texas A&M University in Qatar.

QNRF director Dr. Abdul Sattar Al-Taie said he had been highly impressed by the number and quality of proposals submitted.

“WCMC-Q obtained $240,000 out of the total $1,190,000 funds offered by QNRF in the first cycle. The Medical College had a 100 percent success rate for their proposals,” he said. “Each project was subject to an independent peer review process and had to be of relevance to Qatar.”

Dr. Al-Taie said the program was designed to give students experience in research so they could improve their problem-solving skills, their ability to communicate scientifically, and undertake independent work.

“The program requires a faculty member to mentor the students throughout each project,” he said.

Associate professor of organic chemistry Dr. Kevin Smith said the program was an opportunity to develop WCMC-Q’s research capabilities.

“Each year selected students go to the US to acquire research experience and medical faculty later comment on their improved ability at managing the medical curriculum,” Dr. Smith said.

“QNRF has taken this one step further and is helping us develop our own in-house research projects, offering more students the opportunity to experience research.”
Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs Dr. Maya Hammoud, who is leading a project on the use of episiotomy in Qatar, agreed that early exposure to research was important, particularly for pre-medical and medical students.

“A thorough medical education must include research experience. It teaches them what is involved in science and how to tackle difficult problems.”

Qatar and the tradition of healing

Among the projects is a study of the local traditions of healing. With $10,000 in financial support from QNRF, the project is being carried out by three pre-medical students and led by WCMC-Q lecturer in writing Lauren Alleyne.

Abdullah Firoze, Zainab Hejji and Benazir Karim are trying to identify Qatari healing traditions, how they emerged, how successful they are considered, and whether or not they are still practiced.

Ms. Alleyne said the students would be required to explore the intricacies of people, place and culture.

Abdullah is honest about the challenges, “It’s fun but it’s hard to shift your mind from science to the humanities. Unlike the experiences in the lab there’s no right or wrong in humanities.”

Ms. Alleyne explained how the research was developing, “We’ve done a lot of research into what’s out there in terms of healing which has helped us redefine what we’re trying to do. The existing literature is mainly on herbal treatments, so we’re going to focus on spiritual and Koranic healing, pre-hospital surgical procedures and midwifery.”

Benazir said the team had been surprised by their initial findings. “In our minds we thought it was all herbal. We never knew there were practical therapies still happening.”

“The most interesting things we’ve come across are cupping*, fire-heating and putting nails into arthritic joints,” Abdullah explained. “Someone at the museum has seen it with her own eyes. I never knew things like this existed.”

The awarded funds will be used to purchase tape recorders, cameras, laptop computers and hire translators to enable the team to document their research.

They plan to produce a book that includes photographs and narratives of their interviewees and hope that it will reinforce links between WCMC-Q’s presence in Qatar and the local community. “Our research will allow Qatar to preserve its ancient medical history,” Abdullah commented.

Investigation into episiotomy

Dr. Maya Hammoud, a specialist in obstetrics and gynecology, and third-year medical student Amila Husic are undertaking groundbreaking research into the use of episiotomy during childbirth in Qatar. QNRF has awarded them $10,000 to identify the incidence and the indications for the use of the procedure.

“Research into episiotomy has been done in other Gulf countries and pretty much every major health center around the world, but not in Qatar,” Amila commented.

She went on to describe her reasons for taking on the project. “I was doing my obstetrics and gynecology clerkship at Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). In Qatar, many women have given birth four, five or more times. As a result they give birth very easily, so I was confused by the frequency with which they did an episiotomy. I decided to see what the reasoning was behind it.”

The data for the research is being collected through a questionnaire answered by students observing 100 singleton deliveries at HMC Women’s Hospital. Amila will subsequently undertake an analysis of the data and hopes to present the findings at the Middle East Obstetrics and Gynecology Conference in Dubai in January next year.

“Episiotomy use is a controversial topic,” Dr. Hammoud explained. “There is a lot of literature on this, but the debate has not happened in Qatar which makes this evidence-based research very interesting.”

Dr. Hammoud is confident this project will encourage Amila to undertake further research in her medical career. “She’s a very motivated student who wants to do research and this is a great start.”

* Cupping is a method of treatment in which a jar is attached to the skin surface to cause local congestion through the negative pressure created by introducing heat in the form of an ignited material.
CMC-Q faculty and staff shared their ideas on laboratory teaching with science educators and industry professionals from across Qatar at the second annual Symposium on Science Teaching and Learning in March.

The event, at Qatar University (QU), provided a great opportunity for WCMC-Q to reach out to other learning institutions, commented WCMC-Q associate professor of organic chemistry and Symposium organizing committee member, Dr. Kevin Smith.

Among those who delivered presentations at the Symposium were WCMC-Q associate professor of physiology and biophysics Dr. Lars Hedin, lecturer in biology Dr. Christopher Ogden, professor of physics Dr. Roger Hinrichs, and director of environmental health and safety Thomas Doyle.

Dr. Hedin introduced a session on physiology in education and emphasized the importance of laboratory exercises to illustrate basic physiological principles. He called for the introduction of physiology lab exercises in both university and high school biology teaching.

“Many programs in physiology are integrated with other subjects such as anatomy or pharmacology,” he explained. “One result of the integration is a reduction in the number of lab exercises.”

Dr. Hinrichs, another organizing committee member, added: “It is all too easy for science teachers to focus on lectures rather than learning. The message is important, but so is the medium.

“It is imperative that we, as teachers, engage students through interactive demonstrations and hands-on learning in the lab... Active learning concepts based on discovery and critical thinking are proven to be more effective.”

Later, Dr. Ogden used a personal example of research he undertook as a student in Puerto Rico to underscore the importance of independent research for undergraduates as a logical extension of laboratory teaching. His project involved sampling the waters of Laguna Joyuda, a natural shrimp hatchery, to determine the mass of inorganic nutrients.

“This sounds very simple, but the opportunity to figure out sampling requirements, the logistics of sample collection, transport, storage, and processing, provided me with an excellent bridge between coursework and real-world research. Although it was sometimes hard work, our results were published and we had a lot of fun along the way,” enthused Dr. Ogden.

In another presentation, Thomas Doyle was recognized for his assistance in designing and facilitating safety workshops for QU that familiarize biomedical students with risk management concepts and laboratory hazards.

The Qatar Symposium on Science Teaching and Learning, an initiative of WCMC-Q and QU, is now a firm fixture on the Qatar academic calendar.
On the road to success: Med student wins prestigious research award

Iniative, enthusiasm and a strong determination to succeed as a physician and researcher have won third-year medical student, Subhi Al’Aref, a 2007 Tamayoz Award.

The Trainee Award for Research was presented to Subhi at a ceremony at the Grand Hyatt Hotel in Dubai on April 19. The prize is a one-month all expenses paid observership, in the field of his choice, at a Harvard-affiliated hospital or laboratory in Boston, Massachusetts.

An initiative of Harvard Medical School’s Dubai Center (HMSDC), the Awards promote the academic careers of young healthcare professionals and recognize excellence in medical research and outstanding accomplishments in clinical care that incorporate the values of education and professionalism. They include categories for trainees, young physicians and other healthcare professionals with two awards in each category.

Subhi said he was thrilled to win the award, which would help steer his career in the right direction.

“I’m so interested in research. It’s a challenging field that requires one to use his/her innovative and creative skills,” he said.

“I want my career to focus on both the clinical and research aspects of medicine. My grandmother died from breast cancer so I have cancer as my enemy; I want to be involved in research so I can contribute to finding a cure.

“The observership will be an opportunity not only for training but also for me to explore and get to know people at another university. My plan is to do it in November during my electives.”

Subhi’s application highlighted four research projects he has been involved in. The first was his research in the summer of 2005 in the laboratory of Dr. Olaf Andersen, professor of physiology and biophysics and director of the MD-PhD Program at Weill Cornell in New York. He incorporated some basic research using concepts of biophysics to achieve clinical significance in understanding the mechanism of a disease process such as cystic fibrosis. The work has been published and peer reviewed in the journal of Molecular Pharmacology.

The second project was a review paper that Subhi published in the Qatar Medical Journal in November 2006 about digitalis toxicity and fab fragment. The third was a public health project that he undertook with fellow medical student Maryam Shafaee in their second year of medical school. The two students mapped the prevalence of diabetes on a world map after doing a literature review on published data of diabetes prevalence between 1995 and 2006. They are now working on publishing the project.

The fourth and final project was a case report on a patient with idiopathic cystic artery aneurysm, an unreported cause of acute pancreatitis. The report is still in preparation. Subhi commented, “I want to publish the findings of the case so that people learn from it and if they come across this rare condition in the hospital they know how to treat it.”

In addition to a synopsis outlining each research project, Subhi provided the Awards committee with two letters of recommendation from Dr. Andersen and Dr. Maya Hammoud, WCMC-Q Associate Dean of Admissions and Student Affairs.

“Subhi has shown great interest and aptitude in research. I could not think of a more deserving student for such an award,” Dr. Hammoud said.

“He is an excellent student who is very committed and has performed extremely well academically. He has also shown a great interest in research.”

Explaining how he came to apply for the Award, Subhi said: “I was passing by one of the notice boards at Hamad Hospital during my rounds when I saw the announcement calling for submissions. The poster said the award was for trainees, namely interns and residents, it didn’t mention medical students. I thought that with my experience in research, maybe I had a chance to win and it would help me in my career. I had nothing to lose, so I applied.”

“I found out by email and had to call my parents straight away. We (the Class of 2008) were in a neurology session when I read it. I just had to leave the session and call my parents. They were very proud and they came all the way from Jerusalem to Dubai to see me get the award. That’s the most important thing for me, to make my mother and father happy. That’s the Award itself!”
The child is the father of the man:
Dr. Roberto Romero

“The perinatal period of life is crucial in determining an individual’s future health and propensity to disease.” This was the concept presented by Dr. Roberto Romero, one of the most prominent leaders in modern obstetrics, in the second annual Hamad Bin Khalifa Lecture at WCMC-Q earlier this year.

“Cardiovascular diseases of the modern world – obesity, diabetes, hypertension and coronary artery disease – may all be prevented before birth,” he added. “The origin of these conditions, all of which are common in Qatar, could be in fetal life.”

In his Lecture entitled The Child is the Father of the Man, Dr. Romero, Chief of the Perinatology Research Branch and Program Director of Obstetrics and Perinatology, Division of Intramural Research of the National Institutes of Health, focused on his research applying molecular biology and genomics to the study of maternal-fetal medicine.

Visiting Qatar for the second time, the acknowledged international expert in preterm labor and conditions affecting pregnancy presented some unusual insights and explained how they might contribute to the prevention and treatment of maternal-fetal disorders.

Dr. Romero noted that the most important patient of the 20th and 21st century was the human fetus. But, he said it was also the most challenging patient because “you can see it but you can’t reach it”.

“Several epidemiological, animal and clinical studies indicate that insults during the earliest stages of life can profoundly affect our health as adults.

“This realization goes beyond the obvious examples of genetic or congenital diseases. Intrauterine malnutrition, for example, is a significant risk factor for the development of chronic hypertension, diabetes, stroke and death from coronary artery disease in adults.”

He said that while much progress had been made in the areas of prenatal care and treatment for maternal diseases over the years, challenges lay ahead.

“In addition to the manageable environmental factors that influence an individual’s propensity to a disease, there is a genetic component. A fraction of these diseases are attributable to intrauterine environmental factors, but this cannot be changed at present.

“We spend millions of dollars educating people about a healthy diet, warning of the dangers of smoking, and promoting exercise, so why not do more research on the genetic side of prevention?

“These diseases may need to be prevented during the perinatal period. I believe there is potential to screen those women who are at risk so we can better prevent insults later on. There is tremendous opportunity for research in this area here in Qatar, a country which is fast becoming one of the frontiers of medicine.”

Dean of WCMC-Q, Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, recognized Dr. Romero as a physician and philosopher who had made substantial contributions to the field of biomedical research.

“He has contributed to more than 500 peer-reviewed publications and has received countless international awards for his achievements as a professor at some of the most prestigious universities in the world.”

As an outstanding physician and scientist, Dr. Romero was perfectly suited to deliver the Hamad Bin Khalifa Lecture, in honor of His Highness Sheikh Hamad Bin Khalifa Al-Thani, the Emir of the State of Qatar, in grateful recognition of his extraordinary support of WCMC-Q.

Among the audience were guests from Qatar Foundation, including Board member and Higher Education Advisor Dr. Mohammad Fathy Saoud; Chairperson of the National Health Authority, H.E. Dr. Ghalia Bint Mohammed Al-Thani, Hamad Medical Corporation physicians, and WCMC-Q students, faculty and staff.
Teaching by example
Medical faculty show their dedication to life-long learning

Weill Cornell faculty physicians in Qatar showed their commitment to life-long learning recently by taking part in a new Clinical Teaching Program.

An initiative of WCMC-Q and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC), the Program covers a range of clinical teaching activities designed to enhance the skills of doctors who teach medical students and residents in Qatar.

With the establishment of WCMC-Q just five years ago and the subsequent role of HMC as the primary teaching hospital in Qatar, there has been a fast developing clinical faculty community in Doha, noted Dr. Elizabeth Alger, associate director of WCMC-Q’s Office of Education Development.

“The program addresses the need to homogenize the very international and heterogeneous clinical faculty in Qatar,” she said. “It is a way of familiarizing people with American methods of education and with Cornell’s teaching standards.”

With the successful delivery of two 14-hour workshops and a month-long facilitator training course led by the Stanford Faculty Development Center* in February and March, the program was off to a racing start.

Nearly 100 faculty members from HMC and WCMC-Q took part in the workshops, which covered a range of topics, from learning climate, control of the teaching session and communication of goals, to promotion of understanding and retention, evaluation, feedback and promotion of self-directed learning.

Each topic was introduced by a brief presentation and followed by breakout sessions that explored the subject in greater depth through discussions, role-play exercises and videotape review.

Six faculty members also took the intensive facilitator training course, earning them the qualification to lead future workshops.

Participants from HMC included consultant in rheumatology and internal medicine, Dr. Samar Al Emadi, assistant director of Medical Education, Dr. Ismail Helmi, and director of Pediatric Emergency Centers and consultant and head of the Pediatric Pulmonology Section, Dr. Ibrahim Janahi. Participants from WCMC-Q included associate director of

* A leader in improving medical education in the US for more than 20 years, the Stanford Faculty Development Center offers career development opportunities for faculty members, and simultaneously provides a mechanism for institutional improvement, through its programs.
the Office of Education Development, Dr. Elizabeth Alger, professor of pediatrics, Dr. Marcellina Mian and associate professor of neurology, Dr. Leopold Streletz.

A unique capacity-building effort

“As a capacity-building effort, the program we are undertaking is unusual in its magnitude and scope,” Dr. Alger noted.

“In addition to the faculty members trained in the first two offerings of the workshop, there are plans for the six newly-trained facilitators to offer workshops for residents this spring and summer. Another workshop for faculty who were unable to attend the first two is planned for the fall.

“It’s an effort to very rapidly train as many people as possible and at the same time give us the ability to sustain and reinforce that training. Neither piece would be as effective without the other.”

A driving force behind bringing the program to Qatar, Dr. Alger said the directors of the Center, Dr. Kelley Skeff and Dr. Georgette Stratos, had been incredibly responsive to the desire to expedite the training of a large number of clinical teachers outside the US. It is the first time Stanford has offered the facilitator training course overseas.

Dr. Skeff explained: “The dedication and enthusiasm of the faculty, the commitment of the institutions and the commitment of Qatar to education and providing a high standard of clinical teaching are what attracted us here.”

“Qatar has brought together two institutions, HMC and WCME-Q, to try to be synergistic. Our entire teaching program is one that brings about collaboration and synergy between teachers and learners in every situation, so it was quite consonant with our philosophy of education.”

Dr. Stratos added that it was important for physicians to participate in programs like this so they could rejuvenate their enthusiasm for teaching and share their struggles and successes with colleagues.

“Teaching in the medical environment is hard. This course is designed so that teachers can talk to each other and not feel so alone in their difficult job,” she said.

Dr. Skeff concluded: “The commitment of WCME-Q and HMC to emphasize the importance of continual improvement in teaching ability among their faculty is admirable. It is a part of life-long learning after all, a practice they promote among their students.”
More health education programs come to Qatar

Programs in nursing and dentistry will soon be offered at universities in Qatar, strengthening the country’s commitment to becoming a major healthcare hub in the region.

In the largest overseas program developed to date by a Canadian university, the Faculty of Nursing at the University of Calgary (U of C) is to open in Qatar in August 2007. In addition, the College of the North Atlantic in Qatar (CNA-Q) has added a new Dental Training Clinic to its School of Health Sciences.

The new programs complement the Pre-medical and Medical Programs offered by WCMC-Q and plans for the Sidra Medical and Research Center.

Dean of the Faculty of Nursing at U of C-Qatar, Dr. Michael Clinton, said, “The opportunity to work with HMC, WCMC-Q, CNA-Q and the other institutions in Doha creates a unique opportunity for world-best practice in interdisciplinary education.”

Without Walls wins gold

Without Walls, a short film commissioned by WCMC-Q to showcase the Medical College, won gold at the 2007 New York Festival’s International Film and Video Awards in February.

Designed to inspire a new generation of doctors, Without Walls was judged best ‘Sales – Educational Institute’ film in the highly competitive Film and Video Category. The Awards recognize the world’s best work in informational, educational and industrial film productions and corporate videos, and attract entries from more than 30 countries.

The short promotional film and another 37-minute documentary were produced by The Edge Picture Company in London last year. Both high definition films capture the heart and soul of WCMC-Q. They show what it’s like to be a student at the Medical College, how Cornell University and Qatar Foundation came together to establish one of the world’s most advanced medical schools, and the evolution of the Medical College since its creation.

The eight-minute image-based short film uses the silent witness technique where an actor carries the audience through every scene as an invisible, ghost-like character. Meanwhile, the documentary comprises interviews with students and those involved in the founding of the Medical College.

Incorporating beautiful cinematography of Qatar and a personalized soundtrack, both films capture the diversity of the university, the state-of-the-art facilities, and life for students away from their studies.

Director of Public Affairs Michael Vertigans said the award was testament to the film’s quality and success. He thanked all those involved, colleagues and students, for their hard work in making this happen.

“The film honestly conveys just how inspiring and unique WCMC-Q is as a place to study,” he said.

The Edge producer Norma Gaunt added: “The uplifting and emotional nature of the promotional video sets extraordinary expectations of life at the College.”

The film has been distributed to prospective students and their parents, to healthcare practitioners around the Middle East, and to readers of Middle East Medical magazine. It also appears on the websites of Weill Cornell in Qatar and New York.

“The more medical professionals that see the film the better,” Mr. Vertigans explained. “In the Middle East doctors are highly regarded amongst their extended families. By reaching those already working in the healthcare sector we can tap into the next generation who may be inspired to come to WCMC-Q and be the leading physicians of the future.”
Dr. Miller inspires students to succeed

A motivational talk by Dr. Carlyle Miller, Associate Dean for Student Affairs at Weill Cornell in New York, recently left students in Qatar with a renewed desire to succeed.

During his visit to Doha in late March, Dr. Miller addressed the medical and pre-medical classes, and caught up with representatives of the Medical Student Executive Council in Qatar (MSEC-Q) and the WCMC-Q poetry group.

A member of the Admissions Committee, Dr. Miller, offered advice to the pre-medical students on their applications and interviews to medical school and talked about his experiences of medical residency with the medical students.

He told them, “Never lose sight of your patients, even as a student. When approaching exams and assignments think about how the information you are learning will one day help you to help patients.”

Remarking on the similarities between students at Weill Cornell in Qatar and New York and those at Cornell University in Ithaca, Dr. Miller said, “It’s true what they say, ‘students are students wherever they are.’ They have the same worries, concerns, hopes and aspirations.

“The third-year medical students are ‘pioneers’ at the threshold of applying for residency programs, whilst the second-year pre-meds are in the midst of taking their MCAT which will determine, in part, their admission to medical college. Both of these realities combined contribute to a sense of anxiety for very understandable and realistic reasons.

“Under the leadership of Dr. Maya Hammoud (Associate Dean for Student Affairs and Admissions at WCMC-Q) these anxieties are minimized, “but it never hurts to have a second opinion that affirms what they have been told. That’s where I come in.”

First-year medical student Adam Khader explained how Dr. Miller lightened the mood: “He was charismatic and fun to listen to and at the same time there were things he said that were so touching. Through a poem he wrote, he reminded us not to lose sight of the bigger picture.”

“He told our class the story of how he decided to become a doctor. When he was a child he read a lot about different diseases. At eight he managed to diagnose an elderly man with ‘pneumonia’, pronouncing pneumonia as it is spelt, rather than as it is spoken. Amazingly, he turned out to be right – the man did have pneumonia! His whole family was amazed, and from then on he decided he wanted to be a doctor.”

In his role as president of MSEC-Q, Adam Khader, and vice president Mohammed El Shazly, discussed the council’s operations with Dr. Miller.

Poetry group member, Anas Abou-Ismail, also had the chance to discuss strategies.

“Dr. Miller was very warm and supportive of our efforts and he inspired us to keep our talents alive,” Anas commented. “We learned that we can be poets and doctors at the same time.”

“It is this opportunity to achieve global leadership with our partnering organizations in Qatar that motivates our presence here.”

With classes beginning in Fall 2007, U of C-Qatar will require its nursing graduates to meet the same standards of students in Canada. Priority areas have been identified as acute care specialities, community and home nursing, midwifery, nurse education, primary care, psychiatric and mental health nursing, and renal nursing.

The new Dental Training Clinic at CNA-Q includes state-of-the-art dental equipment and digital radiography capabilities and will provide an ideal setting for students training to be dental assistants. The two-year program will use a combination of classroom instruction and hands-on practical experience, both in the lab and in the clinical setting, to teach students. The course will cover oral hygiene, instrumentation procedures, terminology and laboratory procedures.
Community commitment at WCMC-Q

CMC-Q students have been engaged in a seemingly exhaustive list of community activities in recent months, from working with healthcare partners in Qatar to supporting charities.

On the medical front, students have organized blood drives and volunteered for a Medical Camp and the National Immunization Campaign. They have also organized a Coffee House to raise funds for the Qatar National Cancer Society and supported the Doha Asian Games.

Supporting medical education

On April 20, both medical and pre-medical students engaged in a Medical Camp organized by the Indian Islamic Association to provide thousands of unskilled expatriate workers with medical treatment free of charge.

President of the Medical Student Executive Council in Qatar (MSEC-Q), Adam Khader, said the event included a healthcare exhibition, presentations, and medical treatment by qualified doctors.

“The med students worked with Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) physicians and took patient histories and blood pressures, while the pre-meds put their language skills to use educating patients of different nationalities on healthcare,” he said. “Continuing the efforts of previous years, we also organized a blood drive in February to help HMC replenish low stocks and save lives,” he added.

Forty students volunteered to help another partner, the National Health Authority (NHA), in January during its Mass Immunization Campaign. For the third year running, students joined teams of doctors and nurses from the NHA to help vaccinate children against the polio virus.

“The students are extremely eager to find ways to help the community,” Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, Dr. Maya Hammoud, commented. “They are so positive and hopeful and they are always coming up with their own ideas.”

Opening doors to education and charities

Among other recent student-driven events at WCMC-Q was a visit by the children from HOPE-Qatar to the Blood Bank.

Protecting the community: Pre-medical student Nasser Mohamed makes the most of his experience as a volunteer for the NHA’s Immunization Campaign.
Tasnim Khalife has a passion for helping the community. This first-year medical student leads by example. When she isn’t working around-the-clock on her studies, Tasnim is rousing students for charity fundraisers and community health events.

“Helping the community in Qatar is a way of reminding ourselves why we want to be doctors,” she explained. “It reinforces our commitment and it’s a way to interact with people from all walks of life.”

A variety of ideas for charity and community health events pour in each year from students at WCMC-Q with different nationalities and backgrounds. As secretary of the Medical Student Executive Council in Qatar (MSEC-Q), Tasnim and her colleagues, president Adam Khader, vice president Mohamed Shazly, treasurer Nadia Merchant, and other members of the Executive Committee, support as many of these ideas as possible.

“The students are proving adept at managing and organizing events that involve a multitude of cultures and they are very aware of different cultural sensitivities,” Dr. Hammoud said.

“Their enthusiasm in organizing these events and their ability to empathize and help the people of Qatar, as well as those abroad, will most certainly make them the best doctors of the future.”
Among visitors to the Medical College were:

1. The Islamic Medical Association of North America (IMANA) enjoyed a tour of WCMC-Q in January. Pictured are some of the members.

2. WCMC-Q library systems manager Mike Mandili (left) and Distributed eLibrary director Tom Williams (right) welcomed Dr. Shahin Al Hosany, information and library consultant at the United Arab Emirates University, in January.

3. Finland’s president, Tarja Halonen, (second from left) took a tour of the Medical College in April alongside a delegation which included President of Qatar University, Dr. Sheikha Abdulla Al-Missnad (second from right).

4. Medical and pre-medical students invited children from HOPE-Qatar, a local charity that provides opportunity and education to young people with mental disabilities, to WCMC-Q in March.

5. Lord Mayor of the City of London, John Stuttard, was greeted by Vice Chairperson of Qatar Foundation, Dr. Saif Al-Hajari, in February. Mr. Stuttard was given a tour of the Medical College.

6. Minister of Foreign Investment for the Republic of Macedonia, Mr. Gligor Tashkovich (left) and Deputy President for Education and Agriculture, Mr. Zivko Jankuloski, visited WCMC-Q as Cornellians in February. They were greeted by Dr. David Robertshaw, Associate Dean for Pre-medical Education.
Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar was jointly established by the Qatar Foundation for Education, Science and Community Development and Cornell University