



BULLETIN

December 1, 2007

Conference round-up

1. Overseas

AAMC: With 4,000 people attending the event, WCMC-Q's delegation to the Annual Meeting of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), November 2-7, spread the word about the Medical College among colleagues in North America.

Weill Cornell Medical College worked with WCMC-Q, Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons and NewYork-Presbyterian Hospital to stage a massive information and display booth. WCMC-Q's presence on the display was testament to the international reach of Weill Cornell.

The WCMC-Q team was led by the Dean, **Dr. Daniel R. Alonso** and included Associate Dean for Admissions and Student Affairs, **Dr. Maya Hammoud**; assistant professor of pathology, **Dr. Gerardo Guiter**; and director of admissions, **Lee Askin**, among others.

Dr. Hammoud gave two presentations during the meeting. The first outlined her research into the admissions process at WCMC-Q, with data on 148 students of more than 20 nationalities for the period 2002-2006. Currently, the Medical College has separate admissions processes for the Pre-medical and Medical Programs; Dr. Hammoud concluded that it would be possible to adopt a one-step process, in line with the practice among U.S medical schools that offer joint BS/MD programs.

The second focussed on the use of portfolios in medical education, drawing on her experience as a member of a panel of the Alliance for Clinical Education, a multidisciplinary group that works to enhance clinical instruction of medical students.

Visitors to the exhibition showed a keen interest both in WCMC-Q and in Qatar. The WCMC-Q team highlighted the programs, their pride in the upcoming 2008 first graduating class and, more generally, life in Qatar.

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Dr. Amal Khidir, assistant professor of pediatrics and Associate Director of the Pediatric Clerkship, presented at the 15th Congress of the Union of Arab Pediatricians in Khartoum, Sudan, November 13-15. Held jointly with the Sudanese Association of Pediatricians, the meeting attracted pediatricians from Arab countries at different levels of training and academic ranks. The topic was "Preliminary Perception of Attending Physicians of the implementation of North American Pediatric Curriculum in Middle-Eastern Hospital; Needs Assessment." The needs assessment was done in the Pediatric Department of Hamad Medical Corporation to have a base for any support needed to assist in the implementation of the pediatric curriculum. The study was mentored by faculty from the Harvard Macy Institute, Harvard University, USA.

2. Qatar: Faculty members took part in a number of conferences in November:

Dr. Ahmad Teebi, professor of pediatrics and of genetics, was keynote speaker at the first Qatar International Conference on Newborn Screening, Nov. 2-5, organized by Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC). In *Genetic Disorders in the Arab World*, Dr. Teebi surveyed patterns of migration to and from the region, and traced the origins of several disorders and syndromes in Arab populations.

Those attending came from Europe, North America, the Far East, Middle East and South Asia. During the event, they heard about the highly successful neonatal screening program, a leader in the region, which began in HMC in 2003 and now screens newborns for some 30 disorders, from metabolic diseases to visual and hearing impairments.

Dr. Renee Richer, lecturer in biology in the Foundation Program, spoke on *Biodiversity Conservation in Qatar in Light of Increasing Industrialization*, during a panel discussion on the environment organized by the Center for International and Regional Studies of Georgetown University School of Foreign Service in Qatar, Nov. 12.

In her presentation, Dr. Richer outlined the nature of Qatar's "challenging" environment; identified factors that are increasing pressure on it (such as industrialization and population growth); highlighted the need for publication of scientific information on the status of Qatar's flora and fauna; and examined how the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan are addressing some of these issues.

Research Presentation

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Second year pre-meds **Sabrina Alam** and **Utsav Nandi** gave a public presentation at WCMC-Q, Nov. 27, entitled "Literature and Medicine: A New Partnership." It focused on research conducted this year with the support of Qatar National Research Fund, as part of the Undergraduate Research Experience Program (UREP).

The students investigated the place of writing seminars in the curriculum and, more generally, the value of literature for medical students. They gathered data by circulating a questionnaire to faculty and students at the Medical College and analyzing the input from 90 respondents.

Alam and Nandi said their curiosity and enthusiasm were ignited by a First Year Writing Seminar taught by assistant professor of English, **Dr. Alan Weber**, who was Principal Investigator for the project. The experience introduced them to the rules and regulations governing medical research, to the principles of designing a scientific questionnaire and to the complexity of the administrative process.

Also presenting at the event were **Peter Fortunato**, senior lecturer in English and Coordinator of the First Year Writing Seminar; and **Dr. Mohamud Verjee**, assistant professor of family medicine.

Another outcome of the project, an anthology of writing by contributors from within and outside the Medical College, was presented at the meeting.

Qatar National Research Fund (QNRF) launched the UREP in fall 2006 to encourage students in Qatar's universities to engage in research under the guidance of faculty mentors. In the first two cycles of funding, WCMC-Q students from first-year pre-meds to final year meds secured support for 19 projects, with each student participant funded up to a total of \$10,000.

Faculty News

1. Visiting faculty

Dr. Frank J. DiSalvo, Director of the Cornell Center for a Sustainable Future, visited WCMC-Q in early November. During his visit Dr. DiSalvo, John A. Newman Professor of Physical Science at Cornell University, discussed environmental issues with faculty and students. He also gave a lecture to the wider Education City faculty on the Center's activities and met with members of Qatar's Supreme Council for the Environment and Natural Reserves.

2. Update on medical faculty numbers and activities

The number of Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) physicians with WCMC-Q faculty appointments keeps growing. These voluntary faculty members -

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practicing clinicians at HMC who also teach WCMC-Q medical students - increased from 95 to 108 between September and November '07.

Meanwhile, the number of WCMC-Q full-time faculty licensed and credentialed to see patients in HMC hospitals and clinics has now reached 11.

The Clinical Teaching Program is organizing a number of training activities over the coming weeks. There is a third offering of the Clinical Teaching Workshop for HMC clinical faculty, to be hosted by the Medical College, December 7 and 8. Two guest faculty, Dr. John Buckley from the Henry Ford Health System in Detroit, Michigan and Dr. Stephanie Call from Virginia Commonwealth School of Medicine in Richmond, Virginia join **Dr. Elizabeth Alger**, Associate Director of the Office of Education Development, **Dr. Marcellina Mian**, **Dr. Leo Streletz**, **Dr. Ismail Helmi**, **Dr. Samar Al Emadi** and **Dr. Ibrahim Janahi** as facilitators. Approximately 60 faculty members from various departments in HMC are expected.

Dr. Alger is also offering a workshop for new PBL tutors during the first weeks of December.

3. Pre-medical and foundation faculty

Dr. Marina Dodigovic, visiting assistant professor in the Foundation Program, is participating as a reviewer in the adjudication process of the Ruth Crymes Fellowship Academy Award, set up in honor of the late Ruth Crymes, an active member of TESOL* and a former president of the organization. The Ruth Crymes TESOL Academy Award is for outstanding educators in this field to attend conventions and academies.

**TESOL is an international organization set up in support of teaching English to speakers of other languages.*

4. Faculty outreach

Dr. Roger Hinrichs, professor of physics, was co-director with Dr. Ilham Al Qaradawi, associate professor of physics at Qatar University, of workshops for 60 teachers from independent and government high schools held at WCMC-Q, Nov. 25 and 29. The fourth in a by now well-established series that aims to promote active learning, these latest workshops explored the topic of Alternating Current through a short lecture and hands-on lab using magnets, oscilloscopes and flashlights. There was also a presentation by a guest speaker from Qatargas, Nasser Al Issa, emphasizing the value of developing teachers and students who can test their own ideas in a supportive environment.

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"The teachers are highly motivated, and they pass this motivation and excitement on to their students," Dr. Hinrichs commented.

Participants each received a certificate and a small hand-powered flashlight, which they had successfully deconstructed and reconstructed themselves to study the generation of electricity.

Peter Fortunato, senior lecturer in English and Coordinator of the First Year Writing Seminar, led a literacy-based presentation entitled "Engaging Children's Love of Nature with a Book," Nov. 14. The workshop for primary and secondary school teachers, sponsored by the Qatar Reading Association, took place at The Learning Center in Education City.

Autumn Watts read selections from her recent work, a series entitled "Depositions," at the Doha Writers' Workshop, hosted by College of the North Atlantic-Qatar, Nov. 6. Watts, who is lecturer in English and Coordinator of the Writing Center, read pieces exploring Nevada's social and geological history.

Student News

1. The first woman has been elected to the position of president of the students' representative body, the Medical Students Executive Council-Qatar (MSEC-Q). **Nadia Merchant** (Class of 2011) takes over from outgoing president Adam Khader (class of 2010). Not only this - the second-in-command is **Tania Jaber**, also from the Class of 2011!

2. Almost 60 WCMC-Q students, who volunteered to assist with medical camps for expatriate workers earlier in the year, were presented with certificates in recognition of their effort, Nov. 8. Organized annually by the Indian Medical Association and the Indian Islamic Association, the camps offer free medical check-ups, counseling and health advice to low-income workmen. The pre-med and med students took part in patient counseling and a medical exhibition at the camps, which were visited by some 5,000 people. Inaugurating the ceremony, professor of pediatrics **Dr. Marcellina Mian** noted that teaching others also solidifies one's own knowledge: "In giving to those people, I think the volunteers gained a great deal." Also speaking was **Dr. Mohamud Verjee**, assistant professor of family medicine.

3. Foundation Program students **Sharefa Al Mannai, Aljazy Al Maraghi, Zahra Makki, Kholoud Saleh, Moza Al Sulaiti and Sara Al Suwaidi** struck gold Nov. 11, when they were presented with gold Education Excellence Awards for their academic achievements prior to enrolling in WCMC-Q.

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Amna Al Khuzaei achieved an even more remarkable feat, being one of only nine students in Qatar to receive the rare platinum award for excellence at high school.

The students, who are all graduates of Al Bayan School, received their awards at the annual Education Excellence Day held under the patronage of HH the Heir Apparent Sheikh Tamim bin Hamad bin Khalifa Al Thani. Their names were put forward by the evaluation committee of the Supreme Education Council (SEC) and approved by HE Sheikha Ahmed Al Mahmoud, Minister of Education and SEC Secretary General.

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