



BULLETIN

11 March 2008

Events

Celebrating medical educators

WCMC-Q and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) joined together to mark Medical Education Day, February 20.

The celebration in the superbly appointed HMC Education Center, which opened last spring, was the occasion for WCMC-Q to recognize and thank HMC physicians who are actively contributing to the clinical education of medical students.

Dean of WCMC-Q, Dr. Daniel R. Alonso, congratulated and acknowledged all teachers, faculty and members of HMC as partners in bringing the Medical College's triple mission of patient care, education and research to Qatar and the region.

"HMC is an outstanding teaching hospital. Your commitment to health care and the mission of WCMC-Q has made it easy for us to become your partners and colleagues. Together, it is our obligation to take the Medical Corporation and medical school to new levels of excellence," said Dr. Alonso.

He recalled how the WCMC-Q/HMC partnership began, with the signing of an affiliation agreement in October 2004 to have HMC doctors actively engaged as Weill Cornell faculty in teaching medical students, to the start of the first clinical rotations in 2006.

Teaching awards were presented by WCMC-Q to 24 faculty-physicians. An additional collective award was made to HMC's Department of Medical Education in recognition of its contribution to the education of medical students.

Recipients of awards were: Dr. Maryam Abdul Malik; Dr. Mohamed Janahi; Dr. Hilal Al Rifai; Dr. Badr Eldin Ahmed; Dr. Suhaila Ghuloum; Dr. Dirk Deleu; Dr. Issa Matar; Dr. Hassan Al-Thani; Dr. Ahmed Kamha; Dr. Ibrahim Janahi; Dr. Hatem Abdul Rahman; Dr. Saadat Kamran; Dr. Warren Alen Abrameit; Dr. Salahaldin Genahi; Dr. Abbas F. Ahmed; Dr. Mandy Abu Shama; Dr. Najat Ali Mohsen; Dr. Mohamed Asif; Dr. Tasleem Raza; Dr. Nidal Assad; Dr. Mehdi Errayes; Dr. Abdelhalem Al-Hiday; Dr. Ashraf Adel; and Dr. Wanis Ibrahim Hamad.

Department of Medical Education: Dr. Abdul Latif Al Khal; Dr. Ismail Helmi; Dr. Omer Zaghmout; and Dr. Mohammed El Tawil.

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Annual Symposium goes from strength to strength

Numbers attending the annual Symposium on Science Teaching and Learning continue to grow apace, with a three-fold increase in three years. About 250 people attended last month's event at Qatar University (QU), organized by faculty of WCMC-Q and QU.

This year's meeting focused on developing problem solving skills in the sciences, with presentations run in parallel in four sessions, covering problem solving skills in applied science; interdisciplinary approaches; technology tools; and lab work.

There were also workshops on teaching research skills to pre-college students, critical thinking and presentation softwares, and chemistry-based activities. A number of outside keynote speakers from the USA and UK gave presentations on the importance of teaching science, guided inquiry, and creative tools and techniques for research. Presenters from WCMC-Q were **Dr. Roger Hinrichs**, professor of physics, and foundation faculty members **Dr. Sheila Qureshi**, senior lecturer in chemistry, and **Dr. Renee Richer**, lecturer in biology. On a lighter note, there was even a chemistry show.

At the first symposium, hosted by WCMC-Q in fall 2006, more than 80 faculty and staff of QU and the Medical College met to explore laboratory-based teaching. This theme was pursued at the second event in March 2007, with representatives from other institutions of higher learning, secondary schools and industry in Qatar invited to attend.

WCMC-Q's pre-medical faculty have been actively involved in all the meetings. Assistant professor of organic chemistry, **Dr. Michael Pungente** chaired the first symposium steering committee, while for the second and third meetings, Dr. Hinrichs; **Dr. Kevin Smith**, associate professor of organic chemistry; and **Dr. Chris Ogden**, lecturer in biology, were on the steering committee. Planning has already begun for a fourth symposium in 2009, with a proposal to include universities in the Gulf region as well.

Reaching out to Qatari high school students

This year, WCMC-Q is stepping up the ongoing effort to reach out to Qatari high schools. The Office of Admissions has set fixed office hours in two schools; there are off-site visits by faculty, staff and students to meet with pupils interested in studying medicine; and most recently, two school parties were welcomed to WCMC-Q.

18 girls from Al Bayan Scientific School, and eight students from Omar Bin Al Khattab Educational Complex for Boys – the main feeder schools for the Medical College – spent several hours at WCMC-Q on separate days in February at the invitation of Director of the Foundation Program, **Dr. Imad Makki**. Almost all the visitors were Qatari nationals.

The Foundation Program, introduced in 2007, extends the pre-medical phase by a year for those applicants who would benefit from a longer period of preparation before applying to the Medical Program.

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“By organizing these events, we hope to get the young people familiar with medicine, and to show them that WCMC-Q is *their* medical college,” Dr. Makki said. “We want them to take away the message that, once they enter Weill Cornell, we will give them all the support we can to help them succeed.”

The visitors met faculty, pitched their questions to Qatari pre-meds and found out what it’s really like to study at the Medical College – from student-faculty interaction to trying their hand at using lasers in the laboratory, supervised by professor of physics, **Dr. Roger Hinrichs**. Admissions staff members were also on hand to explain the on-line application system introduced in fall 2007.

“I learned a lot from the visit,” said Khalid Al Saegh, who had already applied to the Pre-medical Program. “I didn’t know about the Foundation Program before (I came). When I applied, I didn’t think I had a chance. Now, I think my chances are greater.”

Counselor at Omar Bin Al Khattab school, Mr. Saleh Al Neshwar, was also positive.

“What concerns the boys most is the rigor and intensity of the program, as well as its length,” he explained. “It’s important for them to hear about the supportive system that helps students to succeed, and to go back and spread the word. When they see how students from the same school have made it to the Pre-medical and Medical Programs, it takes away some of the concerns they have.”

Faculty News

Teaching workshops extended to basic science faculty

In an extension of a program offered to clinical faculty since early 2007, the Office of Educational Development is holding a teaching workshop for basic science faculty from January thru March.

A program of the Stanford Faculty Development Center, it introduces new teaching behaviors, enhances faculty members’ versatility in the classroom and promotes discussion of teaching practices. Facilitating the 14-hour workshop is **Dr. Elizabeth Alger**, Associate Director for Faculty Development.

Eight faculty members are taking part, with four basic science faculty from the Medical Program joined by two each from the Foundation and Pre-medical Programs. The workshop covers topics from creating a positive learning environment to approaches to evaluation, and includes activities such as mini-lectures, critiquing video clips and role-play.

Dr. Alger, who trained as a clinical faculty trainer before taking a further course for basic science training, noted: “The faculty are different. Their way of interacting with students is very different from that of clinical faculty: It’s a more structured and more faculty-directed approach.”

Up to now, guest faculty and Stanford-trained WCMC-Q and Hamad Medical Corporation (HMC) facilitators have run workshops for 140 clinical faculty and residents at the Medical College and HMC.

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Starting this fall, Dr. Alger plans to invite all new clinical faculty members to attend clinical teaching workshops, and to offer brief refresher sessions to those previously trained. A second offering of the basic science workshop is also planned for the spring.

Dr. Ahmed Teebi, professor of pediatrics and of medical genetics, has been appointed Vice-Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at Weill Cornell Medical College in New York City and Director of Weill Cornell's pediatric service in Qatar.

Announcing the appointment, Dr. Gerald M. Loughlin, Nancy C. Paduano Professor and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics, said: "Dr. Teebi is a leader in the fields of pediatrics and genetics. His longstanding work and outstanding reputation in the region make him a perfect choice to represent our department in Doha. Prior to joining our faculty, Dr. Teebi was professor of pediatrics at the University of Toronto and a member of the medical staff of the Sick Children's Hospital.

"As we expand and develop our pediatric faculty in Doha, participate in the planning of the children's hospital at Sidra Medical and Research Center, and continue to build our collaboration with our colleagues at Hamad Medical Corporation, we are thrilled to have an individual of Dr. Teebi's stature representing us, and the interests of children."

Dr. Ziad Kronfol, associate professor of psychiatry, has been appointed Vice-President for West Asia of the Asian Federation of Psychiatric Associations. (AFPA). This newly founded entity is based on the participation of regional psychiatric groups and national organizations. Its official journal, the *Asian Journal of Psychiatry*, will be launched during the XIV World Congress of Psychiatry to be held in Prague, September 20-25, 2008. Dr. Kronfol will be *ex-officio* a member of the editorial board of this journal. He is also a member of the organizing committee of the 2nd World Congress of Asian Psychiatry that will take place in Taipei, Taiwan, November 8-10, 2009.

Peter Fortunato, senior lecturer in English, gave a literacy-based presentation entitled "Words & Pictures" for the Qatar Reading Association at the American School of Doha, February 27. As part of the symposium, "Teachers Teaching Teachers" Mr. Fortunato spoke about the way that combining words with illustrations led to the creation of his book for children, *Color Me Earth*. He discussed theories of creativity and how it might be encouraged in children through the combination of writing with visual art, led a participatory exercise combining drawing with writing, and suggested ways it could be adapted for students and children of various ages.

The Qatar Reading Association brings together teachers and parents with an interest in literacy and education in English, Arabic and other languages. February's symposium included a series of workshops for primary school, secondary school, and university level teachers, as well as parents.

Dr. Marina Dodigovic, visiting assistant professor in the Foundation Program, presented at the international NELTA (Nepal English Language Teachers' Association) conference held 16-18 February in Kathmandu. The title of the presentation was: "Acting, drama and role play in EFL."

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Campus links

Doha calling Ithaca: Live wires spark great exchange

Foundation program students took time out from their after-school studies, and faculty, staff and international students woke up near the crack of dawn on Cornell's Ithaca campus, March 4 – all to take part in the first videoconference between the two groups.

Focusing on “Cornell and diversity,” the exchange proved fruitful and fun. Participants swapped ideas and information on everything from what it's really like to be an international student at the University, to where to find the most amazing ice cream flavors in Ithaca.

The WCMC-Q students had lots of questions, including some intended to discover what the Ithaca students thought about their Doha counterparts and how much they knew about Qatar. The Ithaca group of predominantly Far Eastern graduate and undergraduate students was positive about the Cornell community's “terrific diversity” and acceptance of – and interest in – students from all over the world.

Dr. Krystyna Golkowska, senior lecturer in English in WCMC-Q's Foundation Program, organized the encounter with colleagues in Cornell's International Teaching Assistant Development Program (ITADP), to establish a closer link between the two campuses and to make her students aware of the value Cornell places on inclusiveness.

“International students arriving in Ithaca often come with stereotypes of what Cornell students are, the myth of the "homogenous" native speaker being one of them. At the same time, students and faculty on the main campus may assume there is no diversity on our Doha campus, which is not true either. The video-conference was meant to help both sides to get to know each other better,” Dr. Golkowska, who has many years' experience of the Ithaca campus, explained.

The exchange was also intended to prepare the foundation class for a six-week period at the Cornell Summer College, June-July 2008.

“For many of the foundation students, it will be a culture shock,” she said. “But it's going to be a very good experience for them to go to Ithaca and to gain confidence, once they find they are doing fine.”

Theresa Pettit, senior lecturer in Cornell's Center for Learning and Teaching, and Director of the ITADP, said: “Because of our diverse campus, we have encounters with people from different backgrounds every day. In my opinion, it's what makes the campus so rich. The (Qatar) students seemed very open and forthright...very much like the students you would meet here.”

Lecturer in the Center and Associate Director of the ITADP, Kimberly Kenyon, suggested the exchange could be developed further: “I am really happy that our students got to participate in this activity. The ability to videoconference is a terrific tool for the Center. I think creating a “summer buddy system” with ITAs, or current Ithaca campus students, would be a great way to foster international conversations and connect the two campuses.”

Also participating was Abby Eller, Director of Cornell's Summer College.

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