

WEILL CORNELL

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Moving Stories

The major task of the summer at WCMC-Q was the move to the new building. The distance was a matter of just a few hundred yards, but even so, packing up and transporting the lab equipment presented a whole range of challenges: *read all about it on pages 6 and 7.*

Message from the Dean



As we open the doors of the new Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar building to students, faculty and staff at the outset of the academic year, we reach a milestone in the history of Cornell University and, indeed, in our partnership with the Qatar Foundation.

WCMC-Q is the first branch of an American medical college ever established overseas. Over the past year, we have worked with energy and commitment to create an institution true to the founding vision of dedication to the highest standards of academic scholarship, and service to the community. We are very proud of the achievements of all those who have contributed magnificently to this effort: faculty, staff and students.

The past year has also been a transitional period as we awaited the completion of our building. Kindly accommodated, in the interim, by Qatar Academy in a wing of their beautiful premises, we watched with admiration as engineers and construction workers translated the designs of architect Arata Isozaki

People are at the heart of our operations: WCMC-Q is a community of individuals working together in pursuit of a common goal.

into material form. They met extraordinary challenges, including the construction of lecture halls in shapes never previously attempted, notably the ovoids. Not only this, but they completed the building with great speed.

Everyone who sees the new home of WCMC-Q will probably have his or her own view of what is most remarkable about it: the design, a subtle blend of the contemporary with traditional Islamic and Gulf themes; the lecture halls; the vistas within the building; the state-of-the-art technology that brings academic communities in the U.S. and the Gulf closer than ever before; or, perhaps, the library, that challenges the usual assumption of a static space filled with thousands of volumes, since it allows access to resources across the globe by electronic means at any time of the day or night from computers positioned in “library pods” throughout the building.

Beyond the physical premises that we occupy, however, people are at the heart of our operations: WCMC-Q is a community of individuals working together in pursuit of a common goal. We are delighted to welcome our new students, the class of 2009, as they embark on the exciting, demanding yet rewarding journey towards qualifying as doctors of medicine. We welcome back returning students, the

class of 2008, ready to complete the final year of the Pre-medical Program in preparation for entry to the Medical Program. Truly this is an exhilarating time to be at WCMC-Q.

The Newsletter captures some of the excitement and the effort of the summer as we moved into the new building while students were engaged in other educational activities. Our inaugural class took an MCAT preparatory course: WCMC-Q has been designated a site for the exam, the only such center in the Gulf region. A number of students also took part in a pilot program to experience research at Cornell’s Ithaca and New York campuses.

This issue looks forward to Orientation and Opening Exercises, and the new academic year. It also brings you news from faculty, and from Education City, where we are joined in September by branches of other American universities as they open in Qatar.

Finally, a reminder that WCMC-Q’s new Website is now online, keeping you up to date with our activities and giving essential information about the College. I hope that you will visit the site over the coming weeks and that you enjoy the reflection of WCMC-Q and its activities both in print in the following pages and by electronic access.

—Daniel R. Alonso, M.D.

Website launched with fresh look



Before our move to the WCMC-Q building this summer, the new Website was launched with a fresh look and up-to-date information about the College's activities.

Attractive and clearly organized, the site has been designed to make navigation easy. Web Developer Zahara Velji, who headed the project to build it, identifies usability as a central goal:

"The main objective is to succeed in getting the information to the appropriate audience—students, incoming faculty and interested visitors. This was the hardest part of the task, but I believe we have achieved it."

Keeping the site current is another top priority. Velji comments: "since we are a new institution in the region, it's most important that we use the Website to keep visitors right up-to-date as our activities evolve."

Visit the site at <http://www.med.cornell.edu/qatar>

Welcome — Marhaba!

Pilot project introduces students to research work

WCMC-Q students spend summer in the U.S.

Five WCMC-Q students spent more than two months in the U.S. this summer working alongside Cornell University researchers in labs at WCMC-NY and Ithaca.

Our picture shows (L to R) Amila Husic, Muna Al-Ali, Kunali Dalal, Dino Terzic and Vildana Omerovic during an outing to Niagara Falls.

Dr. David Robertshaw, Associate Dean for Pre-medical Education, said that the experience was designed to show



the students how research scientists work: "how they think, how they conduct research, how they generate a hypothesis...and the way they interact within a broader scientific environment such as you have in a

major research university."

The students also attended seminars, took a preparation course for the MCAT, and found out what life is like at the main campuses of Cornell University.

Academic News:

Pre-medical Program moves into second year

As the new incoming class of pre-medical students arrive at WCMC-Q this fall, they embark on an academic program specifically designed to prepare them for medical school.

They will study in superb facilities in the new building, which opens for operation as they arrive. State-of-the-art technology will give them access to lectures and other educational resources at Cornell University in the U.S., while the library, almost entirely electronic, can be accessed from computers placed throughout the building. It's an exciting time to be at WCMC-Q.

It has been great fun to give input into the design of the new facilities, says Dr. David Robertshaw, Associate Dean for Pre-medical Education. He adds: "we have wonderful facilities to work in, committed students and faculty, and small classes; all those things combine to make this a very positive experience."

Nevertheless, as the Pre-medical Program is a two-year course, it is more concentrated and demanding for students than normal four-year undergraduate programs in the United States. Dr. Robertshaw acknowledges this reality: "it is much more intensive, because it is hard science, with no relief in terms of a humanities discipline which can take them away from almost a totally science-oriented program."

The Pre-medical Program is designed to give students breadth of understanding of the sciences fundamental to medicine. While the first year focus is on the basic sciences, there is a shift towards subjects that are closer to medicine in the second year. This means that there is significant integration between the Pre-medical Program and the four-year Medical Program that is to follow.

Courses in biology, chemistry, mathematics and physics are taken in the first year. If this seems a wide approach, then Dr. Robertshaw says that they all underpin the study of medicine. Taking math as an example, he explains: "the



Dr. David Robertshaw, Associate Dean for Pre-medical Education

mathematics we have focuses largely on calculus because this is used very widely in medical disciplines. All the subjects in the first year have one common factor—mathematics."

Lab sessions challenge "established fact"

Lab sessions are also a very important part of the first year curriculum. "The lab serves two purposes," he says, "one is to show how information is generated, and the other is how to record accurately and analyze that information—so it brings precision into what students do."

He also believes that lab work helps move the students towards a more questioning and challenging approach, something that is developed in the second year in preparation for the problem based learning of medical education.

"It is important to understand that, although there may be an answer, it may not be the only answer to a problem. So what they are presented with in the lectures as established fact can always be challenged."

There is less work in the labs during the second year, but areas such as organic chemistry, biochemistry and genetics are introduced, moving students closer to medical studies.

The course in human genetics and society looks at how genetics applies to medicine, and at some of the ethical questions that arise from it. This is complemented by a seminar course in medical ethics taught by Dr. Pablo Rodriguez del Pozo and comprising lectures and discussions. In these, students will be encouraged to consider some of the ethical issues of modern medicine and trained how to approach ethical problems within local cultural standards.

Cornell psychology course to be offered at WCMC-Q

They may also find themselves analyzing their own thought processes and motivation while taking the introductory psychology course; one main aim of the course is to prepare them to recognize different types of behavior patterns in people.

Taught by Dr. James Maas, professor of psychology at Cornell University, this is the most popular, and therefore the largest, single lecture class in the U.S, with some 1600 students in the audience in Ithaca—to whom we may now add the WCMC-Q class. Academic, author, and TV personality, Dr. Maas is an expert in the effects of sleep deprivation. The lectures will be broadcast by streaming video from Ithaca, with weekly real time review sessions for WCMC-Q students, and support from a teaching assistant in Doha.

The examination of human behavior will be complemented by a seminar course in neuroscience that explores how the brain functions. Dr. Robertshaw explains: "students can see the link between the science of the way in which the brain works and its expression in behavioral terms."

Looking back over the first year at WCMC-Q, Dr. Robertshaw cites the "esprit de corps" created among faculty as a notable aspect of the experience. Working in a new school, in a different part of the world and culture has helped them forge a common bond. There is, he believes, "a great deal of enthusiasm about what we're doing."

WCMC-Q a regional center for the MCAT

**Course and exam held
in Qatar for first time
as students prepare for
Medical Program**

The Medical College Admission Test or MCAT was held for the first time in Qatar this summer, with WCMC-Q serving as the exam center. It was preceded by a two-month preparatory course taught at the College by a Kaplan International instructor.

WCMC-Q is one of only two centers in the Middle East to host the exam, which takes place twice a year, in April and August. The other center is in Beirut.

The MCAT, which is administered by the Association of American Medical Colleges, is a pre-requisite for entry to almost all North American medical schools, and WCMC-Q is no exception. Applicants are tested in



Putting them in the picture: instructor Jayson Potts explains the principles of photography to the MCAT class.

biology, chemistry (including organic chemistry), physics, verbal reasoning and writing.

While the majority of the students taking the course and exam were from WCMC-Q, there were also five graduates of Qatar University's biomedical sciences program, who work as lab technologists at the Hamad Medical Corporation. They may apply to the four-year Medical Program.

The introduction of the MCAT—and indeed of a medical college—in Qatar opens up new opportunities, said Nisreen Nabeeh Abd Rabo, who

works in the cytopathology lab at the Hamad Hospital. Abd Rabo had originally wanted to study medicine; in the absence of a medical college in the country at the time, she opted for a degree in biomedical sciences at Qatar University, graduating in 1992.

The major challenge of the MCAT for her was the inclusion of non-science subjects, which she had not studied since high school.

Jehan Al-Rayahi, member of the inaugural class at WCMC-Q, commented on the commitment

(continued on page 10)

Summer 2003: Notes from Faculty

Dr. Thomas Rishel gave an invited keynote address at the Second International Conference on Trends in Mathematical Education at the Lebanese American University, in Beirut, in June.

Despite the recent war in Iraq, and the consequent logistical problems for the organizers, the conference attracted about 100 people from around the world.

Dr. Rishel spoke on "Discovery and Active Learning Strategies in the Mathematics Classroom." He traced 'discovery learning' back to the ancient Greeks, specifically Plato's dialogue "Meno." He comments: "the essence of my talk was that many of the questions that are current in mathematical education today are contained in that dialogue

from 25 centuries ago."

In May, **Dr. Marco Ameduri** attended the International Workshop on Off-Shell Effects in Quantum Transport (Non-equilibrium Physics at Short Time Scales) at the Max Planck Institute for the Physics of Complex Systems in Dresden, Germany.

The common theme of the talks and discussions was the development of tools to study complex physical systems away from equilibrium. Dr. Ameduri discussed his work on the dynamics of magnetic molecules, that is, molecules formed by a small number of magnetic atoms at their center, surrounded by nonmagnetic chemical groups.



Dr. Thomas Rishel



Dr. Marco Ameduri

He comments: "these molecules are promising candidates for technological applications such as new information storage devices, and perhaps even quantum computers."

Dr. Ameduri also gave an evening lecture on "Cornell in Doha: New Developments in International Education." He reports that this created considerable interest and discussion among the audience.

Moving Stories

All wrapped up and somewhere to go

There came a point in late June when WCMC-Q staff working in offices near the science labs began to ask each other: just how much adhesive tape do you need to pack up a physics lab? 30 rolls? 50 rolls? 100 yards? Perhaps 500 yards? (This, by early July.) Pointless speculation, you might say; but as each day went on to the accompaniment of the discordant, ear splitting sound of tape being torn from the roll, the question hovered in the air and refused to go away.

Packing up the labs, one each for biology, chemistry and physics, was probably the most challenging part of the move from WCMC-Q's temporary quarters in a wing of Qatar Academy to the new building.

It was not a matter of distance, since only a few hundred yards separate the two buildings. It was the *nature* of the items that made the task so difficult—fragile, volatile, hazardous, expensive, difficult to replace or—well, quite simply, alive.

Bear in mind also the conditions in which the move took place: daytime temperatures in Doha at this time of year normally reach about 110 degrees Fahrenheit, sometimes accompanied by either a dust-laden wind or high humidity. So, while biology lab technician Barbara Polkowski planned carefully for her bacteria, bugs, fish and fungi, chemistry lab technician Alex Tejada also made detailed arrangements to transport explosive and volatile chemicals under controlled conditions.

A refrigerated truck was a necessity, said physics lab technician Syed Ahmed

Hasanin, in order to maintain a consistently cool environment for delicate equipment such as the electron beam diffraction tubes. It was also important to make sure they were kept stable and well protected against any kind of impact—hence the layers of wrapping and yards of tape.

If anything went wrong, then not only would it be expensive to purchase new supplies, it would also require more time than was available before the start of classes in September, since most of the equipment was brought to Qatar from the United States. The very real difficulty of re-supplying the labs was a major consideration.

Not surprisingly, it took weeks of planning and effort to get each lab ready for the move. Presciently, the technicians had kept much of the packaging in which equipment was originally transported from the U.S., which meant that many pieces could be wrapped almost as if new. Not all of the packaging could be salvaged, however; some of Barbara's protégés had actually eaten theirs (therein lies another story—see "S.O.S." page 10).



Health and safety issues were another important consideration. In the physics lab, for example, heavyweight equipment such as the Tesla coil (a lightning machine) had to be packed in a specially made wooden crate, wheeled out and lifted onto the truck by crane, while any item containing a capacitor, and therefore capable of giving an electric shock, was packed by Hasanin himself.

However, health and safety took on a different meaning when Polkowski explained that the fish, kept in two tanks in the Prep Room, would have to be transported in separate containers—to keep them apart and prevent fights from breaking out.

Assistants from among the staff were recruited to help supervise the live specimens as they made their way to their new home, and prevent any attempts at a breakout, though taking a roll call of the woodlice was perhaps a challenge too far.

Another main concern was to make sure that fragile articles were safely transported: it turned out that the skeletons were all set to rattle down the road in Polkowski's car,



Clockwise from top left: The move begins...pauses overnight as the Diamond Hall in Qatar Academy, home to WCMC-Q for the past year, holds some of Cornell's vital resources for one last time...proceeds with the removal of laboratory equipment from the Qatar Academy building...and finally ends at the new building, as Alex Tejada checks equipment and supplies for the chemistry labs.

and in broad daylight. Fortunately the area around WCMC-Q is relatively quiet at this time of year, or the cover of darkness might have been necessary.

Before the move, conditions in the new labs were closely monitored to make sure that they were ideal for the incoming occupants, with the fridge/freezer at the correct temperature for bacteria and fungi, and the water in the fish tanks the right chemical balance. This took several days, and regular checks,

before the transfers could be made.

Getting the new facilities ready in time for the fall semester was a further concern.

With double the number of labs in the new building, the technicians would have a lot more equipment to unwrap and assemble. Alex commented: "we're expecting chemicals, big pieces of equipment, instruments—the most difficult part is deciding where to keep all these

things." Indeed, even as the staff was preparing to leave the old facilities, new supplies arrived from New York.

Fortunately for everyone in the neighboring offices, these were all packed, labeled, sealed and ready to move on. Not a single piece of extra tape was required.

Student Orientation 2003:

Inclusive program provides a warm welcome

New and returning students will receive a warm welcome at this year's Orientation, which is designed to introduce the freshmen to life as part of Cornell University and help them settle into the growing community at WCMC-Q.

Part of the tradition of North American universities, Orientation marks the formal entry of students into the College, as the Office of Admissions 'hands them over' to faculty.

This year's event, which takes place over a four day period, begins with a student roll call and welcome from Dean Alonso on Saturday, August 30. A varied program of activities follows, culminating in Opening Exercises on September 2. This final stage, a rite of passage for the students, will include addresses by both the Dean and a guest speaker, and formal presentation of the Cornell University Pre-medical Program pin.

Returning students—the inaugural class—will also have a separate, brief Orientation on September 7, the day that classes begin.

The purpose of Orientation is both to familiarize students with new surroundings, curriculum and administrative systems, and to help them feel at home as they embark on this exciting and challenging stage of their education. Parents are invited to attend several sessions because, as Director of Student Affairs Charles Paragg, says: "we want to get the parents to understand how they can help the students succeed."

It is a notably inclusive program: everyone—faculty, teaching assistants, staff, students and parents—is involved at some stage. This year, WCMC-Q joins in the Cornell University summer reading project (see below).

Study skills will be an important area of discussion on successive days,

with guest Professor Mary Ann Rishel from Ithaca leading several workshops that focus on developing skills of critical thinking and problem solving, reading textbooks, test-taking skills, and understanding the academic culture, among others.

In other sessions, students will be introduced to the academic courses, lab safety procedures, the law governing release of information, and university policies concerning grading and transcripts, among other issues.

A full schedule of social activities complements the more serious side of Orientation: a team scavenger hunt at City Center-Doha, a bowling night and a barbecue dinner with karaoke entertainment are all part of the plan. The second evening will feature an Arabian Gulf-style dinner and intercultural games, chosen as "a fun way to teach cultural diversity" says Registrar Betty Monfort.

Summer Reading:

Antigone takes center stage

This year, the Cornell University summer reading project will be part of Orientation at WCMC-Q for the first time, with students, faculty and staff meeting to discuss Sophocles' tragedy *Antigone*.

The main purpose of the project is to help new and returning students and faculty to get to know one another before the start of the academic year.

The reading project was initiated two years ago and has already become part of Cornell tradition. Texts chosen in previous years were Jared Diamond's *Guns, Germs and Steel* and Mary Shelley's gothic novel *Frankenstein*.

This year's choice, a play written some 2,500 years ago, continues to have resonance today and to be performed on stage: one of the highlights of the project in Ithaca will be a new production in September staged by Cornell's Department of Theatre, Film and Dance.

An additional benefit for WCMC-Q



Artwork by Carla DeMello, Iris Design Team, C.U. Library

students, who are studying a purely science-based curriculum, is that it gives them a chance to take part in an activity that focuses on the humanities. This opens up a "broader picture," says Dean of the College, Daniel R. Alonso:

"The study of literature and the humanities is an important aspect of pre-medical education in the U.S. and

the summer reading project allows our students to focus on a great classical work, as well as encouraging them to bond and to get to know faculty."

Antigone centers on the fate of the children of Oedipus, the mythical Theban king who—unknowingly—murdered his father and married his mother, and whose tragedy is the theme of another of Sophocles' plays, *Oedipus the King*.

At the heart of the work is a battle of wills between a young woman and her uncle, the ebb and flow of their argument accompanied by commentary from the chorus, which voices the concerns of society at large and re-affirms balance as the play ends.

Powerful and compelling, *Antigone* examines many issues and conflicts of principle that concern us today: respect for individual laws, set against wider principles of justice and religious observance; loyalty to family, and to the community; and the exercise, and abuse, of power especially in times of emergency.

Student Affairs:

Helping students succeed with their goals

Headed by Charles Paragg, the Office of Student Affairs team includes Registrar Betty Monfort and secretary Samar Wahbi. Between them, Paragg and Monfort have worked in university student affairs offices from Winnipeg to New York and Miami for a total of almost 50 years. So whatever requests, concerns or questions they face, the team has a wealth of experience on which to draw.

The department is easily accessible, situated with the Office of Admissions near the entrance to the south wing of the new building, and students are welcome to call in, to unwind and have a chat.

A central objective of Student Affairs is to “help students succeed with their educational and personal goals.” This is a broad remit—so how does the staff put words into action?

Firstly, they offer myriad administrative services: ID badges, visas for travel, official transcripts, and information about accommodation and health care services.

The team also works on

formulating policies, liaising with outside organizations, and developing extra-curricular activities.

Last semester Paragg began building links with the Hamad Medical Corporation, paving the way for students to explore the practice of medicine through a ‘shadowing’ system.* He is pleased to note that some students have followed the experience up on their own initiative during the summer, and he now plans to extend the program.

Sports and social events—football (soccer) matches for students and faculty, a bowling extravaganza, and a special iftar meal during the Holy month of Ramadan, for example—have also been organized, to help create a sense of community.

This community feeling is set to develop over the coming period,



Director of Student Affairs Charles Paragg with Registrar Betty Monfort (right) and secretary Samar Wahbi (left).

Paragg believes: “as we have more students and there’s more interaction between the different classes starting in the fall, plus students from other institutions,** there will be more social interaction.”

Both Paragg and Monfort identify the development of a student government as a top priority. Says Paragg: “what is missing is student leadership—but certainly this will come in time.”

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Student Housing and Recreation Update



Student housing is of a high standard.

Education City has fantastic sports facilities:

they are being significantly upgraded during the summer, and they are definitely worth checking out. Visit the Academic Bridge Program (ABP) building and find out about the:

- Re-equipped cardio gym
- Separate gym for weights
- Upgraded Olympic-size swimming pool
- New equipment for tennis, volley-, basket- and handball, indoors or outdoors.

Watch the WCMC-Q Website for news of the opening date for the new Jacuzzi and sauna center, also at the ABP building.

Male students move home: starting this semester, all male WCMC-Q students who board will be housed in a different building from last year. The accommodation consists of self-contained flats, with each flat shared by two students. The change is in response to growing pressure on housing at Education City.

All flats are furnished and equipped to a high standard. The building has a social area and a dedicated computer room equipped with Apple computers, with access to the Internet.

Excellent sports facilities include this multi-purpose hall.



S.O.S. WCMC-Q wildlife: cold comfort for gourmet woodlice

Providing the right diet for some of her charges has proved quite a headache for biology lab technician Barbara Polkowski. It's not that they refuse to eat, but one species of woodlouse, *Porcellio scaber*, is definitely harder to please than another.

While woodlice of the species *Armadillidium vulgare* have tucked into the tasty potato, carrot and paper morsels she has provided, the other group have been reluctant to adjust to their new diet and have apparently pined for the tastiest dish of all—the brown, unbleached paper in which they were originally packed when flown to Qatar from their home in the U.S.

The signs are clear, says Polkowski: *Porcellio scaber* are not thriving.

"I can see they are not multiplying the way they were when they were eating the brown paper, and they were also previously growing much quicker."

This is a puzzle, since woodlice are not unduly picky about their food:



Barbara Polkowski—running out of food for the gourmet woodlice.

decaying vegetable matter suits them fine and they are very useful for making compost. Something strange—if not nasty—seems to be happening in the woodshed here.

Polkowski has tried a whole menu

of offerings to tempt the creatures, including an assortment of wood and paper. Surfing the Internet led to the discovery of a sure-fire recipe of dry rabbit food and leaves, and she did her best to make a version of this using local ingredients. To no avail—the only thing that opened their appetites was the untreated paper used to wrap other imported specimens, such as termites and earthworms.

Faced with the prospect of bringing in special supplies of paper to feed her "bugs," Polkowski is torn between trying to look after the gourmet woodlice and the economic reality of housekeeping for them. As the supplies of paper from the earthworms dwindle, she reflects that the situation is getting desperate: "Now I'm short again, so I hope that faculty will bring some of the paper back from the States," she laughs.

That's an unusual way to solve the problem of bringing gifts back from holiday!

Student Affairs

(continued from page 9)

If Monfort has her way, salsa classes could be another means of enhancing the social side of life. An irrepressible New Yorker of Cuban origin, Monfort discovered the affinity between Latino and Arabic dance during a women's social gathering at Education City.

Apart from her role in helping to organize social activities, the Registrar provides numerous

support services: "if the students need any information on their grades, what's inside their records, any kind of enrollment verifications, supporting documentation for volunteer activities or anything else, they come to me."

On the subject of disclosure, she explains that the College works in accordance with U.S. law: "we are an American school, so we go on the premise of a privacy law called FERPA (The Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act), which has very strict codes and guidelines as to what can

and cannot be disclosed, students' access to their records, and their families' access to them."

The broad remit of Student Affairs means that there's every chance to get to know the students well. As Monfort comments: "the more you talk to students, the more you see their strengths and their weaknesses. In knowing that, you could formulate programs, activities and guidance to help them along."

* Reported in the Weill Cornell Qatar Chronicle, vol. 1, no. 2.

** Texas A & M University opens a branch this fall: see page 12

MCAT (continued from page 5)

required by the course:

"I thought it would be more difficult. Right now, I think it's 'do-able,' but you have to work very, very hard."

Ibrahim Sultan said that it provides essential preparation for the demands of the MCAT, which places emphasis on critical thinking and working against the clock: "you have to stay within the time, and you have to concentrate; it's critical thinking based on logic and fundamental science.

You need to have a solid foundation in sciences, but you don't need to have depth in everything. They want you to read and analyze."

Teaching the students at WCMC-Q was an opportunity that instructor Jayson Potts would not have missed. Commenting on the experience, the Canadian engineer said:

"It's been good to get some different perspectives: there are so many people here from so many different areas, it's astounding. It has definitely encouraged me to travel more."

He has also learned to sail, a skill

he hopes to develop when he takes up his place as a medical student at Queens University this fall.

With a Masters degree in engineering, Potts decided on a change of career in order to have closer contacts with people and to move from urban to rural Canada—there is a shortage of physicians at present, particularly in rural areas.

Of the MCAT, which he took in 2002, he said: "I think it tests your endurance. It's more like a marathon than a sprint."

A Good Read:

Notable Cornellians

From anthropology to politics, business to television, graduates of Cornell University have become prominent figures since the University was founded in the 1860s. The stories of some of these men and women are celebrated in a book published earlier this summer, *The 100 Most Notable Cornellians*.

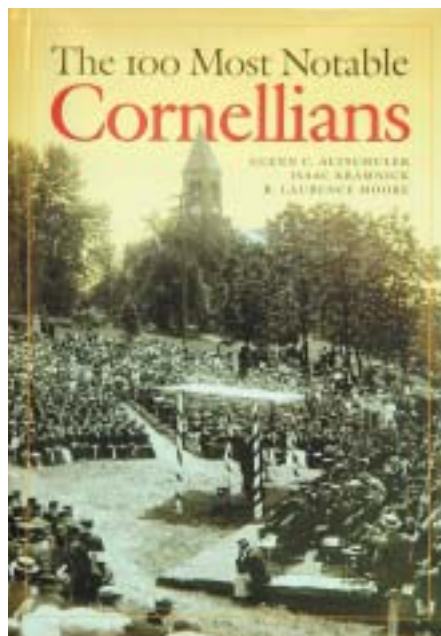
Here we have Nobel Laureates rubbing shoulders with musicians, pioneering physicians, journalists, actors, bankers, entrepreneurs and novelists. It is inspiring to read how eclectic the Cornell community has been, and how much Cornellians achieved and contributed to society during the University's first century.

The book has been compiled by three academics holding senior posts at Cornell: Glenn C. Altschuler, Isaac Kramnick and R. Laurence Moore. It is neatly divided into chronological sections, each one preceded by an introduction tracing the development of the University through the period in question.

The selection was made from men and women who completed undergraduate degrees at Cornell, and those who left before graduation (Kurt Vonnegut) or who were not undergraduates at the University (Carl Sagan) are not included. The criterion for inclusion, that the subjects be "notable," is held by the authors to imply moral neutrality, and some who appear—though only a very few—might be considered more infamous than famous.

Not that "fame" is exactly the criterion for inclusion. All of us in Qatar have reason to be grateful to Willis Haviland Carrier, but how many of us have any idea about him or why we should honor him? The answer becomes clear as soon as you read that Carrier, class of 1901, is "the father of air-conditioning."

A winner of the Nobel Peace Prize, (John Mott, class of 1888) appears as early as the first section of the book. Other Nobel Prize winners follow—for economics and physics, for example. Prominent lawyers Ruth Ginsburg and Janet



Reno are here, along with government adviser Sandy Berger, eminent physicians such as Henry Heimlich, and Hollywood director Howard Hawks.

Some unusual aspects of the University community come to light: several students from China studied at Cornell in the early Twentieth Century through a special scholarship program. It is also interesting to note the formative influence on writers of working for the *Cornell Daily Sun*—notably E. B. White contributor to the *New Yorker* and *Harper's* magazine, and author of the children's book *Charlotte's Web*.

Stories of persistence in the face of adversity make for enthralling reading. Emily Dunning Barringer (1897), overcame stiff male opposition to become a prominent physician, and continued to battle for equality into the 1940s; black student Margaret Morgan Lawrence (1936) worked as a servant to pay her way through Cornell, was refused entry to the Medical School, but went on to qualify as a doctor. Most poignant, perhaps, is the final biography in the book, since former *Superman* actor Christopher Reeve (1974) is now better known for his battle with profound disability following a riding accident in 1995.

Published by Cornell University Press 2003

WEB WATCH

Paula Craig, coordinator for e-learning and continuing education, reviews two Websites with a wealth of useful information:



<http://www.nyph.org>

The recently redesigned website of New York-Presbyterian, the University Hospital of Columbia and Cornell, offers user-friendly information about the healthcare services offered, a wide variety of health topics, such as diabetes, and continuing education opportunities for the health professional. The section, "Guide to Our Hospital" can serve as a model for physicians explaining a hospital stay to a patient entering the hospital. Ease of navigation, as well as the practical aspect of this site, makes it a must to bookmark.



<http://www.cancer.gov>

The National Cancer Institute (NCI) provides current and accurate cancer information, including treatment options, clinical trials, ways to reduce cancer risk, ways to cope with cancer, and resources for researchers and health professionals. Authoritative information is available for patients and their loved ones, advocates, health professionals, and researchers. A health professional or physician may find this site helpful in explaining cancer to patients. The Medical Library Association has deemed this regularly updated site one of the best 10 websites.

Stylish celebration at year's end



The end of year dinner at Porcini Restaurant was a night to remember. The class of 2008 celebrated their last “official” moments of the first year as they said goodbye to teaching assistants (T.As.) Debi Mitra, Kelly Ann Ryan and Justin Matis, who were leaving to continue their medical education back home in the U.S.

The Dean, all faculty and many staff members, along with a small number of invited family and friends, joined students for a breathtaking evening enjoying the delicious classical Italian cuisine, prepared in front of them in an open kitchen. The conversation ranged from classification of the shrimp in the seafood dish as an arthropod, to the

wildlife in Ithaca.

Students had their unique way of saying goodbye to faculty by presenting end of the year certificates of appreciation to them, with a tie between two for the informal title of “most liked.” At the end of the ceremony, a spontaneous speech of thanks on behalf of the class highlighted the dedication and hard work of faculty that had contributed to making the year flow gently, despite the challenges.

Finally, tears were the closing curtains of the night as everyone said goodbye, perhaps for the last time since the T.As. were flying out of Doha later that night.

It really was an exceptional night, to be remembered always.

—Lama Oreibi

Education City News:

The opening of Texas A & M University-Qatar in September brings engineering programs to Education City. The new institution, a branch of Texas A & M at College Station, will offer four-year courses in chemical, electrical, mechanical and petroleum engineering. Texas A & M will share WCMC-Q facilities for an initial period until its new premises are ready.

Reminder: date for your diary

The ribbon cutting ceremony for the new WCMC-Q building will be held on Sunday, October 12, 2003.

A gala event, it will be part of the wider activities happening at Education City over a period of several days, to include:

THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF EDUCATION CITY

THE INAUGURATION OF TEXAS A & M UNIVERSITY PROGRAMS

THE INAUGURATION OF THE RAND POLICY INSTITUTE

and finally...



Wherever you are in the world, whatever the time of day or night —remember you can visit our Website and check out the latest news from WCMC-Q:

www.med.cornell.edu/qatar

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QATAR CHRONICLE
THE NEWSLETTER OF THE WEILL CORNELL MEDICAL COLLEGE IN QATAR

The Newsletter of the Weill Cornell Medical College in Qatar

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Daniel R. Alonso, M.D.
Dean

Havva S. Idriss
Vice Dean

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Education City,
P.O. Box 24144
Doha, Qatar
Email:
smi2001@med.cornell.edu

Norma Haddad
Director, Public Affairs

Sylvia Ismail
Editor

David Carlson
Design & Production

Khaled Al-Marzouqi, Zahara Velji, Lee Askin
Photography